



Code of conduct for parents, carers, visitors and contractors

The Trust Schools and Central Team are very proud and fortunate to have dedicated and supportive school communities. Our schools' staff, governors, parents and carers alike all recognise that the education of our children is a partnership process between all these parties.

As a partnership we are all aware of the importance of solid working relationships to equip all of our children with the necessary skills for adulthood.

The purpose of this document is to provide a reminder to all parents, carers, visitors and contractors to our schools about the expectations around the conduct of all parents, carers, visitors and contractors connected to our schools.

We understand that everyday frustrations can cause misunderstandings and have a negative impact on our relationships. Establishing where this happens, that we remain committed to resolving difficulties in a constructive manner through open positive dialogue is, however, essential.

In this way, we can continue to flourish and progress to achieve, in an atmosphere of mutual understanding.

Our schools already have a code of conduct for all our employees but this code is aimed at the wider school community, so that all can see and understand the expectations on the behaviour of anyone connected with the school. Whilst we appreciate that incidents are extremely rare, we feel it is important to make clear the types of behaviour that we will find unacceptable and what action we may need to take in response.

Each school's Safeguarding Policy also references parents', carers', visitors' and contractors' behaviour when visiting the school. Along with the expected standards in this document, Appendix I has further information at the end of this policy.

A behaviour which is in breach of this policy occurring on any school premises or in connection with school, may cause the school to take legal advice and consider banning the offending adult from entering the school premises altogether.

Thank you for abiding by this policy across our Trust. Together we create a positive and uplifting environment not only for the children, but also all who work and visit our school.

Please note: can parents/carers please make sure all persons collecting their children are aware of this policy.

What happens if someone ignores or breaks the code?

In the event of any parent/carer or visitor of the school breaking this code then proportionate actions will be taken as follows;

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In cases where the unacceptable behaviour is considered to be a serious and potentially criminal matter the concerns will in the first instance be referred to Thames Valley Police. This will include any harassment or all cases of threats or violence and actual violence to any child, member of staff or governor in the school.

This will also include anything that could be seen as a sign of harassment of any member of the school community, such as any form of insulting social media post or any form of social media cyber bullying. In cases where evidence suggests that behaviour would be tantamount to libel or slander then the school will refer the matter to the Trust's Legal Team for further action.

In cases where the code of conduct has been broken but the breach was not libellous, slanderous or criminal matter, then the school will send out a formal letter to the parent, carer, visitor or contractor with an invite to a meeting.

If the parent, carer, visitor or contractor refuses to attend the meeting then the school will write to the individual and ask them to stop the behaviour causing the concern and warn that if they do not, they may be banned from the school premises. If after this, the behaviour continues, the individual will again be written to and informed that a ban is now in place.

Note: (1) a ban from the school can be introduced without having to go through all the steps offered above in more serious cases.

(2) Site bans will normally be limited in the first instance.

Complaints

This code of conduct does not prevent parent, carers, visitors and contractors from raising a legitimate complaint in an appropriate fashion.

In most cases, we hope that all complaints and concerns can be resolved through open dialogue with members of staff as appropriate.

Where you are not satisfied with responses received however, we would ask that you then follow the complaints procedure as laid out in the School and Trust complaints policy. This is available on the Schools' and Trust website, but if you would prefer, please contact the school office and we can arrange for a hard copy to be made available.

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Appendix I

Behaviour that will not be tolerated:

- Disruptive behaviour that interferes or threatens to interfere with any of the school's normal operation or activities anywhere on the school premises.
- Any inappropriate behaviour on the school premises.
- Using loud or offensive language or displaying aggression.
- Threatening in any way, a member of staff, visitor, fellow parent/carer or student.
- Damaging or destroying school property.
- Sending abusive or threatening emails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communications (including social media) to anyone within the school community.
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the students/parents/staff/governors at the school on social media or in the community (See Appendix 2 for more details)
- The use of physical, verbal or written aggression towards another adult or child. This includes physical punishment of your own child on school premises.
- Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child, or a member of their family, towards their own child. (Such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and is likely to have legal consequences)
- Any language or actions which breach our commitment to the Equalities Act, for example, but not exclusively, sexist, racist or homophobic comments/actions.
- Smoking, taking illegal drugs or the consumption of alcohol on school premises. (Alcohol may only be consumed during authorised events).
- Dogs being brought on to the school premises (other than assistance dogs).

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Appendix 2

Issues of conduct with the use of Social Media

Think before you post.

We ask that social media, whether public or private, should not be used to fuel campaigns and voice negative views about the school, school staff, parents, governors/trustees or students.

We take very seriously inappropriate use of social media by a parent to publicly humiliate or criticise another parent, student, or member of staff.

If parents have any concerns about their child in relation to the school, they should:

1. Initially contact the class teacher /subject teacher / tutor
2. If the concern remains, they should contact the Phase Leader/Head of Year/Head of Faculty
3. If the concern remains they should contact the head teacher
4. If still unresolved, the school governors, through the complaints procedure

They should not use social media as a medium to air any concerns or grievances.

Online activity which we consider inappropriate:

- Identifying or posting images/videos of students (this is a serious breach of the Data Protection Act and will have consequences, which could be legal and involve child protection agencies)
- Abusive or personal comments about staff, students or other parents
- Bringing the school into disrepute
- Posting defamatory or libellous comments
- Emails circulated or sent directly with abusive or personal comments about staff or students
- Using social media to publicly challenge school policies or discuss issues about individual children
- Threatening behaviour, such as verbally intimidating staff, or using bad language
- Breaching school security procedures.

At our Trust we take our welfare and safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will deal with any reported incidents appropriately in line with the actions outlined above.

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