



# PONTEFRACT

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## ACADEMIES TRUST

### CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARENTS & CARERS

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Pontefract Academies Trust (The Trust) is committed to running top-quality, high-achieving schools that give our children and young people the chance in life they deserve.
- 1.2 We have a responsibility to ensure that we treat people with respect, openness and care, in fact our People Matter: children, parents/carers and staff. We believe children learn best in a safe and supportive environment based on respect and trust, and underpinned by an effective partnership between parents/carers, staff and the Trust.
- 1.3 High standards of behaviour are required of pupils. Staff are expected to act professionally at all times. The positive support of parents and carers is needed and highly valued by our schools. We expect parents, carers and staff to model the behaviour that we see in our children.
- 1.4 This Code of Conduct provides a reminder to all parents/carers and visitors to our schools about the conduct that is expected of them both on school premises and on social media. It sets out both what they should aim to do and how any inappropriate conduct will be addressed, so that we are all working in a spirit of partnership allowing relationships to flourish, progress and achieve, in an atmosphere of mutual understanding.
- 1.5 This Code of Conduct has been updated in line with the Government's expected standards of behavior around Covid-19 social distancing.
- 1.6 This code complements the Complaints Procedure (available on the schools' websites) which is designed to handle parental concerns or complaints at the earliest possible stage.

## **2.0 EXPECTATIONS**

- 2.1 Our expectations of parents/carers (and, where appropriate, visitors and other adults authorised by parents/carers):
  - Respect the caring ethos and values of our schools.
  - Be tolerant of each other's views, beliefs and opinions.
  - Work together with school staff for the benefit of their children.
  - Treat all members of the school community with respect, using appropriate language and behaviour.
  - Approach the school to help resolve any issues of concern. The involvement of other agencies, such as, the Police, the LADO, local authority or Ofsted, is a parental right but we welcome open dialogue in the first instance to allow school staff to address the issue directly.
  - Where appropriate, clarify a child's version of events with the school's view in order to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue.
  - Promote good pupil behaviour at all times, especially in public, where it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive or unsafe behaviour. For example, children must not be encouraged to fight to resolve issues.
  - It is inevitable that, at times, there will be conflict between pupils in the school. To ensure that these incidents are dealt with safely and effectively, we ask that parents/carers speak to school staff rather than approaching the other child or parent/carer directly or through social media to reprimand them.
  - Email contact with staff is used in our schools as a way to support collaboration. However, there is no expectation that staff must respond to emails within a specific timescale and staff may choose not to respond to any aggressive emails.

- Public communication regarding the school (e.g. on social media) should be factual and, where there is a concern, this concern should be shared with the school in the first instance to enable resolution.
- 2.2 In order to support a peaceful and safe school environment, the Trust will not tolerate parents, carers or visitors behaving in a way that threatens or harms the wellbeing of our pupils or staff. This includes exhibiting the following:
- Disruptive or other inappropriate behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with any of the school's operation or activities, anywhere on the school premises.
  - Sending your child to school when a member of the household is symptomatic/tested positive for Covid-19 or your child is displaying symptoms/tested positive for Covid-19.
  - A disregard to the Government's social distancing expectations around Covid-19 and the schools policies and measures implemented to meet these guidelines.
  - Approaching another parent/carer or child in order to discuss or reprimand them because of an issue between pupils – please talk to a member of the school staff to resolve any problems.
  - Using loud or offensive language or displaying temper.
  - Threatening, in any way, a member of staff or a member of the School Performance Review Board, visitor, fellow parent/carer or child.
  - Using physical or verbal aggression towards another adult or child, including your own.
  - Any other behaviour, verbal or otherwise, which could be considered to be inappropriate, offensive, or abusive.
  - Sending abusive or threatening e-mails, texts, voicemails, phone messages or other written communications to anyone within the school/Trust community.
  - Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the pupils/parents/carers/staff at the school or Trust on Facebook, Twitter or other social media.
  - Damaging or destroying school property.
  - Arriving on the school premises partially clothed.
  - Smoking (including e-cigarettes), taking illegal drugs or the consumption of alcohol on school premises.
  - Entering the school premises under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
  - Bringing dogs (except for registered assistance dogs) or other animals into the school environment without prior agreement.
  - Driving unsafely in the vicinity of the school.
  - Taking photographs with phones or other devices on school premises without permission from the school.
  - This list is not exhaustive.
- 2.3 Where the above expectations are not upheld, the initial response will usually involve a conversation with the parent/carer or visitor. Where this is not sufficient to resolve the issue, the school may have to consider further action. This could include: banning from site for a fixed time (see 'barring from the school premises' below); contacting the Police or seeking legal redress through the courts and/or restricting channels of communication (e.g. no longer allowed to email staff directly). In the case of defamatory comments posted online, we would also report the post to the site's admin. In some cases, we may also need to refer to social services if the behaviour of a parent/carer or visitor indicates that they may be unsafe around children.
- 2.4 We expect that parents, carers and visitors will assist the school with the implementation of this policy and we thank you for your continuing support.

We ask that parents and carers ensure that they make all persons responsible for collecting their children aware of this policy.

### **3.0 SOCIAL MEDIA SITES**

3.1 Our schools/the Trust recognise the value that social media brings to the school community and would encourage the distribution of positive comments and messages about the school and its pupils. We ask that parent/carers demonstrate tolerance and respect towards other people's opinions and beliefs when posting on a school social media site, or on a site not controlled by the school.

#### **3.2 Inappropriate use of social network sites**

3.2.1 Social network websites and online systems are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, headteachers and staff members, and in some cases, other parents/carers/pupils. The use of social network sites being used in this way is viewed as unacceptable and not in the best interests of pupils or the whole school community and can seriously harm an individual's wellbeing. Any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, senior leader or the Headteacher so that they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned, and at the earliest opportunity.

3.2.2 In order to avoid inappropriate social network activity, the following actions will be considered a breach of this Code of Conduct:

- Making complaints, negative comments or factually inaccurate statements about the school.
- Posting photographs of pupils taken on school premises or on a trip or visit without permission from parents/carers.
- Creating a social network page/forum in the name of the school/using official logos to imitate the school or posting comments in the guise of the school.
- Posting photographs of staff including photographs of staff available on school websites.
- Making negative comments about other parents/carers, pupils and/or staff; any comments or concerns should be raised with the school directly.
- Using defamatory and inappropriate language in relation to other parents/carers, pupils and staff.

#### **3.3 Defamatory posts**

3.3.1 In the event that any pupil or parent/carer of a pupil being educated by a school within the Trust is found to be posting defamatory comments on Facebook, Twitter or other social network sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the social network site. It is likely that the Police will also be informed. All social network sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted on the site and they provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity which breaches this. Each of our schools will also expect that any parent/carer or pupil removes such comments immediately, when requested. In some cases, it may be necessary for the school to seek legal advice on comments posts, which may result in a warning letter being sent to the individual responsible. If the content is still not removed, legal action may be taken against those responsible for the content.

### **3.4 Cyber bullying**

3.4.1 The safety and wellbeing of the school community is paramount to the operation of the school. We take very seriously the issue of cyber bullying by a child or a parent to publicly humiliate another parent, carer, child or member of staff as serious inappropriate social network use. We will deal with this as a serious incident of bullying. In serious cases the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites.

### **4.0 RECORDING MEETINGS**

4.1 The recording of meetings is permitted by staff/parents/carers. This must be for private use only and the party making the recording should be encouraged to make this clear at the start of a meeting or other event. Recordings must not be published on any social network sites. Where the school has a requirement to record the meeting this will be explained to the parent/carer in advance of the start of the meeting.

4.2 The school encourages parents, carers and staff to be open and honest about the recording of meetings. Any meeting held with parents/carers that is recorded should ideally be agreed beforehand by all parties.

4.3 All staff should conduct meetings as though they were being recorded to ensure nothing inappropriate is said that could be used to form the basis of a formal complaint.

4.4 It is worth noting that:

- When the school refuses to hold meetings with parents/carers who want to record them, it can cause a lack of trust between the school and parents/carers.
- It could also suggest to the parent/carer that the school has “something to hide”.
- In addition, and most significantly, a school may be unable to exercise its duties relating to safeguarding and child protection if it simply refuses to meet with the parents/carers who want to record a meeting.

### **4.5 Secret filming/recording**

4.5.1 For confidentiality reasons, staff should ensure that they do not have conversations about pupils or parents/carers in the general vicinity of other pupils/parents/carers who may overhear and who could be recording them. All staff should conduct meetings as though they were being recorded to ensure nothing inappropriate is said that could be used to form the basis of a formal complaint.

### **5.0 BARRING FROM SCHOOL PREMISES**

5.1 The public has no automatic right of entry to any school in the Trust. The school will therefore act to ensure they remain a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of their community.

5.2 If a parent’s/carer’s behaviour is a cause for concern, a senior leader can ask him/her to leave the school premises. In serious cases, the Headteacher can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the parent/carer may wish to make to the Headteacher.

The parent/carer will have the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing.

- 5.3 During the barring period, all contact should go through the Headteacher's PA or a named member of staff either by email or telephone.
- 5.4 The Headteacher's decision to bar should be reviewed by the Executive Director. They should take in to account any representations made by the individual and decide whether to either confirm or lift the bar. If the decision is confirmed, the individual should be notified in writing, explaining:
- how long the bar will be in place.
  - when the decision will be reviewed.
- 5.5 Once the school's appeal process has been completed, individuals may be able to apply to the Civil Courts. Individuals wishing to exercise this option should seek independent legal advice.
- 5.6 Any ban should be reviewed at the end of the agreed timescale as outlined above.
- 5.7 The DfE Guidance on [Controlling access to school premises](#) provides more guidance on access to school premises.
- 5.8 See Appendix B for sample barring letters and letters from the Executive Director to uphold or dismiss the ban.

## **6.0 LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES**

- 6.1 The following policies should be read in conjunction with this:
- Complaints Policy.
  - Behaviour for Learning Policy.
  - DfE Guidance on Controlling access to school premises.
  - Health and Safety Policy.

## **APPENDIX A - Code of Conduct for parents/carers**

1. In our schools, we value the support we receive from parents and carers. We want to hear your suggestions and feedback. We know that your son or daughter will do better in school if we all get on well and work together to do our very best for the pupils.
2. We want our parents, carers and staff to model the behaviour we wish to see in our pupils. This Code of Conduct explains to parents, carers and visitors how to behave in and around the school.
3. The school will not accept parents, carers or visitors doing the following:
  - 3.1 **Bad Language**
    - Using loud or rude language.
    - Threatening anyone.
  - 3.2 **Behaviour**
    - Being aggressive towards other adults/parents/carers or pupils.
    - Physically attacking or being aggressive towards staff or pupils.
    - Losing your temper.
    - Taking actions into your own hands, rather than asking the school to sort out a problem.
    - Fighting with other parents/carers or pupils.
    - Damaging or destroying school property.
    - Arriving on the school premises partially clothed.
    - Smoking (including e-cigarettes), taking illegal drugs or drinking alcohol on the school premises.
    - Entering the school premises under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
    - Driving dangerously near the school.
    - Bringing dogs (except for registered assistance dogs or other animals with permission) into the school or the grounds.
    - Taking photographs, with phones or other devices, on school premises without permission from the school.
    - Behaving in a way that stops the school running smoothly.
  - 3.3 **Social Media**
    - Sending unkind, rude or aggressive e-mails, texts, voicemails, phone messages or other written messages to anyone in the school community.
    - Making rude or false comments about the school or anyone who works in it on Facebook, Twitter or other social media.
    - Bullying using social media or online or by text. Sometimes this is called cyber bullying.
  - 3.4 **What will happen?**
    - In all cases of physical or severe verbal assault towards our staff or pupils we will always seek prosecution.
    - The school may contact social services because they are concerned about you and your family.
    - You could be barred from the school for a period of time.
    - The Police may be informed.



## **APPENDIX B - Letters for use in barring from the school premises**

### **Letter 1 Warning (sent by the Headteacher)**

Recorded delivery

Marked *“Private and Confidential to be opened by addressee only”*

Dear

*“Name of school” and Pontefract Academies Trust promotes working, learning and developing together. We believe that good relationships are at the heart of everything we do.*

*However, I have received a report about your conduct at the school on **(enter date and time)**. **(Add the expectation that was not adhered to and a factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils and other parents/carer)**.*

*I must inform you that the school will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to protect its pupils, staff and visitors. We aim to treat all those we are in contact with in a respectful manner, because anything else goes against our ethos and the way we work.*

*Therefore, if, in the future, I receive any reports of conduct of this nature I will be forced to consider removing your licence to enter the school grounds and buildings. If you do not comply with that instruction, I will be able to arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.*

*Nevertheless, I wish to give you an opportunity to give me in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to the report which I have received about your conduct.*

*These comments may include any expressions of regret on your part and any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct. To enable me to take a decision on this matter at an early point, you are asked to send me any written comments you wish to make by **(state date ten working days from the date of letter)**.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Headteacher*

*cc: Executive Director*

## Letter 2 Withdraw permission pending review (sent by the Headteacher)

Recorded delivery

Marked "Private and Confidential to be opened by addressee only"

Dear

"Name of school" and Pontrfract Academies Trust promotes working, learning and developing together. We believe that good relationships are at the heart of everything we do.

However, I have received a report about your conduct on.....at.....

**(Add the expectation that was not adhered to and a factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils and other parents/carers).**

**(Optional reference to first letter from Headteacher).**

I must inform you that we will not tolerate conduct of this nature on the school premises and will act to defend school staff, pupils and visitors. The school aims to treat all those we are in contact with in a respectful manner, because anything else goes against our ethos and the way we work.

I am therefore instructing you that until I have reviewed this incident, you are not to reappear on the school premises. If you do not comply with this instruction, I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises. If you cause a nuisance or disturbance on the premises you may be prosecuted under section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of £500.

The withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises takes effect immediately and will be in place for 15 school days in the first instance.

**In the case of a primary school include:**

For the duration of this decision you may bring your son(s)/daughter(s) **(complete as appropriate)** to school and collect them/him/her (delete as appropriate) at the end of the school day, but you must not go beyond the school gate.

**In the case of EY/KS1 children, also insert:**

Arrangements have been made for your **(delete as appropriate)** son(s)/daughter(s) (insert child/ren's names) to be collected, and returned to you, at the school gate by a member of the school's staff.

I wish to give you an opportunity to give me in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to your conduct on the school site. These comments may be to challenge or explain the facts of the incident, to express regret and give assurances about your future good conduct.

Your letter will enable me to take a decision on whether or not you will be allowed on the school premises after the 15 days. Please send me any written comments you wish to make by **(date ten working days from date of letter)**.

If on receipt of your comments, I consider that my decision should be confirmed, you will be supplied with details of how to pursue a review of your case.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher  
cc: Executive Director

**Letter 3a Withdrawal of permission confirmed (sent by the Headteacher)**

Recorded delivery

*Marked "Private and Confidential to be opened by addressee only"*

Dear

*"Name of school" and Pontrfract Academies Trust promotes working, learning and developing together. We believe that good relationships are at the heart of everything we do. However, on ..... I wrote to inform you that I had withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of the school.*

*To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by ..... .*

*I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated....., the contents of which I have carefully considered.*

*In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the incident of poor conduct, I have determined that the decision to withdraw permission for you to come onto school premises should be confirmed. I am therefore instructing that, until further notice, you are not to come onto the premises of the school without my prior knowledge and approval.*

*If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises of the school. If you cause a nuisance or disturbance on the premises, you may be prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.*

*Even though we have taken this decision, we remain committed to the education of your child/ren, who must continue to attend the school as normal.*

***In the case of a primary school include:***

*For the duration of this decision you may bring your son(s)/daughter(s) (**complete as appropriate**) to school and collect them/him/her (**delete as appropriate**) at the end of the school day, but you must not go beyond the school gate.*

***In the case of EY/KS1 children, also insert:***

*Arrangements have been made for your (**delete as appropriate**) son(s)/daughter(s) (insert child/ren's names) to be collected, and returned to you, at the school gate by a member of the school's staff.*

*This decision will be reviewed again.....(**insert review date which should be within a reasonable period and no longer than six months**).*

*When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the withdrawal of permission to come onto the school premises, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from you; and any evidence of your co-operation with the school in other respects.*

*Finally, I would advise you that your complaint is being considered under the appropriate stage of the school's parental complaints procedure. The school will contact you about this in due course. (**delete as appropriate**)*

Yours sincerely

Headteacher  
cc: Executive Director

**Letter 3b Restore permission after review (sent by the Executive Director)**

*Recorded delivery*

*Marked "Private and Confidential to be opened by addressee only"*

*Dear*

*"Name of school" and Ponterfract Academies Trust promotes working, learning and developing together. We believe that good relationships are at the heart of everything we do.*

*On ..... Mrs/Miss/Mr..... (Headteacher's name) wrote to inform you that he/she had temporarily withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of ..... School.*

*To enable her/him to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, you were given the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by .....*

*We have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated....., the contents of which I have carefully considered.*

*In the circumstances, I have decided that it is not necessary to confirm the decision and I am therefore restoring to you permission to come onto the school premises, with immediate effect.*

**(Optional)** *I must warn you, however, that if it should become necessary in the future, I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the school premises once again.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Executive Director  
cc: Headteacher*

**Letter 4a Continue ban after second review (sent by the Executive Director)**

Recorded delivery

Marked "Private and Confidential to be opened by addressee only"

Dear

"Name of school" and Pontefract Academies Trust promotes working, learning and developing together. We believe that good relationships are at the heart of everything we do.

On ..... Mrs/Miss/Mr..... (Headteacher's name) wrote to inform you that he/she had temporarily withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of ..... School.

To enable her/him to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, you were given the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by .....

We have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated....., the contents of which I have carefully considered.

You were also advised that we would take steps to review this decision by.....

I have now completed the review. However, I have determined that it is not yet appropriate for me to withdraw my decision. **(Add brief summary of reasons).**

I therefore advise that the instruction that you are not to come onto the premises of ..... School, without my prior knowledge and approval remains in place from..... **(insert date).**

If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises and you may be prosecuted under section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

I shall undertake a further review of this decision by.....**(insert review date which should be within a reasonable period and no longer than six months).**

In the meantime, you can write to me with a statement of your views, which I will consider.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher  
cc: Executive Director

**Letter 4b Restore permission after later review (sent by the Headteacher)**

*Recorded delivery*

*Marked "Private and Confidential to be opened by addressee only"*

*Dear*

*"Name of school" and Pontefract Academies Trust promotes working, learning and developing together. We believe that good relationships are at the heart of everything we do.*

*I wrote to you on ..... confirming that permission for you to come onto the premises of ..... School had been withdrawn until further notice. I also advised you I would take steps to review this decision by .....*

*I have now completed the review. I have decided that it is now appropriate to restore permission for you to come onto the school premises with immediate effect.*

*I trust that you will now work together with the school and there will be no further difficulties of the kind which made it necessary to restrict your access to school premises.*

**(Optional)** *I must warn you, however, that if it should become necessary in the future, I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the school premises once again.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Headteacher*  
*cc: Executive Director*

## **APPENDIX C - Advice for school leaders when pictures or a video is uploaded to a social media site**

### **1. Question: What can a school do when a pupil or parent/carer uploads a video or pictures onto social media without permission, showing an event that has taken place in a school?**

- If a pupil or parent/carer has taken their own video footage, for example of a fight in school, and posted it online, there is going to be very little that leaders can do about this.
- If you have asked the parent/carer/pupil to take the footage down and they have refused, then the other option is to flag this with the social media company as a breach of their terms of use. Footage may breach their terms and so if flagged should be taken down.
- If the action of putting a picture or video online itself is part of bullying or in some other way breaches the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy, and was put online by a pupil themselves, then this could potentially trigger action by the school against that pupil under the policy.
- Each case would have to be judged in the circumstances and if footage has been put online by a parent, then your only real option is to flag this with the social media provider.

### **2. Question: Can we involve the Police in this matter?**

You could inform the Police, but unless there is a clear criminal offence being committed by the uploading of the footage, they are not going to be interested.