Code of Conduct for Parents/Carers

PONTEFRACT
ACADEMIES TRUST

Contents

1.   Purpose

1.1   This Code of Conduct provides informaton 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.

1.2   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.

1.3   Pontefract Academies Trust is committed to running top-quality, high-achieving schools that give our children and young people the chance in life they deserve.

1.4   We have a responsibility to ensure that we treat people with respect, openness and care, in fact our People Matter: children, parents/carers, staff and volunteers.

1.5   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.

1.6   High standards of behaviour are required of pupils/students and staff are expected to act professionally at all times, modelling the behaviour the Trust expects from its pupils/students.

1.7   The support of parents and carers is critical, and highly valued by our schools. We expect parents and carers, alongside, staff to model the behaviour that we see in our children. This code of conduct reflects the Trust's expectations of parents and carers.

1.8   This code is supported by the [Complaints Policy](#) which is designed to handle parental concerns or complaints at the earliest possible stage, with a view to a mutually agreeable resolution and sustaining the spirit of partnership and atmosphere of mutual understanding that the Trust feels is vital to the success of its school communities.

2.   The Trust's Expectations

2.1   The Trust's expects parents/carers (and, where appropriate, visitors and other adults authorised by parents/carers) to:

- 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 Designated Officer), the Local Authority or Ofsted, is a parental right but we welcome and encourage open dialogue in the first instance to allow school staff to address the issue directly. The Trust firmly believes that this approach is the one most likely to produce a swift, meaningful and mutually agreeable outcome that fosters the spirit of partnership and embeds effective communication.
- 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.
- Acknowledge that whilst it is inevitable that, at times, there will be conflict between pupils/students, we ask that parents support the Trust in ensuring that these incidents are dealt with safely and effectively by speaking to school staff rather than approaching the pupils/students or parents/carers, either directly or via social media to reprimand them.
- Understand that whilst email contact with staff may be used in Trust schools as a way to support collaboration, there is no expectation that staff must respond to emails within a specific timescale.
- Make all persons responsible for collecting their children aware of this policy.

3.   General Considerations

3.1   Social media, websites and online platforms are increasingly being used to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, headteachers, individual staff members, and in some cases, other parents/carers or pupils/students.

3.2   The use of social media, websites and other online platforms is never in the best interests of pupils or the whole school community, and can seriously harm an individual's wellbeing.

3.3   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.

3.4   Emails and phone messages can often be interpreted in different ways. We ask that before pressing send on an email and using the telephone you reflect on whether or not the email or call may be seen as abusive or threatening.

3.5   Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all

parties must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting taken.

3.6   The Trust expects that all staff will conduct meetings professionally and respectfully, ensuring that content, tone and language used is appropriate and is not in isolation something that would be the legitimate source of a of a formal complaint were the meeting recorded.

4.   Inappropriate Behaviour

4.1   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

- Being 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.
- Approaching another parent/carer or pupil/student in order to discuss or reprimand them because of an issue between pupils.
- Using loud, foul, abusive or offensive language.
- Threatening, in any way, a member of staff or a member of the School Performance Review Board, visitor, fellow parent/carer or pupil/student.
- 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.
- Defamatory, offensive negative, or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the pupils/parents/carers/staff at the school or Trust on social media, forums, website or any other publicly accessible medium. Any comments or concerns should be raised with the school directly.
- Damaging or destroying school property.
- Arriving on the school premises partially clothed.
- Smoking, vaping, taking illegal drugs or consuming alcohol on school premises.
- Entering school premises whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Allowing dogs (except for registered assistance dogs) or other animals into the school environment.
- Driving unsafely in the vicinity of the school.
- Taking photographs, video or audio recordings with phones or other devices on school premises without permission from the school.
- Making complaints, negative comments or factually inaccurate statements about the school on social media, forums, other websites or any other publicly accessible medium.
- Posting photographs of pupils taken on school premises or on a trip or visit on social media without consent from the parents/carers of the child/children depicted.

- 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 made available on school websites via social media, forums, other websites or any other publicly accessible medium.

This list is not exhaustive.

5.   The Trust's Response

5.1   Where the Trust's expectations are not upheld, or inappropriate behaviour takes place, the initial response will usually involve a conversation with the parent/carer or visitor.

5.2   Where this is not sufficient to resolve the issue, the school may have to consider further action. This could include:

- Banning from premises for a fixed time.
- Restricting channels of communication (e.g. no longer allowed to email staff directly).
- Reporting defamatory or abusive comments to site admins in relation to posts on social media, forums, websites or other online platforms.
- Requesting the immediate removal of comments, photographs or other media that constitutes a breach of the code.
- Warning letters being issued in relation to breaches of the code.
- Contacting the Police or seeking legal redress through the courts.

5.3   In the event that any pupil/student or parent/carer is found to be posting defamatory comments on social media or elsewhere on the internet, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the social network or website. It is likely that the Police will also be informed.

5.4   The safety and wellbeing of the school community is paramount and the Trust takes the issue of cyber bullying by a pupil/student or a parent/carer to publicly humiliate another parent/carer, pupil/student, member of staff or volunteer as serious violation of this code and will deal with this as a serious incident of bullying.

5.5   In some cases, it may be necessary to make a referral to social services if the behaviour of a parent/carer or visitor indicates that they may be unsafe around children.

6. Banning from Premises

6.1 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.

6.2 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.

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

6.4 During the barring period, all contact should go through the Headteacher's PA or a named member of staff either by email or telephone.

6.5 The Headteacher's decision to bar will be reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team. They will 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.

6.6 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.

6.7 Any ban should be reviewed at the end of the agreed timescale as outlined above.

6.8 The DfE Guidance on Controlling access to school premises provides more guidance on access to school premises.

7. Legal Framework

2.1 This policy has due regard to legislation, statutory guidance and accepted industry standards including but not limited to:

- Controlling access to school premises DfE Guidance 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

2.5 The policy will be implemented in accordance with:

- [The Trust's Acceptable Use Policy](#)
- [The Trust's Anti-Bullying Policy](#)
- [The Trust's Complaints Policy](#)
- [The Trust's Behaviour and Relationships (Primary Phase) Policy](#)
- [The Trust's Behaviour and Relationships (Secondary Phase) Policy](#)
- [The Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#)

3. Policy Scope

3.1   This policy applies to:

- Teaching Staff
- Non-Teaching Staff
- Volunteers (including SPRB members)
- Pupils/Students
- Parents/Carers

4. Policy Author

4.1   This policy is the responsibility of the **Directors of School Improvement**.

5. Policy Approval

5.1   This policy is approved by the **Education and Standards Committee**, in line with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.

5.2   This policy was approved by the Committee becoming effective on **05/07/23**.

6. Policy Review

6.1   This policy will be subject of review every year.

6.2   It will only be re-presented to the Education and Standards Committee for approval in the event of any material changes. Where the review results in no material changes, the previous effective date will continue to apply, however the last review date will be specified in this section.

6.3   This policy was last reviewed on **05/07/23**.

7.   Policy Distribution

7.1   This policy will be made available via:

- The Trust Website
- School Websites
- The Compliance Library

8.   Version Control

7.1   The changes to this policy over time will be documented in line with the Policy Version. For ease of use this will be located in a separate document that can be accessed here.

7.2   If you spot any broken links or errors within this policy, please report this to dpo@patrust.org.uk.