



# Parent, Carer and Visitor Code of Conduct

*This Code of Conduct is an unsigned agreement between the Parent, Carer, Visitor and St Gabriel's CofE Academy.*

## **1.0 Principles**

The Governors of St Gabriel's CofE Academy encourage close links with families and the community. We are proud to serve our School community, showing God's love in our actions and we recognise that the education of our children is a partnership the staff, governors and families. We value the support of all members in our community but we know that there are times when we will not always agree on the best way forward for our children.

As we are made aware by the media, we see that there are occasions where members of a school community hold a negative attitude towards a school which can result in aggression and verbal or physical abuse towards other members of that community. We recognise that this is an unacceptable way of airing differences and breaks down the unity, love and common purpose we strive for.

The purpose of this code of conduct is to provide the expectations around the conduct of all parents, carers and visitors connected to our School. This code aims to clarify the types of behaviour that will not be tolerated and seeks parental agreement to these expectations. The code of conduct also sets out the actions the School can take should this code be ignored or where breaches occur.

## **2.0 Respect for Others**

The Governors expect parents, carers and visitors to the School to show respect and concern for others by:

- Supporting the ethos of our School by setting a good example in their own speech and behaviour towards all members of the School community;
- Working together with teachers for the benefit of the children. This includes approaching the School with a commitment to resolve any concerns;
- Upholding the School's policies;

- Respecting the learning environment appropriately both on and off the School site;
- Parking with consideration and respect for others when delivering and collecting children to and from School.

The Governing Body does not tolerate:

- Disruptive behaviour which interferes with the operation of the School;
- Any inappropriate behaviour on the School premises;
- Using loud and/or offensive language or displaying aggression;
- Threatening harm or the use of physical violence towards another adult or child;
- Sending abusive or threatening emails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communications (including social media) to anyone within the School community;
- Sharing defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the School or any of the pupils/parents/staff/governors at the School publically and/or by social media channels (WhatsApp, Facebook etc)
- The use of physical, verbal or written aggression towards another adult or child. This includes a parent's own child on School premises;
- Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child towards their own child;
- Wilful damage or destruction of School property;
- Smoking and/or the consumption of alcohol or other drugs anywhere on the premises;
- Accessing the School whilst intoxicated;

### **3.0 Actions following inappropriate/unacceptable behaviour taking place**

If a parent/carer or visitor behaves in an inappropriate or unacceptable way, the headteacher or appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team will seek to resolve the situation through discussion. Staff will not continue discussions if the parent/carer/visitors continue to behave in an improper manner and this will be politely made clear. The parent/carer/visitors behaving in such a manner will be asked to leave the School site.

Where all procedures have been exhausted and aggression or intimidation continue, or, where there is an act of violence or abuse, the person may be banned from the School premises for a period of time, determined by the headteacher and with the assent of the

Chair of Governors. The School remains private property and the implied license of parents to access may be legally withdrawn for a set period. If necessary, the Police will be contacted.

### **3.1 Steps following a ban**

- The parent, carer or visitor will receive written confirmation that he/she is banned from the premises, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, e.g. that an injunction may follow. This may include restrictions to other forms of communication, for example, the use of a third party;
- Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the Police will be included;
- Where appropriate, arrangements for pupils to be dropped off and collected from the School will be clarified;
- An appropriate timescale for the ban will be communicated.

### **3.2 Aggressive Behaviour towards Staff**

On the rare occasions when a negative attitude towards the School is expressed, this can sometimes result in aggression, verbal and physical abuse towards members of School staff or the wider School community. The Governing Body expects its staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to defuse the situation where possible; however, all staff have the right to work without fear of violence or abuse, and the right, in an extreme case, of appropriate self-defence.

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated may include:

- Shouting at a member of staff either in person or over the telephone
- Physically intimidating a member of staff, e.g. standing very close to him/her
- The use of aggressive hand gestures; shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- Swearing at staff
- Pushing, hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, biting or the laying on of hands
- Spitting
- Racist, sexist or other discriminatory comments
- Breaching the School's security procedures

This list is not exhaustive but provides illustrations of unacceptable behaviour.

**In any of the above situations staff will refuse to continue the conversation, remove themselves from the situation and then contact a member of the senior leadership team.**

**Action will be taken against perpetrators and may result in the Police being informed of the incident.**

#### **4.0 Social Media Use**

Many people maintain an online presence and engage in social media channels. The School has a limited social media presence and members of the School community engage in unofficial and informal channels via WhatsApp and Facebook among others.

Within these spaces and other forms of social media we ask parents/carers or visitors to use good sense when discussing School life and maintain levels of respect and privacy that would be expected for all. 'Think before you post'. We ask that social media, whether public or private, should not be used to fuel campaigns and voice complaints against the School, staff, parents or children.

We take very seriously inappropriate use of social media by a parents/carers or visitors to publicly humiliate or criticise another parent, member of staff or child.

Where there are concerns in relation to the School then the School policies and procedures should be followed, informally and then formally.

Parents, carers or visitors 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 children
- Abusive or personal comments about staff, governors, children or other parents
- Bringing the School in disrepute
- Posting defamatory or libellous comments
- Emails circulated or sent directly with abusive or personal comments about staff or children
- Using social media to publicly challenge School policies or discuss issues about individual children or members of staff
- Threatening behaviour, such as verbally intimidating staff, or using bad language
- Breaching School security procedures

In cases where online unacceptable behaviour is considered to be a serious and potentially criminal matter, the concerns will in the first instance be referred to the Police. This will include any or all cases of threats of violence to any child, 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 School'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 or visitor with an invite to a meeting.

If the parent/carer or visitor refuses to attend a meeting, then the School will write to the individual(s) 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.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

Children learn best when there is a positive partnership between home and School. We seek to build a supportive community with our pupils at the heart. Whilst every effort will be made to work with parents, carers and visitors this will only be possible where all parties behave in an acceptable way.

Where a parent, carer or visitor's behaviour is either unacceptable or serious it will impact upon the School's ability to continue working with them and, in some cases, legal action will be taken.

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