

Parent/Carer Code of Conduct

St Mary's is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects everyone to share this commitment.

At St Mary's School, we are extremely fortunate to have a supportive and friendly parent/carers body. Our parents/carers and guardians recognise that educating pupils/students effectively is a process that involves partnership between parents/carers, guardians, staff and the wider school community.

As partners, our parents/carers and guardians will understand the importance of a good working relationship to equip pupils/students with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons we continue to welcome and encourage parents/carers and guardians to participate fully in the life of our school.

The purpose of this document is to provide a reminder to all parents/carers and guardians about the expected conduct. This is so we can continue to flourish, progress and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding.

Guidance

As a school, we have clear high expectations of our pupils/students and similarly we expect excellent behaviour from our parents/carers and guardians. The following details our expectations:

- Respect and model the caring ethos of our school whenever on school premises or when communicating directly with the school.
- Grievances or concerns should be raised directly with the school in a timely manner to seek a resolution and avoid excessive negativity amongst the parent/carers and guardian body and the wider community
- Understand that school staff and parents/carers and guardians need to work together for the benefit of all
- Demonstrate that all members of the school community should be treated with tolerance and respect and, therefore, set a good example in their own speech, conduct and behaviour.
- Seek to clarify a pupil/student's version of events with the school's view in order to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue.
- Correct own pupil/student's behaviour, especially in public, where it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive behaviour or unsafe behaviour.

- Approach the right member of school staff to help resolve any issues or concern. There are clear guidelines about which staff member to contact about specific issues in our school newsletters.

In order to support a peaceful and safe school environment, the school cannot tolerate parents/carers or guardians exhibiting the following behaviour:

- Turning up to the school unannounced and expecting staff to be available.
- Demanding immediate meetings during the school day.
- Disturbing school staff and trying to speak to them whilst they are supervising students.
- Refusing to leave the premises when asked to.
- Breaching school security procedures, e.g., entering school doors without using the intercom system when another parent/carer or guardian is leaving or entering.
- Attempts to gain entry to any part of the school in disregard of procedure or without permission and appropriate supervision.
- Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of a classroom, an employee's office, general office area or any other area of the school grounds including at team matches.
- Using loud or offensive language, swearing, cursing, using profane language or displaying temper.
- Threatening to do actual bodily harm to a member of school staff, governor, visitor, fellow parent/carer, guardian or pupil/student regardless of whether the behaviour constitutes a criminal offence.
- Damaging or destroying school property.
- Abusive, persistent or threatening e-mails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communication.
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the pupils/students/parents/carers/guardians/staff, at the school or on Facebook or other social media sites or platforms. Any concerns you may have about the school must be made through the appropriate channels using the school's escalating staff hierarchy so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.
- Deliberately invented or malicious allegations against a member of school staff.
- Using any language or acting in a manner which breaches our commitment to Equality and Diversity, for example, but not exclusively, sexist, racist or homophobic comments/actions.
- The use of physical aggression towards another adult or pupil/student. This includes physical punishment against your own pupil/student on school premises.
- Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of the pupil/student towards their own child (such an approach to a pupil/student may be seen to be an assault on that pupil/student and may have legal consequences).
- Smoking, vaping, taking illegal drugs or consuming alcohol on school premises (alcohol may only be consumed during authorised events).
- Dogs on school premises (other than assistance dogs).
- Frequently flouting requests at the Senior School not to drop off or pick up children on site.

- Parking irresponsibly, in a way that might block/obscure movement on the school site or endanger children/pedestrians.

Should **any** of the above behaviour occur on, or off school premises (for a school activity, e.g., games match) the school will take actions as outlined under "breaking the code".

We trust that parents/carers and guardians will assist our school with the implementation of this code of conduct and we thank you for your continuing support of the school.

Social Media - Statement of intent

St Mary's School understands the benefits of using social media; however, if misused, the school and the school community can be negatively affected. This code of conduct sets out clear procedures for how we expect parents/carers to conduct themselves on social media and when using messenger apps, such as WhatsApp.

On social media or messaging platforms, please do not name other children or share information about them as the data/information may not be yours to share.

E-safety and social media conduct

St Mary's School expects parents/carers and guardians to behave in a civilised nature online and will not tolerate any of the following behaviour online:

- Posting defamatory 'statuses' about fellow parents/carers, guardians, pupils/students, the school or its employees.
- Complaining about the school's values and methods on social media.

The school has a Complaints Procedures Policy in place that should be used instead of parents/carers or guardians broadcasting grievances online.

Breaches of this code of conduct will be taken seriously by the school and, in the event of illegal, defamatory, or discriminatory content, breaches could lead to legal action being taken.

Parents/carers or guardians must not attempt to 'friend' or 'follow' any member of staff on social media.

Parents/carers or guardians are instructed not to post anonymously or under an alias.

St Mary's School retains the right to request any damaging material to be removed from social media websites or platforms.

Online messaging

St Mary's School parents/carers or guardians may, of their own volition, use messaging apps such as WhatsApp to communicate with one or another. The school will not intervene if disputes occur online between parents/carers or guardians. The Principal however may suggest that 'group chats' are closed down should any problems continue between parents/carers or guardians or parental bodies.

The school will intervene if it becomes aware of abusive messages being sent about members of staff within the school or if abusive messages are sent to members of staff. If this occurs, legal advice will be taken by the school and St Mary's will respond accordingly.

Breaking the Code

Without prejudice to the rights the School has under the Parent Contract, in the first instance as a result of a breach of the Code of Conduct, the school will invite the parent/carer or guardian to a meeting to try and resolve the issue. If the parent/carer or guardian refuses to attend the meeting, then the school will write to the parent/carer or guardian and ask them to stop the behaviour, advising that failure to do so could result in a ban from the school premises.

For certain breaches of the Code of Conduct, an incident may be referred onto appropriate external bodies (such as the police).

Please note that in more serious cases more decisive action may need to be taken, where there is not sufficient time, or it would be inappropriate to hold a meeting before action is taken. Site bans will normally be limited in the first instance or may be a temporary measure whilst further investigations are undertaken and are done as a neutral act.

This code of conduct does not prevent parents/carers or guardians from raising a complaint. In most cases, we hope that all complaints and concerns can be resolved through open dialogue with teachers or other members of staff as appropriate. Where parents/carers or guardians are not satisfied with the responses they receive, they may then follow the Complaints Procedure as laid out in our School Complaints Policy. This is available on the school's website.

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