

Parents and Visitors Code of Conduct



Our Mission

'At SS John and Monica's we learn through the example of Jesus to love, respect, understand and value each other'

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1. Purpose and scope

At SS John and Monica School we are very fortunate to have a supportive and friendly parent body. Our parents recognise that educating children is a process that involves partnership between parents, class teachers and the school community. As a partnership, our parents will understand the importance of a good working relationship to equip children with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons we continue to welcome and encourage parents/carers to participate fully in the life of our school.

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

At SS John and Monica, we believe it's important to:

- Work in partnership with parents to support their child's learning rooted in our school mission to learn from the example of Jesus to Love, respect, understand and value each other
- Create a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for pupils, staff and parents
- Model appropriate behaviour for our pupils at all times

To help us do this, we set clear expectations and guidelines on behaviour for all members of our community. This includes staff (through the staff code of conduct) and pupils (through our behaviour policy).

This code of conduct aims to help the school work together with parents by setting guidelines on appropriate behaviour.

We use the term 'parents' to refer to:

- Anyone with parental responsibility for a pupil
- Anyone caring for a child (such as grandparents or child-minders)

2. Our expectations of parents and carers

We expect parents, carers and other visitors to:

- Respect the caring ethos, vision and Catholic values of our school
- Understand that both teachers and parents need to work together for the benefit of their children.
- Treat all members of the school community with respect – setting a good example with speech and behaviour
- Seek to clarify a child's version of events with the school's view in order to work in collaboration with the school to resolve any issue.
- Seek a peaceful solution to all issues
- Correct their own child's behaviour (or those in their care), particularly in public, where it could lead to conflict, aggression or unsafe conduct
- Approach the right member of school staff to help resolve any issues of concern
- Avoid using staff as threats to admonish children's behaviour
- To be reasonable when making a complaint and not vexatious and or harassing

- Ensure that all communication with school, whether it be verbal or written communication, is reasonable and appropriate, i.e. Not aggressive, offensive or derogatory

3. In order to support a peaceful and safe school environment the school cannot tolerate parents, carers and visitors exhibiting the following:

- Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of a classroom, an employee's office, office area or any other area of the school grounds including team matches.
- Using loud/or offensive language, swearing, cursing, using profane language, displaying temper or verbally aggressive behaviour or shouting at members of staff, pupils or other parents
- Threatening another member of the school community including threatening to do actual bodily harm to a member of school staff, Governor, visitor, fellow parent/carer or pupil regardless of whether or not the behaviour constitutes a criminal offence
- Sending abusive messages to another member of the school community, including via text, email or social media. This include messages and emails which are:
 - Sarcastic
 - Aggressive in tone
 - Deemed to be considered rude and hurtful
 - Inconsiderate and unreasonable
 - Offensive
 - Untruthful
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the pupils/parent/staff, at the school on Facebook, What's App or other social sites. (See Appendix 1). Any concerns you may have about the school must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, Phase Leaders, the Head teacher or the Chair of Governors, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.
- The use of physical aggression towards another adult or child. This includes physical punishment against your own child on school premises.
- Any aggressive behaviour (including verbally or in writing) towards another child or adult
- Disciplining another person's child – please bring any behaviour incidents to a member of staff's attention
- Smoking or drinking alcohol on the school premises
- Possessing or taking drugs (including legal highs)
- Bringing dogs onto the school premises (other than guide dogs)

4. Breaching the code of conduct

If the school suspects, or becomes aware, that a parent has breached the code of conduct in **any** way, the school will gather information from those involved and speak to the parent about the incident.

Depending on the nature of the incident, the school may then:

- Send a warning letter to the parent
- Invite the parent in to school to meet with a senior member of staff or the head teacher
- Contact the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour)

- Seek advice from the local authority's legal team regarding further action (in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous)
- Ban the parent from the school site
- In dealing with parents who persistently breach this code of conduct the school will follow the procedures and steps outlined below

As always the school will always respond to an incident in a proportional way. The final decision for how to respond to breaches of the code of conduct rests with the head teacher.

4.1 Multiple breaches of this code of conduct

In the event of multiple breaches of the code of conduct, the school will follow these steps:

Step 1 – Verbal warning

- The Head teacher or appropriate member of Senior Leadership Team will speak to the parents involved. It will be put to them that such behaviour is unacceptable and an assurance will be sought that such an incident will not be repeated. It will be stressed on this occasion that repetition of such an incident will result in further more serious action being taken. Please note that depending on severity of the breach and subsequent behavior it is under the discretion of the head teacher to decide if the breach requires a written warning (step 2)

If the Head teacher has been subject to abuse this may be done by the Chair of Governors (or other appointed independent governor, if the Chair is involved in the incident in any way).

NB: Any incidents of violent conduct would immediately proceed to **Step 5**.

Step 2 – Written warning

- If a second incident occurs involving the same person or persons, the Head teacher will write to the adult(s) informing them once again that this conduct is unacceptable. As for Step 1, if the Head teacher has been subject to abuse this may be done by the Chair or other appointed governor. (Model letter 1)
- At any stage, the school may report serious incidents of abusive and threatening behaviour to the Local Authority or the Police. The school has a responsibility to ensure that any act of actual or threatened violence is referred to the police immediately.

Step 3 – Final written warning

- If a third incident occurs involving the same person or persons, the Chair or other appointed independent governor, will write to the adult(s) giving a final warning that this abusive and threatening behaviour is unacceptable, and that a repetition of this conduct will leave the governors no option but to take further action. (model letter 2)

Exclusion from School Premises

- If such an incident recurs, or if an initial incident is considered serious enough by the Head teacher, the Chair of Governors (or other appointed governor) would be involved to enforce any action deemed necessary. This may result in a person or persons being excluded from school premises. In the event of exclusion from the school site parents will be informed via model letter 3

The Head teacher / Governing Body may contact the Local Authority and seek legal advice before issuing a letter banning an individual from the premises.

Step 5 – Involvement of the police

- If following a decision to ban a person from the school premises, that person nevertheless persists in entering school premises and is displaying unreasonable behaviour, such a person may be removed from the school premises as a trespasser under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 and charged with an offence under the Public Order Act 1986.

All parents, even if excluded from school premises, have a right to be updated about their child's educational progress.

Other members of the public have no right of access to the school premises. In the case of an incident involving another member of the public steps 1 and 2 as above will be followed. At step 3 the Head teacher will write again and at step 4 the Head teacher will send the banning letter.

5 Parental Complaints

Any parental complaints must follow the procedures set out in the complaints policy which can be found on the school website.

As a school we aim to uphold the standards of courtesy and reasonableness that should characterise all communication between the school and persons who wish to express a concern or pursue a complaint; support the well-being of children, staff and everyone else who has legitimate interest in the work of the school, including governors and parents; deal fairly, honestly, openly and transparently with those who make complaints ensuring that other stakeholders suffer no detriment.

5.1 Parents expectations of the school when a complaint is made

Parents/carers/members of the public who raise either informal concerns or formal complaints with the school can expect the school to:

- 1) Regularly communicate to parents/carers in writing:
 - how and when problems can be raised with the school;
 - the existence of the school's complaints procedure,
- 2) Respond within a reasonable time;
- 3) Be available for consultation within reasonable time limits bearing in mind the needs of the pupils within the school and the nature of the complaint;
- 4) Respond with courtesy and respect;
- 5) Attempt to resolve problems using reasonable means in line with the school's complaints procedure, other policies and practice and in line with advice from the Local Authority (LA) keep complainants informed of progress towards a resolution of the issues raised.

5.2 Persistent or vexatious complaints/harassment

The majority of complaints are handled in an informal manner and are resolved quickly, sensitively and to the satisfaction of the complainant.

However, there are occasions when complainants behave in an unreasonable manner when raising and/or pursuing concerns. The consequences are that the actions of the complainants begin to impact negatively on the day-to-day running of the school and directly or indirectly the overall well-being of the children or staff in the school. In these exceptional circumstances the school may take action in accordance with this policy.

5.3 Who is a persistent complainant?

For the purpose of this policy, a persistent complainant is a parent/carer or member of the public who complains about issues, either formally or informally, or frequently raises issues that the

complainant considers to be within the remit of the school, and whose behaviour is unreasonable. Such behaviour may be characterised by:

- a) actions which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious;
- b) prolific correspondence or excessive e-mail or telephone contact about a concern or complaint;
- c) uses Freedom of Information requests excessively and unreasonably
- d) an insistence upon pursuing unsubstantial complaints and/or unrealistic or unreasonable outcomes;
- e) an insistence upon pursuing complaints in an unreasonable manner;
- f) an insistence on only dealing with the Head teacher on all occasions irrespective of the issue and the level of delegation in the school to deal with such matters;
- g) an insistence upon repeatedly pursuing a complaint when the outcome is not satisfactory to the complainant but cannot be changed, for example, if the desired outcome is beyond the remit of the school because it is unlawful.

5.4 Harassment

For the purpose of this policy, harassment is the unreasonable pursuit of such actions as in (a) to (g) above in such a way that they:

- a) appear to be targeted over a significant period of time on one or more members of school staff and/or
- b) cause ongoing distress to individual member(s) of school staff and/or
- c) have a significant adverse effect on the whole/parts of the school community and/or
- d) are pursued in a manner which can be perceived as intimidating and oppressive by the recipient. This could include situations where persistent demands and criticisms, whilst not particularly taxing or serious when viewed in isolation, have a cumulative effect over time of undermining confidence, well-being and health.

5.5 The school's actions in cases of persistent or vexatious complaints or harassment

5.1 In the first instance the school will verbally inform the complainant that his / her behaviour is considered to be becoming unreasonable / unacceptable and, if it is not modified, action may be taken in accordance with this policy (step 1)

5.2 This will be confirmed in writing (model letter 1)

5.3 If the behaviour is not modified the school will take some or all of the following actions as necessary, having regard to the nature of the complainant's behaviour and the effect of this on the school community:

- a) inform the complainant in writing that his/her behaviour is now considered by the school to be unreasonable/unacceptable and, therefore, to fall under the terms of this policy. Consequently, restrictions upon communication with the school will be enforced (see Model Letter 2 /step 3 –final warning);
- b) inform the complainant that all meetings with a member of staff will be conducted with a second person present and that notes of meetings may be taken in the interests of all parties (see Model Letter 2);
- c) inform the complainant that, except in emergencies, all routine communication with the complainant to the school should be by letter only (see Model Letter 2);

d) (in the case of physical, or verbal aggression) take advice from LA HR / Legal Services (services purchased by the Governing Body) and consider warning the complainant about being banned from the school site; or proceed straight to a temporary ban as per 'Exclusion from School Premises' in dealing with multiple breaches of the code of conduct above

e) consider taking advice from the LA on pursuing a case under Anti-Harassment legislation;

f) consider taking advice from the HR / Legal Services of the LA about putting in place a specific procedure for dealing with complaints from the complainant, i.e. the complainant will not be able to deal directly with the Head teacher but only with a third person to be identified by the governing body of the school, who will investigate, determine whether or not the concern / complaint is reasonable or vexatious and then advise the Head teacher accordingly.

**Approved by:
Governors**

Date: 18.9.20

Last reviewed on: September 2020

Next review due by: September 2022

Appendix 1

Inappropriate use of Social Network Site

Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, Head teachers, school staff, and in some cases other parents/pupils.

The Governors of SS John & Monica's School considers the use of social media websites being used in this way as unacceptable and not in the best interests of the children or the whole school community.

Any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, the Phase Leader, the Head teacher or the Chair of Governors, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

In the event that any pupil or parent/carer of a child/ren being educated in the school is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other social network sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site.

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. The school will also expect that any parent/carer or pupil removes such comments immediately.

In serious cases the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly is the issue of cyber bullying and the use by one child or a parent to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social network entry. We will take and deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying. Thankfully such incidents are extremely rare.

We would expect that parents would make all persons responsible for collecting children aware of this policy.

Appendix 2 Model Letters

MODEL LETTER 1: INITIAL LETTER INFORMING A PARENT THAT HIS/HER BEHAVIOUR IS CONSIDERED TO FALL BELOW A REASONABLE/ ACCEPTABLE STANDARD VIA RECORDED DELIVERY

Dear Parent

This letter is to inform you that the school considers your actions on when you [describe actions, dates, behaviour] to be unreasonable/unacceptable [delete as appropriate].

We would ask you to bear in mind that this is the second time you have breached the Parental Code of conduct following your previous warning (delete if moving straight to warning letter) the fact is that such behaviour on a school site can be disruptive and distressing to pupils, staff and parents/carers [delete if behaviour complained of did not occur on school site e.g. persistent use of e-mail, verbally abusive telephone calls].

Please note that the School's Parent Code of Conduct which sets out standards of behaviour expected of all people in their dealings with the School. These include:

- Respect the caring ethos, vision and Catholic values of our school
- Understand that both teachers and parents need to work together for the benefit of their children.
- Treat all members of the school community with respect – setting a good example with speech and behaviour
- Seek to clarify a child's version of events with the school's view in order to work in collaboration with the school to resolve any issue.
- Seek a peaceful solution to all issues
- Correct their own child's behaviour (or those in their care), particularly in public, where it could lead to conflict, aggression or unsafe conduct
- Approach the right member of school staff to help resolve any issues of concern
- Avoid using staff as threats to admonish children's behaviour
- To be reasonable when making a complaint and not vexatious and or harassing
- To ensure that all communication with school, whether it be verbal or written communication, is reasonable and appropriate, i.e. Not aggressive, offensive or derogatory

The Policy also indicates the steps that we may take if these standards are breached again. These include:

- making special arrangements for meetings and communication with the school;
- considering a ban from the school premises;
- considering legal action.

If the code of conduct is breached again, we will follow the next step as outlined by our code of conduct policy.

We do hope that we can work together to resolve this issue.

Yours sincerely

Head teacher/Chair of Governors (Delete as appropriate)

MODEL LETTER 2: INFORMING A PARENT/CARER THAT HIS/HER REPEATED AND CONTINUOUS BEHAVIOUR CONTINUES TO FALL UNDER THE TERMS OF THE POLICY FOR DEALING WITH PERSISTENT BREACHES OF THE PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Dear Parent,

You will recall that I wrote to you on [insert date] telling you that I felt your behaviour was unreasonable. I am now writing to inform you that in view of your behaviour on [date], when you [describe actions/behaviour] it has now been decided that because of your repeated infringements in breaching the of the Parent Code of Conduct policy the next steps will now be taken.

In the circumstances I have made the following arrangements for your future contact with the school for the foreseeable future, should you wish to meet with any member of staff, I would ask you to note:

- (a) all routine communication, including any request for a meeting between you and the school, will be by letter only. Letters from you need to be addressed to at the school address; email correspondence will not be responded to;
- (b) an appointment will be arranged and confirmed in writing as soon as possible;
- (b) a third party from the school will be present;
- (c) in the interests of all parties, formal notes of this meeting may be made.

Exceptionally, these arrangements do not apply to any emergency involving [insert name of pupil] – in which case you should contact the school in the usual way. While these arrangements are in place, with respect to normal access to information available on parents' evenings, this will be provided in a termly report.

These arrangements take effect straightaway. If you wish to make a representation about the contents of this letter, which may include any expressions of regret on your part and any assurances that you are prepared to give about your future good conduct, you can do so by writing to me at the school by [state ten working days from the date of the letter]. If on receipt of your comments I consider that the arrangements outlined above should continue, you will be supplied with details of how to review a circumstance of your case.

I do hope that the difficulties we are currently experiencing can soon be resolved.

Yours sincerely

Head teacher/Chair of Governors (Delete as appropriate)

MODEL LETTER 3; LETTER FROM GOVERNING BODY BANNING PARENT FROM SCHOOL SITE

Dear [parent name],

I am writing to inform you that, after consultation with the Head teacher as the chair of governors, I am banning you from the school site until [date]. This is as a result of the following incidence:

[Include details of the incidents, including dates, locations and effects on staff/pupils/other parents for every relevant incident.

Despite previous correspondence and conversations about your conduct, there have been further breaches of our parent code of conduct.

If you do not comply with the ban, we will contact the relevant authorities and arrange for you to be removed from the grounds 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.

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. While the ban is in place, you will have to make arrangements for your son/daughter to be collected from school.

The withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises takes effect straightaway until further notice

I wish to give you an opportunity to give me in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to this letter / the report which I have received from the head teacher. These comments may include any expressions of regret on your part and any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct.

If you would like to raise a complaint, you can do so using the school's complaints procedures, which are available on our website.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors