

## University of Chichester Academy Trust

### Parental and Visitor Code of Conduct

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### Purpose:

This Code of Conduct sets out the expectations for parents, carers, and visitors to ensure a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all members of our school community.

The University of Chichester Academy Trust actively encourages close links with parents/carers and the community. We believe that pupils benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one.

We welcome visitors to our schools and will act to ensure it remains a safe place for pupils, staff and all other members of our community. If a parent/carer or visitor has concerns, we will always listen to them and seek to address them. However, abusive, threatening, or violent behaviour will not be tolerated. If such behaviour occurs, we will follow the procedures outlined in Appendix A of this policy.

We expect parents, carers and visitors to:

#### 1. Behave with Respect and Courtesy

Treat all staff, pupils, and other parents with respect at all times. Use appropriate language and tone in all communications, including face-to-face, telephone, email, and social media. Avoid aggressive, abusive, or threatening behavior.

#### 2. Work in Partnership with the School

Support the school's values, policies, and procedures. Work collaboratively with staff to resolve concerns through the proper channels. Attend meetings and events punctually and engage positively.

#### 3. Communicate clearly

Direct any concerns or complaints through the University of Chichester Academy Trust's official complaints procedure. Do not discuss school issues or staff on social media or in public forums. Maintain confidentiality regarding other pupils and families.

#### 4. Be Safe

Follow all safeguarding procedures when visiting the school. Do not enter restricted areas without permission. Ensure children arrive on time and are collected promptly.

## 5. Role Model

Demonstrate positive behavior and attitudes for pupils to emulate. Promote tolerance, diversity, and inclusion in all interactions.

## 6. Accept Zero Tolerance for Abuse

Physical or verbal abuse towards staff, pupils, other parents, or visitors will not be tolerated. Breaches may result in restricted access to the school premises or legal action.

## Acknowledgment

By engaging with the school, parents/carers and visitors agree to uphold this Code of Conduct and contribute to a safe and respectful learning environment.

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

## Reasonable Adjustments

The Trust will make reasonable adjustments in communication and procedures where appropriate.

This procedure is supported by the following Trust & school policies and procedures:

- Complaints Policy
- Barring from school premises
- Safeguarding Policy

The following national Department for Education guidance informs this policy and procedure:

- [Best practice guidance for academies complaints procedures](#)
- [Controlling access to school premises](#)
- [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#)

## Appendix A - Inappropriate Use of Social Networking Sites

The Trust is committed to resolving issues constructively and without the use of social media. Our families thrive with a strong school & parent relationship which directly benefits the outcomes for our children and young people in our family of schools.

Social media restrictions are concerned with safeguarding and fairness; the Complaints Policy should be used for raising any concerns. Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, Headteachers, school staff, and in some cases other parents or pupils. The University of Chichester Academy Trust considers the use of social media websites to be used in this way unacceptable.

Defamatory, offensive, or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the pupils/parent/staff at the school should not be aired on social media. Any concerns about the school must be made through the appropriate channels, for example by using the Trust's Complaints Policy, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately, and effectively for all concerned.

In the event that visitor or parent/carer of a child/ren being educated in a Trust school is found to be posting libelous or defamatory comments on any social network site, 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 their site, and they provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity which breaches this. The school will also expect that any parent/carer removes such comments/ material immediately.

In serious cases, the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites. This includes 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.

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

## Appendix B - procedure for dealing with a breach of this code of conduct

All members of the school community (staff, pupils, parent/carers, and visitors) have a right to expect that their school is a safe place in which to work and learn. Most parents, carers and others visiting our school are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school.

From time to time, it is necessary for parents/carers and the school to deal with problems relating to pupils. It is important that discussions between parents/carers and staff are conducted in a calm and respectful manner.

On the rare occasion where there is a breach of this code of conduct and unacceptable behaviour is directed at school staff or members of the school community, the school will need to act to ensure it remains a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of that community (Appendix C).

The University of Chichester Academy Trust expects and requires its members of staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and to attempt to defuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues.

There is no place for aggression, physical or verbal abuse in our schools. This type of behaviour towards school staff or other members of the school community, including other parents/carers, students and visitors, will not be tolerated. Any incidents will be recorded for transparency and accountability.

Types of behaviour considered serious and unacceptable and which will not be tolerated are:

### Verbal Abuse and Harassment

- Shouting, either in person or over the telephone
- Swearing, either in person or over the telephone
- Constant emails and/or phone calls which amount to harassment and intimidation, despite the school's best efforts to address a situation

### Online/Electronic Misconduct

- Inappropriate electronic activity including publishing abusive or inappropriate content with regards to the school, teachers or pupils on social networking websites such as Facebook, X and WhatsApp or in email communication (see appendix A)

### Physical Aggression and Intimidation

- Hitting, slapping, punching, kicking or pushing
- Physical intimidation, e.g. standing unnecessarily close to her/him
- The use of rude or aggressive hand gestures, including shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- Spitting
- Use of physical punishment against your child while on school premises
- Disciplining another person's child – please bring any behaviour incidents to a member of staff's attention

### Safety and Security Breaches

- Breaching the school's security procedures
- Actions intended to be vexatious or malicious

### Prohibited Items & Substances

- Smoking or drinking alcohol on the school premises (unless alcohol has been allowed at a specific event)
- Possessing or taking drugs (including legal highs)

### Other unacceptable behaviour

- Bringing dogs onto the school premises (other than guide dogs)
- Coming on site on electric scooters

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour. Whilst such behaviour is unacceptable in all circumstances, the school is particularly concerned to protect its students from being exposed to such behaviour (whether or not directed at them).

## Appendix C – Barring from school premises

If an individual's behaviour is a cause for concern and the parent has breached the Code of Conduct, a headteacher can ask them to leave the premises.

The procedure to be followed is outlined below:

### **Informal – discuss and modify behaviours**

If a parent/carer/visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the Headteacher and/or appropriate senior staff will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If the inappropriate behaviour is directed towards the Headteacher, the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, or another person they nominate, will support the resolution of the situation.

This informal discussion will highlight how the behaviour of the parent/carer did not meet the school's expectations and a request will be made that future communications with the school are modified in the light of this.

The parent/carer will be given the opportunity to make a representation in this discussion in relation to their breach of the code of conduct.

A letter will normally be sent to the parent/carer to confirm this request.

### **Formal – bar from the school premises**

Although fulfilling a public function, academies are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Schools will therefore need to act to ensure they remain a safe place for pupils, staff, and other members of their community.

#### Investigation

The Headteacher will investigate and decide if and what measures should be taken. If the inappropriate behaviour is directed towards the Headteacher, the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, or another person they nominate, will investigate, and decide if and what measures should be taken.

During the investigation, any contact with the school will be through a designated member of staff and by prior appointment only. The parent/carer will be informed of this by letter or email.

The parent/carer will be given the opportunity to make a representation in this discussion in relation to the investigation.

### Actions that could follow an investigation

Head teachers may use their discretion to act in the best interests of the school, its staff, and any affected children. Actions that would follow an investigation include:

- A request to meet with the Headteacher to discuss events
- A letter clarifying to the parent/carer what is considered acceptable behaviour by the school
- The designation of one member of staff to act as the conduit for communication between the parent/carer and the school

Where the circumstances indicate that the inappropriate behaviour will continue, escalate or lead to unacceptable consequences, the Headteacher after consultation with the Trust's Executive Team, who may take legal advice, may bar the parent/carer or visitor from the school premises.

### Decision to bar a parent/carer from school premises

When a ban is imposed, the person concerned will be informed, in writing and the following information will be provided:

- Details about why the ban was imposed and the review period
- As necessary, arrangements for meetings at school and arrangements for students being delivered to and collected from the school will be clarified.

The individual will be given the opportunity to express formally their views on the decision to bar them from site. At this point, the school can decide whether to continue with barring them.

The Headteacher will seek approval from the Deputy CEO (or a member of the Executive Team in their absence) for the ban to be applied when necessary. The Chair of the local governing body, the Chair of the Trust and the CEO will be informed accordingly.

The Department for Education does not get involved in individual cases.

### Removing individuals from school premises

To have committed a criminal offence, an abusive individual must have been barred from the premises or have exceeded their 'implied license', then also have caused a nuisance or disturbance.

If a school has reasonable grounds to suspect that someone has committed an offence, they can be removed from the school by a police officer or person authorised by the appropriate authority (governing body, proprietor of that school).



### **Complaints raised by staff**

A member of staff does retain the right to submit a formal complaint about any concerning incident to the Headteacher. If a member of staff believes that there is a real and personal threat, they should report this to the police and seek further support from their Senior Leadership Team. If the threat is against the Headteacher, further support should be sought from the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, or another person they nominate.