



## Parents'<sup>1</sup> and Visitors' Code of Conduct

At Highworth Combined School we are very proud and fortunate to have a very dedicated and supportive school community. At our school the staff, governors and parents alike, all recognise that the education of our children is a partnership between all parties.

As a partnership we recognise the importance of solid working relationships to equip all of our children with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons we will continue to welcome and encourage parents to participate fully in the life of our school.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a reminder to all parents and visitors to Highworth School about the expectations around the conduct of all parents and visitors connected to our school.

We understand that everyday frustrations can cause misunderstandings and have a negative impact on our relationships. We believe it is essential that we all remain committed to resolving difficulties in a constructive manner through open, positive dialogue.

Our school already has a Code of Conduct for all our staff and volunteers. This Code for Parents is aimed at the wider school community so that we all share a common expectation and understanding over behaviour. Whilst we appreciate that incidents are extremely rare, we feel it is important to make clear the types of behaviour that we may find unacceptable and what action we might take in response.

### **Behaviour that will not be tolerated:**

- Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with any of the school's normal operation or activities anywhere on the school premises.
- Any inappropriate behaviour on the school premises.
- Using loud or offensive language.
- Threatening a member of staff, visitor, fellow parent or student.
- Damaging or destroying school property.
- Sending abusive or threatening emails, text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communications (including via social media) to anyone within the school community.
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the students/parents/staff/governors at the school on social media (See Appendix 1 for more details).
- The use of physical, verbal or written aggression towards another adult or child (This includes physical punishment of a parent's own child on school premises).
- Any language or actions which breach our commitment to Equality and Diversity, for example, but not exclusively, sexist, racist or homophobic comments/actions.
- 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 when in a working role).
- Putting pupils and families at risk by persistently parking in a dangerous manner

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<sup>1</sup> For ease of read, the term "parent" has been used throughout the document, to include parents, legal guardians and full-time carers.

Should **any** of the above occur on school premises, or in connection with school the school may take legal advice and consider banning the offending adult from entering the school premises altogether.

## **What happens if someone ignores or breaks the Code?**

In the event of any parent or visitor breaking this Code, then proportionate actions will be taken as follows:

In cases where the unacceptable behaviour is considered to be a serious and potentially criminal matter, the concerns will be referred to the Police. This will include any harassment<sup>2</sup>, threats of violence and actual violence to any child, staff or governor at the school.

In cases where evidence suggests that behaviour would be tantamount to libel or slander, then the school will refer the matter to its solicitor for further action.

In cases where the Code of Conduct has been broken but the breach was not libellous, slanderous or a criminal matter, then the school will invite the parent to a meeting to try to resolve the issue. If the parent refuses to attend the meeting then the school will write to the parent and ask them to stop the behaviour, advising that failure to do so could result in a ban from the school premises<sup>3</sup>.

## **Complaints**

This Code of Conduct does not prevent parents from raising a legitimate 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 are not satisfied with responses that 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 or hard copy from the school office.

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<sup>2</sup> This could take the form of insulting social media postings or any form of social media cyber bullying.

<sup>3</sup> In more serious cases, a ban may be introduced without having to go through all of the above steps. Site bans will normally be of limited duration in the first instance.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Issues of conduct with the use of Social Media**

#### **Think before you post**

We ask that social media, whether public or private, is not used to voice negative views about the school, school staff, parents or students.

We take inappropriate use of social media by a parent to publicly humiliate or criticise another parent, student or member of staff very seriously and will take action when appropriate.

If parents have any concerns about their children in relation to the school they should:

1. Initially contact the child's teacher
2. If the concern remains they should contact the Head of Year
3. If the concern remains they should contact the Headteacher
4. If still unresolved, contact the school governors through the Complaints Procedure

#### **Online activity which we consider inappropriate:**

- Identifying or posting images/videos of students
- Abusive or personal comments about staff, students or other parents
- Bringing the school into disrepute
- Posting defamatory or libellous comments
- Emails circulated, or sent directly, with abusive or personal comments about staff or students
- Using social media to publicly challenge school policies
- Using social media to discuss issues about individual children
- Threatening behaviour, such as verbally intimidating staff, or using bad language
- Breaching school security procedures

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

Written May 2018

Reviewed May 2019

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