

Code of Conduct (Parent)

Appleford School is most fortunate in being able to work with some exceptional children and highly supportive parents. Together we create a positive and uplifting environment not only for the children but also for all who work and visit our school.

The main aim of school social media policies is to keep everyone within the school safe and within the law and, in the vast majority of cases, the need to clarify appropriate parental behaviour is not necessary. However, it is sadly true that, in an age of social media and multiple means by which to communicate, there are occasions when appropriate behaviour is not maintained.

Therefore, because of the growing popularity of social media and the corresponding increase in potential issues surrounding its use, we have joined with a large number of schools who now set out their guidelines in a separate written policy.

We do accept that there will be times when a parent may wish to challenge the school or lodge a complaint and it is for this reason that we have established policies and protocols which are freely available on our website.

However, there are also times when parents may opt to voice their concerns via different channels. It is the intention of this policy to identify and reinforce those behaviours which the school deems acceptable and to set out the School's expectations and response should such not be adopted.

Just as we have a Code of Conduct for our staff and pupils, as a condition of their place within the school community, it is equally necessary that we have similar expectations of our parent body.

It is not the School's intention to restrict or limit the parental voice nor preclude any parent from highlighting any valid concern. We simply ask that appropriate channels are used to action this and that parents act with the same level of courtesy and respect as other stakeholders in the school.

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 or displaying temper.
- Threatening in any way, a member of staff, visitor, fellow parent/carer or pupil.
- Damaging or destroying school property.
- Sending abusive or threatening emails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communications (including social media) to anyone within the school community.
- Making false, defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the pupils/parents/staff at the school on social media or other sites.
- The use of physical, verbal or written aggression towards another adult or child. This includes physical punishment of your 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. (Such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and may have legal consequences).
- Smoking, taking illegal drugs or the consumption of alcohol on school premises. (Alcohol may only be consumed during authorised events).

Should any of the above occur on school premises or in connection with school, the school may feel it is necessary to act by contacting the appropriate authorities and/or, sadly, consider banning the offending adult from entering the school premises altogether. In certain exceptional circumstances which may constitute a fundamental breach of this policy or the Home/School Agreement, we reserve the right to end the pupil's place at the school *following due liaison and communication with the parent and/or Local Authority*.

What happens if someone ignores or breaks the code?

In the event of any parent/carer or visitor of the school 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, in the first instance, be referred to the police. This will include any or all cases of threats or violence and actual 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 the Code of Conduct has been broken but the breach was not libellous, slanderous or a criminal matter, then the school will send out a formal letter to the parent/carer with an invitation to a meeting. If the parent/carer refuses to attend the meeting then the school will write to the parent/carer and ask them to stop the behaviour causing the concern, and warn that if they do not further action will be taken.

Issues of conduct with the use of Social Media

Most people take part in online activities and social media. It's fun, interesting and keeps us connected.

There are various online school groups managed by parents for parents, such as school Facebook pages and WhatsApp groups, and they can be a wonderful source of knowledge, support and advice. We encourage you to join in and positively participate if you wish.

Within these spaces, however, we ask that you use common sense when discussing school life online. Think before you post. We ask that social media, whether public or private, should not be used to fuel campaigns, make false or misleading comments and voice complaints against the school, school staff, parents or pupils.

We take very seriously inappropriate use of social media by a parent to publicly humiliate or criticise another parent, pupil or member of staff. **It must be remembered that a number of parents are also members of staff and as such have a duty to report any breaches of school policy.** If parents have any concerns about their child in relation to the school they should:

1. Initially contact the class teacher or houseparent.

2. If the concern remains they should contact the Headmaster
3. If still unresolved, the School's complaints procedure should be enacted. This is freely available on our website. They 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 pupils or staff
- Abusive or personal comments about staff, pupils or other parents
- Bringing the school into disrepute through posting false or derogatory statements
- Posting defamatory or libellous comments
- Emails circulated or sent directly with abusive or personal comments about staff or pupils
- Using social media to publicly challenge school policies or discuss issues about individual children
- Threatening behaviour, such as verbally intimidating staff, or using bad language • Breaching school security or safeguarding procedures

Any matters relating to the school should be sent directly to the necessary staff member using school approved platforms, such as telephone, email or Class Dojo. Requests should not be made directly to members of staff using personal contact details or private social media accounts.