



# Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Visitors

Policy Type:	Safeguarding
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# Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Visitors

## 1. Introduction

We are very fortunate to have a supportive and friendly parent body in each of our schools in the JMAT. Our parents recognise that educating children is a process that involves partnership between parents, staff and the whole school community. As a partnership, our parents 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.

This document outlines the manner in which parents are expected to act whilst on school premises, as well as detailing the type of behaviour which will not be tolerated. This is so our school can continue to flourish, progress and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding.

It is also important that parents understand that teaching staff have the right to discipline children in school in accordance with education law and DfE guidance, this includes misbehaviour which occurs in school and, in some circumstances, outside of school.

This **Code of Conduct** has been written in conjunction with section 547 of the Education Act 1996 which states that school premises are private property and in case of abuse or threats to staff, pupils or other parents, school may ban parents from entering school grounds. It is also an offence for any person to cause a nuisance or disturbance on school premises. The police may be called to assist in removing the person concerned.

### We expect parents, carers and visitors to:

- Respect the caring ethos and values of our school.
- Understand that both teachers and parents need to work together for the benefit of their children.
- Demonstrate that all members of the school community should be treated with respect and therefore set a good example in their own speech and behaviour.
- Seek to clarify a child's version of events with the school's view in order to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue.
- Correct own child's behaviour especially in public where it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive behaviour or unsafe behaviour.
- Communicate with school using the appropriate means at a reasonable time, for example Dojo, email, etc.
- Approach the school to help resolve any issues or complaints, rather than raise the issue on social media.
- Ensure that school meals are paid for in advance, along with other charges for such things as breakfast clubs, after school clubs and school trips.
- Avoid using staff as threats to admonish children's behaviour.
- Respect the school environment by keeping it clean and tidy.
- Follow parking rules, as well as rules for dropping-off or collecting pupils from school.
- Support school's safeguarding measures, such as encouraging/reminding their children to hand in mobile phones, Smartwatches, etc into the school office on arrival in the morning.
- Be fully responsible for the care and well-being of their children prior to handing them over to teaching staff at the start of the school day and once teaching staff have handed them over at the end of the school day.

## 2. Attendance

Parents must:

- Ensure their child(ren) attend school every day and on time.
- Parents must ensure that they contact school by **9.30 am** on their child's first day of absence to give a reason why they are not in school. If no contact is made school will instigate first day calling procedures by:
  - Calling other numbers/people on the contact list after 09.30.

- Carry out a home visit by two staff members if no contact is made by the end of the morning session.
- Contacting the police to carry out a safe and well check if no contact is made by the afternoon session.

### **3. Paying for school meals**

Parents must pay in advance for the school lunch using the cashless system in place in the school. Children will not be provided with a school lunch unless it is paid for, except those that are entitled to free school meals.

### **4. Inappropriate behaviour**

All members of the school community have the right to expect that their school is a safe place in which they work and learn. In order to support a peaceful and safe school environment the school will not tolerate parents, carers and visitors exhibiting the following:

- Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of a classroom or any other area of the school grounds, including sporting events.
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any staff, children or other parents, at the school on Facebook or other social media sites.
- Using loud/or offensive language, swearing, cursing, using irrelevant or disrespectful language or displaying bad temper.
- Discrimination against any individual, whether a staff member, child or another adult, on the basis of their age, race, ethnicity, religion, cultural belief, attainment, disability, gender or background.
- Threatening harm to a member of school staff, governor, visitor, fellow parent/carer or child regardless of whether or not the behaviour constitutes a criminal offence.
- Bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse, will not be tolerated under any circumstances.
- The use of physical aggression towards another adult or child. This includes physical punishment against your own child on school premises.
- Damaging or destroying school property or the property of another person.
- Abusive or threatening e-mails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communication to school staff, governors, visitors, fellow parents/carers or children.
- Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child towards their own child - parents should approach a school member of staff if they wish to discuss the actions of another child.
- Smoking, vaping and consumption of alcohol or other drugs whilst on school property, or being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs whilst on school property.
- Dogs being brought onto the site, unless express permission is sought from the headteacher.

### **5. Inappropriate use of social media**

Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, Headteachers, school staff, and in some cases other parents and children. JMAT 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 headteacher or the chair of governors, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

It is expected that parents:

- Act in accordance with the school's Social Media Policy when discussing the school on social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter (X) and Instagram.
- Must not post content which is damaging to the school or any members of the school community. In the event of defamation, the school will take legal action.
- Are encouraged to use social media responsibly in order to set a positive example for pupils.
- Will not post on social media anonymously or under an alias in order to evade the guidance given in this code of conduct.

- Will not record any meetings or conversation with staff, other parents or other children without prior consent.

In the event that any child, or parent/carer of a child in school, found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other social network sites, the headteacher will report offending individuals using the appropriate 'report abuse' section on the specific social media site, and will arrange a meeting with the individuals concerned to discuss their use of social media. The individual will be advised to immediately remove any posts or comments that are harmful.

In serious cases the headteacher may contact the police where necessary. 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.

## **6. Procedure**

Should any of the above behaviour occur the school may take possible action to deal with it as follows:

- The headteacher will discuss any actions to be taken with the SLT, such as specifying how and when a parent must communicate with school in order to limit the opportunity for further poor conduct.
- Where possible the school will resolve or diffuse violent/aggressive situations through discussion with the individual/s involved.
- The headteacher may feel it necessary to issue a warning letter to the individual stating that 'repeats of such behaviour may well lead to a ban from the school and its grounds'.
- Where conflict cannot be resolved or diffused, or there is the possibility of imminent physical harm towards an individual or school property, the police will be contacted
- If necessary, the school may ban the offending adult from entering the school grounds\*

### **\*Ban from school grounds**

- The headteacher will discuss and agree with SLT/chair of governors before a ban is put in place.
- Where a ban is deemed necessary the headteacher will issue a letter the individual stating that a ban has been put in place.
- The headteacher is responsible for determining the length of the ban and the ban may be dependent on certain conditions being met, as specified by the Headteacher in the letter to parent.
- Headteachers are responsible for writing follow up letters to individuals who have been banned to confirm the end of the ban or with an update to the continuance of the ban.
- If such a ban is felt necessary the school will make suitable arrangements for the child to be met at the school gate at the start and end of the school day.
- Parents who have been banned from the school premises have a general right to receive school information in relation to their child's welfare and education progress.
- Parents who feel they have been unreasonably banned should in the first instance discuss with the school or alternatively may consider asking for the decision to be reviewed under the JMAT Complaints Policy and Procedure.

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

## **7. Monitoring and review**

This Parent/carer and Visitor Code of Conduct will be communicated to all members of the school community, including being available on the school website for parents to view. It will be reviewed on an annual basis.

## **Appendix 1**

## **Inappropriate use of social network sites**

Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, headteachers, school staff, and in some cases other parents/children. The Trustees of JMAT consider the use of social media websites being used in this way as unacceptable and not in the interests of the children or the whole school community. Any concerns you may have should be raised with the class teacher, the headteacher, the chair of the local governing body or the CEO of the JMAT, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

In the event that any child or parent/carer of a child/ren is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on 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 child removes such comments immediately.

Where members of staff receive complaints, insults or abusive comments via online sites they are responsible for reporting it to the appropriate 'report abuse' section on the website in order to get the comments removed, they are also responsible for informing senior leadership within the school as soon as possible, and if applicable taking the appropriate steps for getting the listing removed from Google.

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

## **School meals debt policy for parents / carers**

James Montgomery Academy Trust has adopted a strict **NO DEBT** policy relating to the school meal service. If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money which should be spent on the children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents / carers. Every parent / carer will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents / carers give this policy their full support.

### **Free school meals**

If parents / carers believe that their children may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals please contact Free Schools Meals Service on 01709 382121 for Rotherham, 01302 736000 for Doncaster and for Sheffield 0114 273 4567 Option 4, then option 3.

This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify. Help is available with your application either at the school office or by contacting any of the above numbers.

### **Paying for school meals**

Parents / carers must pay in advance for the school lunch using the cashless system in place in the school. Children will not be provided with a school lunch unless it is paid for, except those that are entitled to free school meals.

If a parent / carer genuinely forgets to pay in advance, this debt must be paid the next day and future meals must be paid in advanced before any meal is provided. If the debt is not cleared, parents must either provide a packed lunch or take the child home for lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, the head teacher will phone the parent / carer to ask them to come to school with the money or ask them to pay online immediately. Otherwise, they must provide sandwiches before lunch time or arrange to take their child home for lunch.

We hope that by implementing this debt policy we are able to help parents / carers manage school dinner money better and at the same time ensure that all money that is for children's learning is available.