



# Overleigh St Mary's CE Primary School

## Code of Conduct, Including, Behaviour Towards Staff By Parents, Carers and Visitors

Signed by:

08.05.2024

Head teacher

Date:

Chair of governors

Date:

20.05.2024

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## **Statement of Intent**

At Overleigh St Mary's CE Primary School, we strive to build a strong relationship with parents to help create a stimulating learning environment that continues from school to home, providing all pupils with the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

To create a welcoming and safe learning environment, the school implements a specifically designed set of rules regarding behaviour and conduct which parents are expected to act in accordance with.

All staff members have the right to work without fear of violence or abuse; therefore, physical attacks, threatening behaviour, and abusive or insulting language towards staff members, governors, visitors, pupils or other parents may result in individuals being removed from the premises.

This document outlines the manner in which parents are expected to act whilst on the school premises, as well as detailing the type of behaviour that will not be tolerated.

## **1. Legal framework**

- 1.1. This document has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:
  - Education Act 2011
  - Education Act 1996
  - Children Act 2004
- 1.2. This document has due regard to statutory and best practice guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:
  - DfE (2020) 'Keeping children safe in education'
  - DfE (2018) 'Controlling access to the school premises'
- 1.3. This document operates in conjunction with the following school policies:
  - Complaints Policy
  - Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
  - H&S Policy

## **2. Expectations**

- 2.1. Our school expects parents to:
  - Act in accordance with this code of conduct at all times.
  - Support and reflect the school's ethos and values through their behaviour.
  - Set a positive example to pupils through their behaviour and the way they interact with staff, pupils and other adults.
  - Work together with staff for the benefit of their child.
  - Treat all governors, staff members, pupils, other parents and any other individuals connected to the school with dignity and respect and without verbal or physical abuse.
  - Work with staff members to resolve any issues of concern.
  - Where appropriate, clarify their child's version of events with the school to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue.
  - Correct their child's behaviour appropriately, particularly on the school grounds where it could otherwise lead to conflict or aggressive or unsafe behaviour.

- Respect the school's property and environment by keeping it clean and tidy.
- Follow the school's parking rules and procedures for dropping-off and collecting pupils from school.
- Dress in an appropriate manner when on the school premises and attending school events.
- Ensure their dress and appearance reflects that they are role models for pupils.

### **School policies and procedures**

2.2. Parents are required to act in accordance with all relevant school policies and procedures at all times including, but not limited to, the following:

- Communication Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

### **3. Inappropriate behaviour**

3.1. The school takes instances of inappropriate behaviour very seriously and will not tolerate any circumstances that may make pupils, staff members and other members of the school community feel threatened.

3.2. Behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and which will not be tolerated in relation to members of staff, and other members of the community include but are not limited to:

- Using foul, abusive or offensive language
- Shouting and or swearing, either in person or over the telephone (Appendix 1)
- Raising voices inappropriately at another individual
- Making racist or sexual comments
- Using aggressive hand gestures, e.g. raising fists and fingers
- Discriminating against any member of the school community, including pupils, staff, governors and other parents
- Bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical, verbal and sexual abuse offline and online
- Sending abusive or threatening messages, emails or other communications to any member of the school community,

including emails that are sarcastic, combative or aggressive in tone or language. (Appendix 2)

- Constant emails and or phone calls which amount to threat, harassment and intimidation and or are vexatious and or habitual, despite the school's best efforts to address a situation (Appendix 2). See also Communication Policy.
- Trespassing on school property without prior permission or implied licence
- Causing intentional damage to school property
- Breaching the school's security procedures
- Using physical violence on the school premises or on a member of the school community, e.g. hitting, slapping, punching, kicking and pushing.
- Physically intimidating an individual e.g. by standing unnecessarily close to them.
- Partaking in unnecessary physical contact with an individual
- Writing or posting abusive, offensive or defamatory comments about an individual or the school, including on social media
- Posting content on social media that is damaging to the school's reputation
- Sending staff aggressive emails or other communications / being aggressive or threatening on the phone
- Psychologically harassing any member of the school community, including displaying vexatious behaviour which is humiliating for the individual and is damaging to their self-esteem
- Displaying disruptive or other inappropriate behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with any of the school's operations or activities
- Approaching another parent or pupil to discuss or reprimand them because of an issue between pupils
- Threatening any member of the school community in any way
- Arriving on the school premises partially clothed
- Smoking on the school premises
- Taking illegal or harmful drugs while on the school premises

- Drinking alcohol on the school premises, unless it has been authorised and supplied by the school
- Allegations that turn out to be vexatious or malicious.
- Taking photographs or videos on the school premises without permission from the school
- Recording staff or other parents / children on the school grounds without first seeking permission.
- Driving / parking unsafely within the vicinity of the school

#### **4. Managing inappropriate behaviour**

- 4.1. If a parent is behaving inappropriately, a report will be made to the headteacher, or the most senior member of staff available in their absence, who will decide on the most appropriate course of action.
- 4.2. Parents will raise concerns regarding another parent's behaviour or conduct directly with their child's class teacher or the headteacher and will not approach the parent themselves.
- 4.3. Instances of parents displaying inappropriate behaviour will be managed in a variety of ways, depending on the severity of the situation.
- 4.4. When a parent has behaved inappropriately, they will be contacted by the Headteacher or a Governor to discuss their behaviour and to attempt to resolve the issue.
- 4.5. Where this initial meeting is not sufficient to resolve the issue, the headteacher, in collaboration with other staff and relevant agencies, will consider what further action may be required. This action, depending on the situation, could include the following:
  - Barring the parent from the school premises
  - Contacting the police
  - Seeking legal redress through the courts
  - Restricting the parent's channels of communication to the school, e.g. no longer allowing the parent to send emails to a staff member directly
  - Reporting content the parent has posted online to the website's admin

- Referring the case to children's social care, where the behaviour indicates that the parent poses a risk to children or is not protecting their own children from harm
- 4.6. Any child protection and safeguarding concerns will be addressed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy.
  - 4.7. The school reserves the right to escort anyone off the premises who is displaying aggressive or disruptive behaviour.
  - 4.8. The police may be contacted to provide advice on managing an incident or to assist in the removal of an individual from the premises, where necessary.
  - 4.9. The police will be contacted where a parent is being violent or has committed assault, or where the event has caused harm to an individual.
  - 4.10. If a parent has been previously barred from the premises, or has exceeded their implied access to the premises and is causing a disturbance, the police will be contacted to remove the individual from the premises.
  - 4.11. If concerns are raised in relation to a parent's appearance or dress, personal factors will be taken into consideration, on a case-by-case basis, when addressing the concern.
  - 4.12. If a parent persistently displays unacceptable and inappropriate behaviour, this may result in them being barred from the school premises, in line with section 5 of this policy.

## **5. Barring from the school premises**

- 5.1. The school has the right to bar a parent from the premises to keep the school community safe.
- 5.2. If a parent is displaying inappropriate or concerning behaviour, they will be asked to leave the school premises.
- 5.3. Behaviour that could result in a parent being asked to leave the premises includes aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language that is a risk to staff or pupils, or behaviour that is making staff or pupils feel threatened.
- 5.4. If a parent persistently or consistently behaves inappropriately on the school site, or there is a one-off incident of extremely



inappropriate behaviour, the school reserves the right to bar this individual from the school site.

5.5. The school will either:

- Bar the parent temporarily, until the parent has had the opportunity to formally present their side.
- Inform the parent that they intend to bar them and invite them to present their side.

5.6. The headteacher will send a letter to the parent, informing them of the following information:

- Why they have been temporarily barred or face a bar
- The nature of the bar, i.e. if they are temporarily barred pending their representation or if they must present their side before the decision to bar can be made
- That they have the right to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing to the chair of governors within 10 working days

5.7. The chair of governors will take account of any representations made by the parent and decide whether to confirm or lift the bar.

5.8. The parent will be notified in writing of the decision to uphold or lift the bar.

5.9. If the decision is confirmed, the parent will be notified in writing, explaining:

- How long the bar will be in place.
- When the decision will be reviewed.

5.10. Decisions to bar will be reviewed at the end of the agreed timescale, in line with the process outlined above.

5.11. Following a review, the bar may be lifted or, if there are grounds for continued concern regarding the parent's conduct, it may be extended.

5.12. Once the appeal process has been completed, parents that remain barred may be able to apply to the Civil Courts. If a parent wishes to exercise this option, they should seek independent legal advice.

## **6. Monitoring and review**

6.1. This document will be reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher and any changes made will be communicated to all parents and staff at the school.

## APPENDIX 1

Acceptable Communication by Telephone Sometimes staff may have to deal with challenging, abusive, aggressive or threatening telephone calls.

It is unacceptable for any member of staff to be subjected to such abuse and this guidance has been produced to assist parents to understand conduct, which the school expects parents to follow during phone calls and to staff if they are faced with a difficult situation.

### Guidance for parents/carers

- When you call a School you will speak initially to our Administrative staff. They will do their very best to connect you with the person you wish to speak to, but given the vast majority of our staff are class based, it is most likely that they will take a message or if possible offer an alternative contact who is available.
- Please do not become frustrated with the Administrative staff if they cannot attain an answer to your concern or connect you to the person you wish to speak to straight away; this is not their fault and any frustrations vented at this time, will not serve to ensure your issue is dealt with any quicker
- At any time when speaking to a member of staff at school please do not raise your voice or use aggressive or threatening language

### Guidance to staff

- To reduce the likelihood of callers becoming abusive, staff should conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner and make every attempt to meet the needs of the caller.
- Staff should also have the confidence that it is acceptable to end an abusive telephone call.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Acceptable Communication by Email**

Sometimes staff may have to deal with challenging, abusive, aggressive or threatening emails.

It is unacceptable for any member of staff to be subjected to such abuse and this guidance has been produced to assist parents to understand conduct which the school expects parents to follow when emailing the school and to staff if receive such messages.

#### **Guidance for parents/carers**

- Always address the member of staff formally (eg Dear Ms Allen...)
- Always use formal and courteous language in the message
- Do not use bold text or capitalisation to emphasise concerns
- Only expect a response to the member of staff to whom you have directly sent the email, not those who you have included in the circulation
- Do not expect an instant response. The majority of staff will be teaching for most of the day and do not have the opportunity to check their emails until the conclusion of meetings and training which take place after the children have gone home

#### **Guidance for staff**

- Always address the member of staff formally (eg Dear Ms Allen...)
- Always use formal and courteous language in the message
- Do not use bold text or capitalisation to emphasise concerns

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Abuse/bullying using cyber technology**

Staff may become targets of cyber abuse or bullying which can have a significant impact on health, well-being and self-confidence. Protecting staff from abuse is best done within a prevention framework, including whole school policies and appropriate practices.

Cyber abuse/bullying may consist of threats, harassment, embarrassment, humiliation, defamation or impersonation. It may take the form of general insults, or prejudice based abuse, e.g. homophobic, sexist, racist, or other forms of discrimination. It may involve email, virtual learning environments, chat rooms, websites, social networking sites, mobile and fixed-point phones, digital cameras, games and virtual world sites.

Abuse using cyber technology can occur at any time and incidents can intrude into the victim's private life. The audience for such messages can be very large and can be reached rapidly. The content of electronically forwarded messages is hard to control and the worry of content resurfacing can make it difficult for the victim to move on.

### **Cyberbullying and the law**

While there is not a specific criminal offence called cyberbullying, activities can be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including:

- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 • Public Order Act 1986
- The Defamation Acts 1952 and

It is the duty of the school to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees. Incidents that are related to employment, even those taking place outside the hours or place of work may fall under the responsibility of the employer.

### **Effectively tackling abuse using cyber technology**

School behaviour policies and procedures explicitly refer to and outline how the school will deal with cyber abuse/ bullying of both staff and students. They include:

- rules on the use of equipment, software and network access provided by the school,
- the use of staff and pupil owned equipment and internet access routes, where they are used on school premises and within school hours, e.g. mobile phones, digital cameras and laptops

## **Responding to incidents**

- Staff should never retaliate i.e. personally engage with cyberbullying incidents.
- Keep any records of abuse – texts, emails, voice mails, or instant messages. Take screen prints of messages or web pages. Record the time, date and address of the site.
- Inform the Line Manager or Headteacher as soon as possible
- Where the perpetrator is known to be a current pupil, parent of pupil or co-worker, this should be dealt with through the school's own behaviour management / disciplinary procedures.
- Monitoring and confiscation must be appropriate and proportionate – parents/carers, employees and learners should be made aware in advance of any monitoring (for example, of email or internet use) or the circumstances under which confiscation might take place.
- A designated member of the leadership team should contact the police where it appears that a law has been broken – for example, where death threats, assault, or racially motivated criminal offences are involved. Where a potential criminal offence has been identified, the school should ensure that any internal investigation does not interfere with police inquiries. School staff are of course able to report incidents directly to the police.
- If a potential criminal offence has been committed and the school is not able to identify the perpetrator, the police may issue a Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) request to a service provider, enabling them to disclose the data about a message or the person sending it.

## **Abuse/bullying using cyber technology**

Where online content is upsetting / inappropriate and the person(s) responsible for posting is known, the quickest way to get material taken down is likely to be to ensure that the person who posted it understands why the material is unacceptable and to request that they remove it.

If the person responsible has not been identified, or will not take the material down, the school will contact the host (i.e. the social networking site) to make a request to get the content taken down. The material posted may breach the service provider's terms and conditions of use and can then be removed.

It is important to be clear about where the content is – for example by taking a screen capture of the material that includes the URL or web address. If the school requests they take down material that is not illegal, it will be clear how it contravenes the site's terms and conditions. In cases of actual/suspected illegal content, the school will contact the police.

