

## **PARENTS AND CARERS CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **Rationale**

At Spalding High School, we are fortunate that the significant majority of our parents/carers are supportive and polite. Most of our parents/carers recognise that educating children is a process that is strengthened by a positive partnership between parents, staff and the school community. This positive partnership and strong working relationship equips 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.

Parental engagement with their children's learning is important in supporting attainment and progress and parents/carers have a legitimate right to understand what their child is learning at school and what progress they are making.

However, contact between parents/carers and the School must be appropriate, proportionate and respectful, in terms of the professional knowledge, experience and skill of the staff and of the entitlement of staff to an appropriate work/life balance.

As a Local Authority Maintained School, Spalding High School has adopted Lincolnshire County Council's "Parents/Carers Code of Conduct Policy" and full credit is given to this policy in our amended version.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is as a reminder to parents/carers and visitors to our school of their expected conduct, in order that we can continue to flourish, make progress and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding.

The policy sets out:

- The general principles underpinning the conduct of members of the School community;
- How it is expected that communication between parents/carers and the School will take place;
- What behaviours towards the School and members of our school community are deemed unacceptable and open to challenge by the School;
- The additional steps the School can take in respect of unacceptable behaviour by a parent/carer/visitor.

### **General Principles**

Staff and Governors are accommodating and prompt in their communications with parents/carers. All communications to the School should be acknowledged within 24 hours and given a timeframe for the matter to be dealt with. If parents/carers do not receive an acknowledgment within 24hrs, they should contact the School again to check that the communication has been received.

24hr acknowledgment does not apply when the School is not in session, for example, during holiday periods or weekends.

If parents/carers wish to correspond by email, they should use the School's central email address at [enquiries@spaldinghigh.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@spaldinghigh.lincs.sch.uk) . This address is monitored during the school day and emails forwarded to the appropriate member of staff. Parents/carers should only use the personal direct email address for staff if the member of staff has provided them with this directly.

All communication should respect the caring ethos and values of our School and reflect the rationale detailed at the start of this policy.

Please remember:

- The School Reception opens at 8am and closes at 4.30pm. Mornings in particular, are very busy.
- Members of staff are very busy during the school day and teach for the significant majority of it;
- When parents/carers would like to speak with a member of staff, we ask that they make an appointment (telephone or face-to-face) to do so at a time when staff can give both sufficient time and their full attention;
- If the matter is still not resolved, parents/carers should follow the procedure in the School's Complaints Policy (available on our website);
- To ensure that all communications, be they written or verbal, are calm and polite and that parents/carers remain mindful of the right of the recipient to be treated with respect.
- The School is governed by the rules and policies as set by the Governing Body, the Headmistress and the Senior Leadership Team;

### **Unacceptable Behaviour:**

As stated above, the School enjoys very positive and productive relationships and communications with the significant majority of our parents/carers.

Please remember:

- Timeframes for a matter to be dealt with appropriately will be decided by the recipient of the communication or by the School's Complaints Policy. Parents/carers should not demand an immediate response or a response within their own timeframe.
- Lengthy, frequent, demanding, or disrespectful communications to staff will seriously undermine their ability to carry out their core duty of educating the children in their care.
- When communicating with staff/Governors, language should remain respectful and calm. It is not acceptable to use language that calls in to question colleagues' professional ability; represents any form of personal attack or seeks to direct how they carry out their professional role. The running of the School is a matter for the Governing Body, the Headmistress and the Senior Leadership Team.
- It is entirely inappropriate to raise one's voice, invade personal space, and use language that is disrespectful, rude, offensive, aggressive or threatening.
- It is unacceptable to record conversations/meetings with staff/Governors without making them aware of the recording and seeking their express permission to capture what could be personal information and breach their human right to privacy, which extends to their workplace.

- It is unacceptable to resort to any other forms of criticism of the School, its staff or Governing Body or any other matters that relate directly to the School via a medium other than the School's Complaints Policy. Parents/carers should be aware of the School's use of social media policy as it appears in Appendix A and within the Acceptable Use Policy and Behaviour For Learning Policy.

### **Attending the School Premises:**

The School is a place of learning with an important duty to safeguard and protect the health and safety and well-being of the one thousand students and one hundred staff we serve.

Schools are private premises and not public spaces. Parents/carers have an implied right to enter the School as a parent/carer of a child currently attending the School but it is open to the School to remove that right of entry at any time it deems this to be a necessary course of action.

Please remember:

- Parents/carers should behave appropriately when on the School premises. Do not shout swear or cause any form of disruption that interferes or threatens to interfere with the core operation of the School. This includes visitors to events such as school fixtures;
- Threats of violence, use of violence towards people or property on the School's premises is a criminal offence, and will likely result in the matter being reported to the police;
- Smoking, the carrying of weapons, consumption of alcohol/drugs is prohibited in all parts of the School premises;
- Dogs should not be brought onto the School's premises unless prior permission has been granted and the dog is an assistance dog;
- To be mindful of how you might reprimand your child when on site. Do not correct your own child's behaviour, especially in public, where it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive or unsafe behaviour. Avoid using staff as threats to reprimand your child's behaviour;
- Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of their actions towards your own child is inappropriate. Such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and may have legal consequences.

### **Additional Steps by the school:**

The following is not an exhaustive list:

- A member of staff/Governor will challenge unacceptable behaviour calmly and by asking the person concerned to stop; to respect their personal space; stop shouting or using inappropriate behaviour or may end the call/meeting or direct the person to leave the premises.
- The School may communicate with a parent/carer to challenge unacceptable behaviour and set out conditions to establish a way forward, this may include a Communication Strategy.

- The School will comply with, and fully implement, the Department for Education Controlling Access to School Premises, should it deem it appropriate to do so.
- If the School decides the matter requires a more formal approach we may instruct our legal advisers to communicate with the parent/carer, warning them about their behaviour and/or putting in place Communication Strategy to restrict their means of corresponding with the School and/or banning them from School premises if felt to be appropriate.
- In serious instances where the peace is breached or the law broken, the School will report the matter to the police.

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.

### **Appendix 1: Inappropriate use of Social Network Sites:**

The School seeks to teach students the importance of appropriate and responsible use of social media and it is therefore vital that everyone in the school community, including parents/carers lead by example.

Our Governors consider the use of social media websites to complain/make personal comments about the School or members of staff/Governors as unacceptable and inappropriate behaviour and not in the best interests of the students nor the School. Concerns parents/carers may have should be made through an appropriate channel such as the School's Complaints Policy so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

In the event that any student or parent/carer of a child/ren being educated in the School 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 expects that the parent/carer or student will remove such comments immediately.

In serious cases the School will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social media sites. 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.

Please note that the inappropriate use of a communications network can give rise to offences under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 or the Communications Act 2003 and if persistent could be deemed to constitute the offence of harassment.