



## Code of Conduct for Parents and Carers

Updated - January 2023

At Orchard Meadow School, we are very proud and fortunate to have a very dedicated and supportive school community. At our school the staff, governors, parents and carers alike all recognise that the education of our children is a partnership process between all these parties. As a partnership, we are all aware of the importance of good working relationships to equip all of our children with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons, we continue to welcome and encourage parents and carers to participate fully in the life of our school.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a reminder to all parents, carers and visitors to our school about the expectations of the conduct at our school and in the local community. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that all persons collecting their children are aware of this policy.

We understand that everyday frustrations can cause misunderstandings and have a negative impact on our relationships. We remain committed to resolving difficulties in a constructive manner through open and positive dialogue. In this way, we can continue to flourish and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding. The policy aims to clarify the types of behaviour that will not be tolerated and sets out the actions the school can take should this code be ignored or where breaches occur.

### **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 or within the direct local community.
- 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 correspondence (e.g. emails, texts, phone messages or other written communications, including social media) to anyone within the school community.
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the pupils, parents, staff or governors at the school on Facebook 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 as 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. If the school have good cause to suspect that an adult on school site is under the influence, further action will be taken (alcohol may only be consumed during authorised events).
- Dogs being brought on to the school premises (other than guide/therapy dogs).
- Use of mobile phones on the school site (as per the safeguarding information notices displayed around school).

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

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 consider banning the offending adult from entering the school premises altogether.

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 Thames Valley Police. This will include all cases of threats of 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, for example any form inappropriate behaviour on social media. In cases where evidence suggests that behaviour would be tantamount to libel or slander then the school will refer the matter to United Learning's Legal Team for further action. In cases where the code of conduct has been broken but the breach was not libellous, slanderous or criminal matter, then the school will send out a formal letter to the parent/carer inviting them to a meeting.

If the parent/carer refuses to attend the meeting then the school will write to the parent/carer asking them to cease the behaviour causing the concern and warn that if they do not they may be banned from the school premises. If after this, the behaviour continues the parent/carer will be informed that a ban is now in place in writing.

**Please note**, in serious cases, a ban from the school can be introduced without having to go through all the steps offered above. Site bans will normally be limited in the first instance.

### **Complaints**

This code of conduct does not prevent parent/carers from raising a legitimate complaint in an appropriate manner. In most cases we hope that all complaints and concerns can be resolved through open dialogue with class teachers or other members of staff as appropriate.

If you are not satisfied with responses received, however, we would ask that you then follow the complaints procedure as laid out in our school complaints policy. This is available on the schools website but if you would prefer please contact the school office and we can arrange for a hard copy to be made available.

### **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 they can be a wonderful source of knowledge, support and advice. Within these spaces however we ask that you use common sense and respect to the whole school community 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 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.

#### **If parents have any concerns about their child in relation to the school as we have said above they should:**

1. Initially contact the class teacher.
2. If the concern remains, they should contact the headteacher.
3. If still unresolved, the school governors through the complaints procedure.
4. 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 without consent.
- Abusive or personal comments about staff, pupils or other parents.
- Bringing the school in disrepute.
- 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 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.

**In order to respect residents in our local community, we ask that:**

- Parents and carers park considerately avoiding:
  - gateways and drives,
  - pavements,
  - junctions.
- Residents are communicated with showing respect and understanding.
- Engines are switched off whilst waiting to collect and drop off children.

**Thank you for abiding by this policy in our school; together we create a positive environment for both the children and all who work and visit our school.**