



PARENTS AND VISITORS CODE OF CONDUCT

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Reviewed by the SLT MAT Board

“The Trustees of the Southport Learning Trust are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at every opportunity and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment”

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1. Purpose and scope

Southport Learning Trust believes it is important to:

- Work in partnership with parents to support their child's learning
- Create a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for pupils, staff and parents
- Model appropriate behaviour for our pupils at all times

To help us do this, we set clear expectations and guidelines on behaviour for all members of our community. This includes staff, through the staff code of conduct and pupils, through a school's behaviour policy.

This code of conduct aims to help the school work together with parents by setting guidelines on appropriate behaviour.

We use the term 'parents' to refer to:

- Anyone with parental responsibility for a pupil
- Anyone caring for a child (such as grandparents or child-minders)

The code of conduct provides information to all parents, carers and visitors on the expected conduct when on school premises and on social media.

Inappropriate conduct will be addressed, so that we are working in partnership to progress, support and achieve a mutual understanding. The Trust believes that pupils achieve best in a safe and supportive environment based on respect and trust, which is underpinned by an effective partnership between all stakeholders within the Trust community.

2. The Trust's expectations

We expect parents, carers and other visitors to:

- Respect the ethos, vision and values of our school.
- Be tolerant of each other's views, beliefs and opinions.
- Work together with staff in the best interests of our pupils.
- Treat all members of the school community with respect, using appropriate language and behaviour. This includes in written communication as well as verbal communication.
- Seek a peaceful solution to all issues.
- Approach the school to help resolve any issues of concern. The involvement of other agencies, such as the Police, the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer), the Local Authority or Ofsted, is a parental right but we welcome and encourage open dialogue in the first instance to allow school staff to address the issue directly. The Trust firmly believes that this approach is the one most likely to produce a swift, meaningful and mutually agreeable outcome in partnership and embeds effective communication.
- Correct their own child's behaviour (or those in their care), particularly in public, where it could lead to conflict, aggression or unsafe conduct.
- Acknowledge that whilst it is inevitable that, at times, there will be conflict between pupils, we ask that parents support the Trust in ensuring that these incidents are dealt with safely and effectively by speaking to school staff rather than approaching the pupils or parents/carers, either directly or via social media.
- Understand that whilst email contact with staff may be used in Trust schools as a way to support collaboration, there is no expectation that staff must respond to emails within a specific timescale.
- Approach the right member of school staff to help resolve any issues of concern

The support of parents and carers is valued by the Trust, and we want to establish a positive relationship and work alongside parents to achieve the best for their child. This code of conduct reflects the Trust's expectations of parents and carers. This code is supported by the Complaints Policy, which is designed to handle parental concerns or complaints at the earliest possible stage, with a view to a mutually agreeable resolution and sustaining the spirit of partnership and atmosphere of mutual understanding that the Trust

feels is vital to the success of its school communities. The Complaints Policy is not to be abused to establish blame or fault but to work in partnership on a positive resolution.

3. Inappropriate behaviour that will not be tolerated by the Trust

To support a peaceful and safe school environment, the Trust will not tolerate parents, carers or visitors behaving in a way that threatens or harms the wellbeing of our pupils or staff. This includes,

- Disrupting, or threatening to disrupt, school operations or activities anywhere on the school premises.
- Approaching another parent/carers or pupil in order to discuss or reprimand them because of an issue between pupils.
- Swearing, using offensive language and any other form of verbal aggression, such as displaying a temper or shouting towards another child or adult, including your own.
- Threatening another member of the school community including pupils, staff and other parents in any way.
- Displaying any other behaviour, verbal or otherwise, which could be considered inappropriate, offensive or abusive towards a pupil or another adult.
- Written communication that is threatening, inflammatory and aggressive.
- Defamatory, offensive negative, or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the pupils/parents/carers/staff at the school or Trust on social media, forums, website or any other publicly accessible medium. Any comments or concerns should be raised with the school directly.
- Damaging or destroying school property.
- Arriving on the school premises partially clothed.
- Smoking, vaping, taking illegal drugs or consuming alcohol on school premises.
- Entering school premises whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Allowing dogs (except for registered assistance dogs) or other animals on school premises.
- Driving unsafely in the vicinity of the school.
- Taking photographs, video or audio recordings with phones or other devices on school premises without permission from the school.
- Making complaints, negative comments or factually inaccurate statements about the school on social media, forums, other websites or any other publicly accessible medium.
- Posting photographs of pupils taken on school premises or on a trip or visit on social media without consent from the parents/carers of the child/children depicted.
- Creating a social network page/forum in the name of the school/using official logos to imitate the school or posting comments in the guise of the school.
- Posting photographs of staff including photographs of staff made available on school websites via social media, forums, other websites or any other publicly accessible medium
- Sending abusive messages to another member of the school community, including via text, email or social media.
- Disciplining another person's child – please bring any behaviour incidents to a member of staff's attention.

This list is not exhaustive.

4. Breaching the code of conduct

Where the Trusts expectations are not upheld, or inappropriate behaviour takes place, the initial response will usually involve a conversation with the parent/carers or visitor.

If the school suspects, or becomes aware, that a parent has breached the code of conduct, the school will gather information from those involved and speak to the parent about the incident.

Where this is not sufficient to resolve the issue, the school may have to consider further action. This could include:

- Banning from premises for a fixed time.
- Restricting channels of communication (e.g. no longer allowed to email staff directly).
- Reporting defamatory or abusive comments to site admins in relation to posts on social media, forums, websites or other online platforms.

- Requesting the immediate removal of comments, photographs or other media that constitutes a breach of the code.
- Warning letters being issued in relation to breaches of the code.
- Contacting the Police or seeking legal redress through the courts.
- Seek advice from the trust's legal team regarding further action (in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous).
- Ban the parent from the school site.

In the event that any pupil or parent/carer is found to be posting defamatory comments on social media or elsewhere on the internet, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the social network or website. It is likely that the Police will also be informed.

The safety and wellbeing of the school community is paramount, and the Trust takes the issue of cyber bullying by a pupil or a parent/carer to publicly humiliate another parent/carer, pupil, member of staff or volunteer as serious violation of this code and will deal with this as a serious incident of bullying.

In some cases, it may be necessary to make a referral to social services if the behaviour of a parent/carer or visitor indicates that they may be unsafe around children.

The school will always respond to an incident in a proportional way. The final decision for how to respond to breaches of the code of conduct rests with the Headteacher and the Trust CEO. The Chair of Governors or Chair of Trustees will be informed of the action taken.

5. Banning from Premises

The public has no automatic right of entry to any school in the Trust. The school will therefore act to ensure they remain a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of their community.

If a parent's/carer's behaviour is a cause for concern, a senior leader can ask him/her to leave the school premises. In serious cases, the Headteacher can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the parent/carer may wish to make to the Headteacher.

The parent/carer will have the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing.

During the barring period, all contact should go through the Headteacher's PA or a named member of staff either by email or telephone.

The Headteacher's decision to bar will be reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team. They will take in to account any representations made by the individual and decide whether to either confirm or lift the bar. If the decision is confirmed, the individual should be notified in writing, explaining:

- how long the bar will be in place.
- when the decision will be reviewed.

Once the school's appeal process has been completed, individuals may be able to apply to the Civil Courts. Individuals wishing to exercise this option should seek independent legal advice.

Any ban should be reviewed at the end of the agreed timescale as outlined above.

The DfE Guidance on [Controlling access to school premises](#) provides more guidance on access to school premises.

Appendix 1: Trust approach to dealing with breaches of Parents and Visitors Code of Conduct

