



PARENT AND VISITOR'S CODE OF CONDUCT

NORTHBOURNE.NSP.011

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Northbourne CE Primary School

Cockcroft Road,
Didcot
OX11 8LJ

Parent, carer and visitor code of conduct

At Northbourne CE Primary School, we strive to nurture excellence in all of our pupils and families. In order to do this, we place great emphasis on the importance of staff working with children and families in a committed, equal partnership.

All staff at Northbourne value our strong relationships with parents and carers. These close and respectful links allow us to achieve the very best for our pupils. Within this partnership, we know that our parents understand and value the importance of a strong working relationship which will ensure that children are able to do their very best socially, emotionally and academically. Parents and carers are always welcome to play as full a role as possible in the life of the school and are encouraged to do so. Achieving the best outcomes for all of our children requires the relationship between home and school to be rooted in our core Christian values of love, community and integrity. The maintenance of this relationship is important to ensure that children are safe and not caused unnecessary stress and anxiety through the behaviour of adults.

Key principles

In addition to the guidance set out in our home-school agreement and holding the above principles in mind, parents, carers and visitors are expected to:

- Respect the caring, nurturing ethos of the school;
- Understand that the best outcomes for pupils are secured when teachers and parents work together;
- Approach school staff to resolve any issues in an appropriate manner;
- Treat all members of our school community with respect, using appropriate behaviour and language;
- Understand that school needs to work with, and listen carefully to, all children to understand and clarify their versions of events and enable appropriate solutions to any issues, in line with school policies, to be found;
- Accept that school staff need to correct any unacceptable actions of children, especially when it might lead to conflict, aggression or unsafe behaviour – both on and off the school premises;
- Follow up any issues which might arise at school through discussion at home, as appropriate;
- Ensure this policy is known and understood by any family members or friends who might visit the school premises to collect or drop-off children, or to attend school events.

Aggression and violence in the school environment

In order to create and maintain a peaceful and safe school environment, Northbourne will not tolerate parents, carers or visitors:

- Demonstrating disruptive behaviour which interferes with, or threatens to interfere with, any of the school's operation or activities on its premises;
- Any inappropriate behaviour on the school premises;
- Using loud or offensive language or displaying temper;
- Threatening, in any way, a member of staff, visitor, parent / carer or pupil;
- Damaging or destroying school property;
- Sending abusive or threatening emails, texts, voicemails, phone messages or other written communication to other members of the school community;
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding school or any pupils, parents or staff on social networking sites (see below);
- Approaching someone else's child to discuss an issue or chastise them because of any actions this child may have taken towards their own child. This may be seen as an assault on that child, and may therefore have legal consequences;
- Smoking, taking illegal drugs or consuming alcohol on the school premises;
- Bringing dogs other than assistance dogs onto the school premises unless otherwise agreed.

Should any of the above occur on school premises the school will take action by contacting the relevant authorities, including the police, and / or will consider issuing either a warning letter or a ban on the offending adult to prevent them from entering the school site.

Thank you for adhering to this policy. Together, we can create a welcoming, nurturing environment where all children, parents and staff feel welcome, safe, valued and nurtured.

Use of social media

The use of social networking sites to make complaints against the school, its staff, other parents or pupils is unacceptable. Any concerns about the school or a child should always be raised with your child's class teacher or the headteacher, to allow them to be dealt with fairly, appropriately and in line with school policies; this will ensure they can be successfully resolved.

In the event that a parent or carer posts libellous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other social networking sites, these will be reported using the appropriate *report abuse* section of the site. All social media sites have clear rules about the content that can be posted and they provide mechanisms to report content or activity which breaches this. The school expects that any such comments are removed immediately.

The use of social media by a child or parent to publicly humiliate another will be dealt with as an incident of cyber-bullying.

School will always consider its legal options when dealing with any misuse of social networking sites.

Dealing with violent or abusive visitors

Introduction

1. ODST is committed to ensuring that all members of its school communities, and all visitors to its member schools, can be confident that they are within a safe environment and that a zero-tolerance approach will be adopted towards any acts of abusive, violent or threatening behaviour.
2. Day to day access to a school is within the control of the Headteacher. Normally parents/carers (and those with parental responsibility) are granted "limited licence" to visit the grounds and buildings of a school.
3. ODST member schools will often establish local procedures which set out: the acceptable purposes for such visits; the areas of the school that may be entered at particular times and the standard of behaviour expected (as outlined in the Code of Conduct for Parents and Visitors, above).
4. Where there is a breach of such procedures the school, as a member of ODST, should respond in a measured way, taking into account the seriousness of any inappropriate conduct.
5. It is possible that a Headteacher may initiate action on their own authority, but it is less likely to lead to personal confrontation if the more serious sanctions are initiated through the ODST.

Overview

6. As a general rule, schools are orderly, safe places, where relationships between staff and visitors, especially parents/carers, demonstrate mutual respect and recognition of shared responsibility for pupils' welfare and educational progress. Parental involvement is an important factor in educational success and in dealing with emerging problems at an early stage.
7. However, on occasion, the behaviour of a few parents/ carers can cause severe disruption or worse, resulting in abusive or aggressive behaviour towards staff, pupils, or other members of the school community.
8. ODST has a responsibility for protecting the health and safety of their staff and pupils and takes this responsibility seriously.
9. This guidance is mainly about dealing with violence, threatening behaviour or abuse by parents of a pupil in a school.
10. Violence, threatening behaviour and abuse against school staff or other members of the school community will not be tolerated. All members of the school community have a right to expect that their school is a safe place in which to work and learn. Where such behaviour does occur, ODST in conjunction with the Headteacher, will play a proactive role in taking all possible action to deal with it.
11. In certain circumstances, this may mean that ODST will take the lead in initiating action on the school's behalf with the school's support, and in other circumstances ODST will support the school in action that the school itself will initiate. It is key, though, that in any such situations there is dialogue between the Headteacher and ODST at the earliest possible opportunity.
12. Headteachers should in the first instance ask ODST for advice on the appropriateness of any remedies available and ODST will, where they have the power to do so, take the lead in initiating action. In circumstances where

power does not lie with ODST (e.g. under criminal law) the Trust will support and advise schools with a view to removing as much of the burden from them as possible.

School policy for dealing with incidents

13. Where a school seeks to introduce a policy covering incidents involving abusive, threatening or violent adult visitors, such policies should be adopted following consultation with staff and parents. Typically, such a policy will provide a readily available set of procedures on:
- a. what to do when an incident arises (e.g. ask the person to leave, or invite them into a room away from other people);
 - b. whom to contact during an emergency (i.e. at the school, local authority and police);
 - c. how to record incidents and who to report the incident to;
 - d. what follow up action is possible (i.e. any legal action to be taken; if a parent, whether they should be refused entry to the premises);
 - e. what support is available from the employer, (e.g. counselling, occupational health or legal support);
 - f. liaison with the police whenever necessary.

Section 547, Education Act 1996

14. A parent/carer of a child attending a school normally has implied permission (limited licence) to be on the school's premises at certain times and for certain purposes but if their behaviour is unreasonable this permission may be withdrawn and they will become a trespasser. This is covered under section 547 of the Education Act 1996 and template letters can be provided to ODST schools to support any such action taken under this clause.
15. Section 547 makes it an offence for a trespasser on school premises to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance, and allows for the removal and prosecution of any person believed to have committed the offence.
16. In addition to any action taken on behalf of ODST by the Headteacher, the police are authorised to remove someone from school premises and to bring proceedings for an offence under this section.
17. It is not set down in law how a person should be authorised but ODST would recommend that this is documented in writing within any school policy. Appropriate training should also be provided to all such persons.
18. Schools wishing action to be taken against someone they believe has committed an offence under s547 should contact ODST. If the police have been involved the school should clarify whether the police intend to summons or charge and whether the Crown Prosecution Service has decided that there is sufficient evidence to prosecute. In most cases, it will be in the public interest to prosecute if there is sufficient evidence to support a prosecution.
19. The Headteacher will need to assemble the full facts before proceeding, making sure that all those involved in any incidents, or witnesses to those incidents, make a full written record as soon as possible. Crucial elements of the process include:
- a. writing to the parent/carer/intruder to record in detail the incident and why it is unacceptable;
 - b. explaining that the school/ ODST will consider banning the parent, giving the parent a period in which they may respond in writing giving their version and why they should not be banned;
 - c. telling the parent when a decision will be made.
20. Even where a parent/carer has been banned from the school premises, they retain their right to an annual consultation in relation to the educational progress of their child/ren. However, the school may determine who will be present at the meeting (e.g. a senior member of staff might accompany the class teacher) and its location (e.g. it may well be arranged off site). The interests of the child should continue to be paramount.

21. Using powers under section 547 allows for action which ODST, working in conjunction with the school, can take on behalf of a school and which can be straightforward, quick and effective in removing violent, aggressive or abusive people from school premises. In practice, it is amongst the most widely used remedies. However, it is not a decision that should be taken lightly and Headteachers should always seek guidance from ODST when considering such action.

22. There may be occasions when Section 547 will not be the most appropriate remedy and in instances of serious violence, repeated harassment or racially aggravated behaviour for example, criminal sanctions may be warranted. ODST would support the school in any such situation and would take a proactive approach.