



Parents code of conduct policy

Author of policy – Lynn Briers
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This policy has been reviewed and is based on the WCF policy template and has been adopted by Matchborough First School Academy.



Code of Conduct for Parents and Carers 2023-2024

We recognise that we can only truly realise this vision if we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Accordingly, it is important that visitors to Matchborough First School Academy model behaviours that are conducive to this.

For the purpose of this policy the term 'school community' refers to staff, parents, carers, others caring for a child at the school (e.g. childminder, grandparents), children and governors.

Statement of principles

The governing body of Matchborough First School Academy encourages close links with parents and the community. It believes that pupils benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one. We expect parents, carers and visitors to:

- respect the caring ethos of our school;
- understand that both teachers and parents need to work together for the benefit of the children;
- demonstrate that **all** members of the school community should be treated with respect and therefore set a good example in their own speech and behaviour;
- seek to clarify a child's version of events with the school's view in order to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue;
- correct own child's behaviour as appropriate, especially in public where it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive behaviour or unsafe behaviour;
- approach the school to help resolve any issues of concern;
- avoid using staff as threats to admonish children's behaviour;
- respect the privacy of staff and their right to a home and family life (i.e. avoid contacting them beyond their working day);

Overwhelmingly, the vast majority of parents, carers and others visiting our school are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school, however, there are rare occasions when a negative attitude towards the school are expressed. This can result in aggression, verbal and/or physical abuse towards members of school staff or the wider school community. The Governing Body expects and requires its members of staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to defuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement, as appropriate, of other colleagues. However, all members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and/or abuse.

Where parents have a concern, we actively encourage parents to communicate with the school, using the appropriate channels. In recent years, a few parents have chosen to voice any dissatisfaction they have with the school using social media (see appendix).

Any communication regarding a concern needs to always start with the **class teacher**. Then, if things are not resolved, the issue will be passed on to middle management (**i.e. Phase or Year Leader**) and then a **Senior Leader** (which includes the Headteacher) if need be. Occasionally, some parents demand to see the Headteacher as their first port of call, which is often impractical, especially given the size of the school, and the fact that things often have to be referred back to the class teacher. If, after reaching the Headteacher, the issue is still not resolved, then it can be directed to our Governing Body using our Complaints Policy, which is available on our website.

Any meeting (whether formal or informal) related to concerns needs to be conducted in a respectful and reasonable way. Consideration needs to be given as to whether it would be appropriate to involve the child in such a meeting. We accept that sometimes criticism of the school can be appropriate, done in a measured, respectful and reasonable way that is constructive. However, parents and carers need to avoid fierce criticism of staff or the school, especially in front of a child.

Parents and carers need to trust in the school to deal with things in a professional way. The school will not accept any attempt by parents or carers to impose conditions around the way things are dealt with in school (the law states that the school is *in loco parentis*).

We expect parents, carers and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards all members of staff and other stakeholders. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated:

- smoking and vaping and consumption/being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs whilst on school premises
- threatening behaviour (including the use of aggressive hand gestures)
- Displaying a temper, or shouting at members of staff, pupils or other parents
- Threatening another member of the school community
- antisocial behaviours, such as swearing
- breaching the school's security procedures
- Abusive offensive or threatening phonecalls, emails, texts, voicemails or any other form of written communication (including where membership of Whatsapp (or similar groups) are used in an abusive manner).
- approaching someone else's child (or parent of the child) in order to discuss or chastise them regarding their actions to their child
- bringing dogs onto site (exception – guide dogs/hearing dogs/support dogs)
- drawing staff into conflict between separated/divorced parents
- physically intimidating a member of staff or school community (for example, standing close to a person in an intimidating way with the intention of upsetting them)
- racist, sexist comments and other forms of prejudicial language or behaviour
- damaging or destroying school property
- shouting at a member of staff or the school community either in person or on the phone
- emotional abuse (for example, applying pressure to a member of staff to break or bend the rules)

The above is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of inappropriate behaviour

Parents, carers and visitors need to be aware that it is an offence under section 547 of the Education Act 1997 for any person (including a parent) to cause a nuisance or disturbance on school premises. Unacceptable behaviour may result in the police being informed of the incident.

Breaching the code of conduct

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.

Depending on the nature of the incident, the school may then:

- Send a warning letter to the parent
- Invite the parent into school to meet with a senior member of staff or the headteacher
- Contact the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour)
- Seek advice from our legal team regarding further action (in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous)
- Ban the parent from the school site

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.

The headteacher will consult the chair of governors before banning a parent from the school site.

Procedure to be followed

If a parent/carer behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school staff or other stakeholder, the Headteacher or appropriate senior staff member will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If necessary, the school's complaints procedures should be followed. Where all procedures have been exhausted, and aggression or intimidation continue, or where there is an extreme act of violence, a parent or carer may be banned by the Headteacher from the school premises for a period of time, subject to review. In imposing a ban the following steps will be taken:

1. The parent, carer or visitor will be informed, in writing, that she/he is banned from the premises, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, e.g. that police involvement or an injunction application may follow (parents/carers have the right of appeal).
2. Where a physical assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the police will be included.
3. MFSA Governing Body will be informed of the ban.
4. Where appropriate, arrangements for pupils being delivered to, and collected from the school gate will be clarified.

In addition, parents, carers and visitors need to be aware that school premises are private property, which parents have been granted permission to use. However, in the case of abuse or threats to staff, pupils or other parents, the school have the legal right to withdraw this permission at any time.

Use of cameras and phones on site

Parents, carers and visitors are not allowed to use cameras or phones to capture images on site. However, parents and carers are welcome to take photographs or videos of school events that their child is part of; though any photograph or video taken should be for personal viewing only, and not be posted on social media. The reason being that there are sensitivities around some children in school, and we need to respect this. If we become aware of a breach in this school policy, then we reserve the right to take legal action.

Recording of conversations

The staff and Governors of Matchborough First School Academy do not give consent for their conversations to be recorded.

Conclusion

MFSA will take action where behaviour is unacceptable (as described above). In implementing this policy, the school, as appropriate, seek advice from their health and safety and legal advisors, to ensure fairness and consistency.

At MFSA, we will actively challenge parents, carers and visitors expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British Values, including 'extremist' views.

Agreed by the Governing Body on 17th November 2023

Review Date: November 2025

Appendix 1

Inappropriate use of Social Network Sites

Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, Headteachers, school staff, and in some cases, other parents/pupils. The Governors of the school considers the use of social media websites being used in this way as unacceptable, and not in the best interests of the children or the whole school community. Any concerns you may have need to be made through the appropriate channels by speaking, in the first instance, to the class teacher, then a senior member of staff, the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors accordingly, so things can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

In the event that any pupil or parent/carer of a child/ren being educated at MFSA is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other social network sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. The school will also expect that any parent/carer or pupil removes such comments immediately.

In serious cases, the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other 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 (or member of staff) by inappropriate social network entry. We will take and deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying.

*Aim High and Smile ☺
MFSA is committed to safeguarding*

Appendix 2

RISK ASSESSMENT

In the event of a parent behaving in an inappropriate way, each situation will need to be considered individually by the Headteacher or a designated member of staff. The following factors should be taken into account as a risk assessment, before deciding on the most appropriate course of action:

- Has the parent been verbally aggressive/threatening/intimidating?
- Has the parent been physically aggressive/threatening/intimidating?
- Has the parent been threatening by mail, email, social media or press posts?
- What evidence is there? What do witnesses say happened?
- Does the parent have a known previous history of aggression/violence? (Information can only be sought from the police when an official complaint has been made).
- Do members of the school staff/community feel intimidated by the parent's behaviour?
- Have pupils witnessed aggressive/threatening/intimidating behaviour from the parent?
- Have pupils been approached inappropriately by the parent?
- Has the parent been abusive to school staff, pupils or visitors?
- Has the parent been persistently abusive to school staff, pupils or visitors?
- Was the parent provoked in **any** way prior to their behaviour and/or does the parent claim to have been provoked?
- Is there evidence of provocation?
- How frequently have the behaviours occurred?
- Is there a risk (low, medium or high) that the behaviour may be repeated?

Appendix 3

OPTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

Inviting the Parent to a Meeting to Discuss Events

This could be helpful where a planned and structured meeting has either not been held before or has previously been productive. Skilled facilitators may need to be used. A full restorative meeting may be considered, but if it is not safe to bring all the parties together at a meeting, a restorative process can still take place through the exchange of information.

The safety and well-being of those attending such a meeting must be carefully considered. It is strongly recommended that members of school staff should be accompanied by at least one other colleague at any such meeting. Consideration should be given to the seating arrangements, and care taken to ensure exits cannot be blocked by a parent who could potentially become aggressive.

The main points of discussion and any agreed actions should be noted, and a follow-up letter sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions. Some parents may covertly record meetings and then seek to use the information obtained to support their case, and therefore ***schools should state explicitly that information obtained without permission will not be permissible.***

Clarifying to the parent what is considered acceptable behaviour by the school

In some instances, it may be appropriate simply to ensure the parent is clear about behaviour standards expected by the school. This could be explained at a meeting, or by letter, however any verbal explanation should be followed by a written confirmation of the discussion and the standards of behaviour outlined.

Forming strategies to manage future situations of potential conflict

It is sometimes possible to identify situations of potential conflict and to plan for these in a way that minimises potential risks. For example, where a parent persistently engages in arguments with staff in corridors at the beginning or end of the school day, the parent could be informed that any discussions with school staff must be held by prior appointment.

Alternatively, the parent may be asked not to approach the teacher but should instead arrange to meet the Headteacher (or other member of the senior leadership team), who will deal with their concerns.

In more serious cases a further option may be to advise the parent that in future their concerns should be dealt with by written communication. Any such arrangements should be confirmed in writing to the parent.

Withdrawing permission for the parent to enter the school site and/or buildings

In more serious cases of actual or threatened aggression/violence, or persistent abuse/intimidation, Headteachers may need to consider whether it is safe for the parent to continue to come onto the school site or enter the buildings.

Appendix 4

CALLING FOR POLICE ASSISTANCE

- In an emergency, police assistance should be sought.
- In cases where a ban is in place but is ignored and the person comes onto the school site, the police should be notified immediately. (Staff will need to be aware of the ban and have agreed procedures in place should the person come onto the school site).
- In situations where there is no immediate threat to staff, pupils, other members of the school community or the school's property, Headteachers may still wish to make their local community police officer (e.g. neighbourhood support team, youth intervention officer) aware of the situation.
- The police could give consideration to warning the offender of formal action, which may include legal proceedings.

Appendix 5

RECORD KEEPING

There should be clear and detailed records of all events which must be kept up to date. Any witness statements (where appropriate) and notes of any subsequent meetings held to discuss the events should also be retained. Notes should be signed and dated.

- Any physical evidence should be bagged and labelled, and witnesses should be asked to make a record of exactly what they saw and heard at the earliest opportunity.
- It is also advisable to ensure that in every case, even where a formal letter is not required, parents receive a written confirmation of the events and the Executive Headteacher's response.
- If the police are asked to deal with an incident as a criminal investigation, there are a number of actions that may thwart this process. Witness details should not be made known to suspected offenders or their families. Groups of witnesses or suspects should not be left together, or allowed to discuss what happened, before the police interview them. If in doubt always seek the advice of the police officer first.

An incident recording form is attached below.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR BY PARENT/CARER/VISITOR

INCIDENT RECORDING FORM

Date and time of incident	
Incident reported by	
Brief outline of incident Name of person causing incident Status (parent/visitor etc.) Description of incident Location Any injuries/harm	
Any possible contributory factors	
Details of any witnesses	
Witness statements attached? Y/N	
Is the perpetrator known to have been involved in any previous incidents? (if yes, give details)	
Were measures in place to try to prevent an incident of this type occurring? Could these be improved? If no measures were in place, could action be taken now?	
Name and contact details of police officer(s) involved. Incident number/crime reference number	
Any other relevant information	

Initial action/outcome	
Subsequent actions	
Form completed by (name and role)	
Date form completed	