

Code of Conduct For Parents and Carers



Firfield Primary School

Learn Together, Grow Together, Achieve Together

Approved by:	Firfield RMC	Date: March 2025
Last reviewed on:	March 2025	
Next review due by:	March 2027	

The purpose of this policy is to provide a reminder to all parents, carers and visitors to our school the expected conduct. This is so we can continue to flourish, progress and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding.

1, Expectations of parents, carers and visitors to the school

The school actively encourages close links with parents/carers and the community. We know that pupils benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one and we welcome visitors to our school and encourage parents to communicate with us by phone, Class Dojo or via email. If a parent or carer has concerns, we will always listen to them and seek to address them as quickly and positively as possible. We will always act to ensure the school remains a safe place for students, staff and all other members of our community and therefore abusive, threatening or aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated.

If such behaviour occurs, we will follow the procedures outlined in this policy. Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and which will not be tolerated in relation to members of staff, and other members of the community are:

- Shouting, either in person or over the telephone.
- Swearing, either in person or over the telephone.
- Emails / messages which are sarcastic, combative or aggressive in tone and language.
- Constant emails, messages and/or phone calls which amount to harassment and intimidation, despite the school's best efforts to address a situation.
- Inappropriate electronic activity including publishing abusive or inappropriate content with regards to the school, teachers or students on social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter or in email communication.
- Any form of physical violence, such as pushing or hitting.
- Physically intimidation, e.g. standing unnecessarily close to her/him.
- The use of rude or aggressive hand gestures, including shaking or holding a fist towards another person.

2. Promoting our school vision, values and rules to create a collaborative culture

‘Our school vision is to empower everyone to be brilliant every day, releasing their inner superhero so that they can flourish and thrive’

Our values and school rules are shown below, and this code of conduct embraces all of these to ensure that everyone can flourish and thrive.



3. Procedure to be followed when behaviour is inappropriate

a) Informal complaint

If a parent, carer or visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the Headteacher, and/or appropriate senior staff will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. Such discussion will highlight how the behaviour of the parent/carer did not meet the school's expectations and a request will be made that future communications with the school are modified in the light of this. A letter will be sent to the parent/carer to confirm this request.

b) Formal complaint

Following any interaction with a parent/carer or visitor, a member of staff reserves the right to submit a formal complaint about the incident to the Headteacher. Should such a formal complaint be made then the Headteacher or designated member of the Leadership team will investigate the complaint, by speaking with the parent/carer and the member of staff. During the investigation, any contact with the school will be through a designated member of staff and by prior appointment only. The parent/carer will be informed of this by letter. The Headteacher will determine any action to be taken in response to the findings of the investigation.

4. Actions which could follow such an investigation

- A request to meet with the Headteacher to discuss events.
- A letter clarifying to the parent/carer what is considered acceptable behaviour by the school.
- The designation of one member of staff to act as the conduit for communication between the parent/carer and the school.
- As a last resort, withdrawing permission for the parent/carer to enter the school site and/or buildings without prior appointment.

5. Acceptable communication by telephone, email and Class Dojo

a) Dealing with abusive telephone calls

Sometimes staff may have to deal with challenging, abusive, aggressive or threatening telephone calls. It is unacceptable for any member of staff to be subjected to such abuse and this guidance has been produced to assist parents to understand conduct which the school expects parents to follow during phone calls and to staff if they are faced with a difficult situation.

Guidance for parents/carers

- When you call Firfield Primary School you will speak initially to our main office staff. They will do their very best to connect you with the person you wish to speak to, but given the vast majority of our staff will be teaching or in a meeting, it is most likely that they will take a message.
- Please do not become frustrated with the main office staff if they cannot attain an answer to your concern or connect you to the person you wish to speak to straight away; this is not their fault and any frustrations vented at this time, will not serve to ensure your issue is dealt with any quicker.
- At any time when speaking to a member of staff at Firfield Primary School, please do not raise your voice or use aggressive, threatening or inappropriate language.

b) Acceptable communication by email

Sometimes staff may have to deal with challenging, abusive, aggressive or threatening emails. It is unacceptable for any member of staff to be subjected to such abuse and this guidance has been produced to assist parents to understand conduct which the school expects parents to follow when emailing the school and to staff if receive such messages.

Guidance for parents/carers

- Always address the member of staff formally (e.g. Dear Mr Yellop).
- Always use formal and courteous language in the message.
- Do not use bold text or capitalisation to emphasise concerns.
- Only expect a response to the member of staff to whom you have directly sent the email, not those who you have included in the circulation.
- Do not expect an instant response. The majority of staff will be teaching for most of the day and do not have the opportunity to check their emails until the conclusion of meetings and training which take place after the children have gone home.

c) Acceptable communication by ClassDojo

We feel ClassDojo is an effective tool to communicate (less formal than an email) with the class teacher about operational aspects of school life. ClassDojo was introduced as a positive method of communication, for sharing rewards, achievements, learning in school and at home and quick messages that may affect your child in class. Therefore, ClassDojo should not be used to address concerns that you wish to discuss.

Guidance for parents/carers

- Always use kind, polite and courteous language in the message.
- Do not use ClassDojo as a platform to share concerns, please arrange an appointment either via email, an appropriate message or by contacting the school office.
- Do not use bold text or capitalisation to emphasise points or sarcasm, inappropriate language as this will cause offence.
- Only expect a response to the member of staff to whom you have directly sent the Dojo message, not those who you have included in the circulation.
- ClassDojo should not be used as the sole method to report absence of your child, this must be reported to the school office.
- Do not expect an instant response, as with email the majority of staff will be teaching for most of the day and may not have the opportunity to check their message until the conclusion of meetings and training which take place after the children have gone home.

6. Abuse/bullying using cyber technology

Staff may become targets of cyber abuse or bullying which can have a significant impact on health, well-being and self-confidence. Protecting staff from abuse is best done within a prevention framework, including whole school policies and appropriate practices.

Cyber abuse/bullying may consist of threats, harassment, embarrassment, humiliation, deformation or impersonation. It may take the form of general insults, or prejudice-based abuse, e.g. homophobic, sexist, racist, or other forms of discrimination. It may involve email, virtual learning environments, chat rooms, websites, social networking sites, mobile and fixed-point phones, digital cameras, games and virtual world sites.

Abuse using cyber technology can occur at any time and incidents can intrude into the victim's private life. The audience for such messages can be very large and can be reached rapidly. The content of electronically forwarded messages is hard to control and the worry of content resurfacing can make it difficult for the victim to move on.

a) Cyberbullying and the law

While there is not a specific criminal offence called cyberbullying, activities can be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including:

- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003
- Public Order Act 1986
- The Defamation Acts 1952 and 1996

It is the duty of the school to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees. Incidents that are related to employment, even those taking place outside the hours or place of work may fall under the responsibility of the employer.

b) Effectively tackling abuse using cyber technology

School behaviour policies and procedures explicitly refer to and outline how the school will deal with cyber abuse/ bullying of both staff and students. They include:

- Rules on the use of equipment, software and network access provided by the school.
- The use of staff and student owned equipment and internet access routes, where they are used on school premises and within school hours, e.g. mobile phones, digital cameras and laptops.

Abuse/bullying using cyber technology

Where online content is upsetting/inappropriate and the person(s) responsible for posting is known, the quickest way to get material taken down is likely to be to ensure that the person who posted it understands why the material is unacceptable and to request they remove it.

If the person responsible has not been identified, or will not take the material down, the school will contact the host (i.e. the social networking site) to make a request to get the content taken down. The material posted may breach the service provider's terms and conditions of use and can then be removed.

It is important to be clear about where the content is – for example by taking a screen capture of the material that includes the URL or web address. If the school requests they take down material that is not illegal, it will be clear how it contravenes the site's terms and conditions. In cases of actual/suspected illegal content, the school will contact the police.

c) 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/carers receive a written confirmation of the events and the 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.

Appendix 1:

Inappropriate use of Social Network Site Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, Headteachers, school staff, and in some cases other parents/students. The Governors 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 must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors, 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 libelous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other 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 will also expect that any parent/carer or student 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 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.

We would expect that parents would make all persons responsible for collecting children aware of this policy.

Persons Causing Nuisance / Disturbance on School Premises

Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 School premises are private property and parents have been granted permission from the school to be on school premises. However, in case of abuse or threats to staff, pupils or other parents, school may ban parents from entering school.

It is also an offence under section 547 of the Education Act 1996 for any person (including a parent) to cause a nuisance or disturbance on school premises. The police may be called to assist in removing the person concerned.

School is not responsible for organising arrangements for children in the above circumstances. Parents will need to provide alternative arrangements for bringing children into school