



**Longfield**Academy

## **Parent/Guardian Conduct Policy**

September 2024

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# Parent/Guardian Conduct Policy

In our academy, we believe it's important to:

- Work in partnership with parent/carers to support their child's learning
- Create a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for pupils, staff and parent/carers
- 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 our behaviour policy). This code of conduct aims to help the academy work together with parents and carers by setting guidelines on appropriate behaviour.

We use the term 'parents' and 'carers' to refer to:

- Anyone with parental responsibility for a pupil (See Appendix A for information and the Trust's response to Parental Responsibility and Family Court matters).
- Anyone caring for a child (such as grandparents or child-minders)

## Expectations of all visitors

We expect parents, carers and other visitors to:

- Respect the ethos, vision and values of our academy
- Work together with staff in the best interests of our pupils
- Treat all members of the academy community with respect – setting a good example with speech and behaviour
- Seek a peaceful solution to all issues
- Correct their own child's behaviour (or those in their care), particularly in public, where it could lead to conflict, aggression or unsafe conduct
- Approach the right member of academy staff to help resolve any issues of concern

## Examples of behaviours that will not be tolerated

The below list illustrates behaviours which would be deemed unacceptable and would constitute a breach of the code of conduct. The list is not exhaustive.

- Arriving at the academy without an appointment and making demands to speak with members of staff; all staff meetings are by pre-booked appointment only
- Disrupting, or threatening to disrupt, academy operations (including events on the academy grounds, in the community such as academy trips or sports team matches)
- Swearing, or using offensive language in the presence of others
- Displaying a temper, shouting at members of staff, pupils or other parent/carers
- Threatening another member of the academy community
- Sending abusive messages to another member of the academy community, including via text, email or social media
- Posting defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments about the academy, its staff or any member of its community, on the internet
- Use of physical punishment against your child while on academy premises
- Any aggressive behaviour (including verbally, in writing, or in person) towards any child or adult
- Smoking, drinking alcohol or being under the influence of substances on the academy premises
- Possessing or taking drugs (including legal highs)
- Bringing dogs onto the academy premises (other than guide dogs)

## Incidents in the community

We expect that all parents and carers promote positive relationships within the community and that children have the ability to access good examples of conflict resolution with others from the adults who care for them. In the event of aggressive or threatening behaviour from adults outside of the academy premises, we stress the importance of contacting community agencies with a specialism to support and maintain safety for all involved. This includes local police, Community Police or Local Council for advice and assistance.

## Breaching the code of conduct

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

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

- Send a warning letter to the parent/carer
- Invite the parent/carer in to academy to meet with a senior member of staff or the Principal
- Contact the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour or Child Protection concerns)
- Seek advice from a legal team regarding further action (in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous)
- Ban the parent/carer from contacting the academy by certain means
- Ban the parent/carer from the academy site

The academy 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 Principal of the academy.

The Principal will consult the Academies Director before banning a parent from the academy site.

# Appendix A

Our practice has been developed in accordance with the DFE guidance, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility> -September 2018 and <https://www.gov.uk/parental-rights-responsibilities>.

Everyone who is a parent or has legal parental responsibility (whether they are a resident or non-resident parent) has a right to participate in decisions about a child's education and receive information about the child (even though for day-to-day purposes the school's main contact is likely to be a parent with whom the child lives on school days).

As a school we must treat all parents equally, unless there is a **court order** limiting an individual's exercise of parental responsibility. Individuals who have parental responsibility whether they are the resident parent or not have the right to:

- information, e.g. pupil reports/attendance
- to participate in activities, e.g. vote in elections for parent governors
- to be asked to give consent, e.g. to the child taking part in school trips
- to be informed about meetings involving the child, e.g. Parent Consultations

Where a parent's actions, or proposed actions, conflicts with our ability to act in the child's best interests, we will try to resolve the problem with that parent but avoid becoming involved in conflict or offer biased support in favour of either parent. However, there may be occasions when a school needs to decline requests for action from one or more parents.

In cases where we cannot resolve the conflict between separated parents, we will advise the parent to pursue the matter through the Family Court. We urge parents to engage in appropriate systems to resolve their conflicts and avoid making impulsive decisions that may affect the child's wellbeing. While we will honour the terms of a court order, issues around residency and contact arrangements remain a civil matter to be agreed between the parents and will not be facilitated by members of our staff.

Court orders under section 8 of the Children Act 1989 (often called section 8 orders) settle areas of dispute in relation to the exercise of parental responsibility or a child's care or upbringing, and can limit how an individual exercises their parental responsibility. It must be noted that a Court order limiting a parent's exercise of their parental responsibility does not necessarily prevent or restrict us from continuing to carry out our duties under education law including Safeguarding.