



# DMAT

## Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Visitors Policy 2023-2024

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## Statement of Intent, Introduction, Purpose, and Scope

This Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Visitors has been adopted and agreed by the DMAT Trustees. It provides a reminder to all parents, carers, and all other visitors to our schools about the conduct expected of them. It sets out both what they should aim to do and conduct which will not be tolerated. This is so we can continue to flourish, progress, and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding. This code complements the DMAT Complaints Policy which is designed to handle parental concerns or complaints in a sensitive and mutually supportive manner.

We to have a supportive and friendly parent body. Our parents recognise that educating children is a process that involves partnership between parents, class teachers and the school community. As a partnership, our parents/carers will understand the importance of a good working relationship to equip children with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons we continue to welcome and encourage parents/carers to participate fully in the life of our schools.

At DMAT we believe 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 in all communication, whether verbal / in person, written or electronic.

To help us do this, we set clear expectations and guidelines on behaviour for all members of our community. This code of conduct aims to help our schools work together with parents by setting guidelines on appropriate behaviour.

### 1 Aims of the Policy

- 1.1 DMAT schools are dedicated to ensuring that all pupils achieve their potential and will work in partnership with all stakeholders to achieve this aim. The schools also have a duty of care for both pupils and staff to ensure their safety and wellbeing. The schools will not tolerate parent/carer's behaviour that is unacceptable and has a detrimental effect on the good order and safety of the schools. This policy outlines the behaviours that are unacceptable and what sanctions are available to deal with such behaviour.

- 1.2 The principles in this policy also apply to any other family members of pupils or other visitors to the schools.
- 1.3 This policy does not affect the right of parents/carers or other parties to make complaints to DMAT schools and this policy should be read in conjunction with the DMAT Complaints Policy.

## **2 Expectations of Parents, Carers and Visitors**

- 2.1 \*At DMAT we expect parents, carers, and other visitors to:
- Respect the ethos, vision, and values of our schools
  - Support our high expectations by communicating to pupils the value of education and the importance of academic achievement
  - Work together with staff in the best interests of our pupils
  - Maintain reasonable expectations for staff response to general communications (five working days)
  - Treat all members of the school community with respect – setting a good example with speech and behaviour
  - Seek a peaceful and reasonable solution to all issues
  - Seek to clarify a child’s version of events with that of the school e school, taking the time to listen to both accounts before any judgement or view is reached, in order to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue
  - Correct their own child’s behaviour (or those in their care), particularly in public, where it could lead to conflict, aggression or unsafe conduct.

## **3 Unacceptable Conduct**

- 3.1 \*The following behaviours are actively discouraged and considered unacceptable by DMAT schools. By engaging in any of these, parents/carers are likely to make things more difficult for their child and/or damage the important home- school relationship:
- swearing or the use of other abusive, offensive, or threatening language
  - intimidation
  - aggressive or disruptive behaviour (this may be verbal or physical)
  - threatening violence or acting violently, including damage to property or injury to individuals

- harassment or discriminatory conduct on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation towards staff, pupils, or parents
- Making derogatory or disparaging comments about staff
- behaving in a way which makes others feel distressed, humiliated, or threatened
- frequent, unwarranted and/or unnecessary correspondence which is hindering the proper running of the school for example repeatedly raising the same issue when it has been fully investigated and all points already responded to
- unreasonable demands upon school staff to respond to a parental query, or expectations for staff to communicate outside normal working hours, including holidays
- posting defamatory, offensive, or derogatory comments about the school, its staff, or any member of its community, on social media or messaging platforms
- making recordings of meetings or telephone calls without the explicit prior permission of all involved, and in agreement with senior leaders
- making deliberately false, malicious, or vexatious accusations
- smoking or vaping on school premises
- consumption of alcohol or use of illegal drugs on the school site, or accessing the school site whilst intoxicated
- damaging or destroying school property
- incitement of others to do any of the above

3.2 \*This policy covers any of the above conducts which are committed:

- in the school buildings or on the school site
- towards a member of school staff, governor, visitor, fellow parent, or pupil
- by telephone to the school
- by email to the school
- by any form of written communication to the school
- on social media referring to the school
- in any other setting which, in the reasonable opinion of the headteacher/s or Chair of Governors, should be regulated by this policy

## **4 Strategies and Procedures**

\*Our schools have a range of strategies and procedures to employ with any

parent/carer who engages in unacceptable conduct:

- ending a meeting if this behaviour is displayed
- not replying to communications that are offensive, abusive, or derogatory
- insisting that any communication with the school is through one member of staff only
- Consider banning the offending adult from entering the school grounds (see below)
- Contacting external authorities

Whilst the sanctions below are set out in this policy by way of a sequential process, they can be initiated at any stage if, in the reasonable judgement of the headteacher/s or Chair of Governors, the severity of the behaviour warrants such a level of intervention.

Where the behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the imminent safety and welfare of staff or others, the matter will be referred immediately to the police for action.

#### 4.1 Verbal warning

A parent/carer who displays any of the behaviours described above will be asked to desist.

#### 4.2 Mediation meeting

Where appropriate, the parent/carer may be asked to meet with the headteacher/s, deputy headteacher and/or Chair of Governors to discuss the matter in person.

#### 4.3 Formal written warning/s

Formal written warning(s) may be sent to the parent/carer by letter to their home address. Any letters sent will be circulated to relevant internal parties to ensure that an informed and consistent approach can be adopted. Any letters sent will be kept on the pupil's school file for a period of twelve months.

#### 4.4 Legal sanctions

Legal sanctions will be used in extreme circumstances e.g., if a parent/carer continues to exhibit conduct in breach of this policy or has committed a serious breach of this policy. Legal advice will be sought from the DMAT legal team before legal sanctions are put in place.

#### 4.5 Proportionate Response

DMAT schools 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/s. The headteacher/s will consult the Chair of Governors before banning a parent from the school site.

### **5 Restricted Communication or Access**

5.1 Communication with the school can be restricted e.g., requesting contact in a particular form (for example, letters only), requiring contact to take place with a named person only or restricting telephone calls to specified days and times. Any parent/carer in breach of the restrictions may have their right to access to the school site removed.

5.2 A parent/carer's common licence to access a school site can be removed or restricted for a specified period. In such circumstance's parents/carers may need to make alternative arrangements for bringing children into school. Any entry onto the site in contravention of such a ban and where a nuisance is caused would be a criminal offence under section 547 of the Education Act 1996. Any parent/carer in breach of the ban will be removed from the premises by the police or an authorised member of staff.

5.3 The school may seek a legal injunction under the Protection from Harassment Act requiring the parent/carer to desist from behaving in the manner in question.

### **6 Monitoring and Review**

6.1 The headteacher/s will report to staff from time to time, and to the governing body annually or earlier if the chair so determines, on the number and type of incidents and behaviours displayed by parents/carers received and their outcomes.

6.2 The Trust will review this policy every three years.

\*All lists are for illustrative purposes and are not exhaustive

## **APPENDIX A      Inappropriate Use of Social Media**

Social media websites and messaging platforms are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, Headteachers, school staff, and in some cases other parents/pupils. The Governors considers the use of social media websites or apps being used in this way as unacceptable and not in the best interests of the pupils or the whole school community. Any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the appropriate member of staff, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately, and effectively for all concerned. 'Think before you post' We ask that social media, whether public or private, should not be used to fuel campaigns and voice complaints against the school, its staff, parents, or children.