

Appropriate Conduct Parents, Carers and Visitors Policy

Document Owner:	Trust Board
Responsible Trust Committee:	Trust Leadership Team (TLT)
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APPROVED Signature (Trust Board):	DATE ()
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1. Other relevant policies and documents

- Home-School Agreement
- Complaints Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

2. Explanation of terms used in the policy

'Trust' = Seckford Education Trust

'Schools' = Schools within the Trust

3. Purpose of the policy

This document outlines the policy on appropriate conduct for parents, carers and visitors to the Schools within the Trust. This policy covers the Trust and all its Schools and as such there is no need for each school to have its own policy.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a reminder to all parents, carers and visitors to our schools about their expected conduct, so that we may continue to flourish and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding.

We believe staff, students and parents are entitled to a safe and protective environment in which to work together. Behaviour that may cause harassment, alarm or distress to users of the premises is contrary to the aims of the Trust and its Schools.

4. Policy Statement

In conjunction with our Home-School Agreement, the Trust expects all parents, carers and visitors to:

- respect the caring ethos of our Schools;
- understand that both teachers and parents and carers need to work together for the benefit of the students;
- demonstrate that all members of the Schools community should be treated with respect and therefore set a good example in their own speech and behavior;
- talk politely and respectfully towards each other at all times;
- seek to clarify a child's version of events with the SET School's view in order to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue;
- correct their child's behavior, especially in public, where it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive behavior or unsafe behavior;
- approach the Schools to help resolve any issues of concern;
- avoid using staff as threats to admonish children's behaviour;
- use the correct Schools entrances for parents, carers and visitors and not enter the school via the playground or classroom doors entrances therefore protecting the students and make the school more secure.

5. General approach

We believe that all members of our community should treat each other with respect and that the adults set a good example to students at all times in their interaction and behaviour.

In order to support a peaceful and safe school environment, the Trust will not tolerate parents, carers and visitors exhibiting the following behaviour at our Schools:

- disruptive behavior which interferes with the operation of a classroom, an employee's office, front office area, or any other area of the Schools grounds including team matches and outdoor events;
- impolite and disrespectful comments;
- using threatening or intimidating behaviour;
- loud/or offensive language, swearing, cursing, profane language or displaying temper;
- damaging or destroying Schools' property;
- threatening to do actual bodily harm to a member of staff, Trustee, visitor, fellow parent/carer or student;
- abusive or threatening emails or text/voicemail/phone messages or any other form of written communication;
- defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the Schools or any of the students/parents/carers/staff and the Schools on Facebook or other social networking sites (see Appendix 1). Any concerns you may have about the Schools must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the Head of School or a member of the Trust so it can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned;
- physical aggression towards another adult or a student, including physical punishment against your own child on Schools' premises;
- approaching another student to discuss or chastise their actions towards their own child. Such an approach may be regarded as assault and may have legal consequences;
- smoking and consumption of alcohol or other drugs whilst on Schools' property;
- dogs, or other animals, being brought on to Schools' premises.

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour.

6. Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour from parents, carers and visitors

The Trust will act to ensure that all Schools remain safe places for students, staff, visitors and all other members of our community. If any parent/carer has concerns we will always listen to them and seek to address them.

Any Behavioural Incident will be reported to the Head of School, and the appropriate procedures will be followed. This may include:

- a verbal warning;
- a written warnings;
- and/or exclusion from the school premises.

At any stage, the Trust will report serious incidents of abusive and threatening behaviour to the Police.

It is an offence under section 547 of the Education Act 1997 for any person (including a parent or carer) to cause a nuisance or disturbance on school premises. As such the Trust has a responsibility to ensure that any act of actual or threatened violence is referred to the Police immediately. Further, the Police may be called to assist removing any person demonstrating either abusive or threatening behaviour.

The Trust also reserves the right to take any necessary actions to ensure that members of the school community are not subjected to abuse. School premises are private property and parents, carers and visitors have been granted permission from the Trust to be on school premises. However, in case of abuse or threats to staff, students or other parents and carers, the Trust may the person(s) concerned from entering the school.

A ban (exclusion) from the School site can be introduced without going through the process of a verbal and written warning. Site bans will normally be a fixed period of time in the first instance.

If there is inappropriate behaviour during a meeting towards school staff, the response is likely to be in line with the following:

1. to ask the parent/carer/visitor to calm down;
2. to stop the meeting if the behaviour continues;
3. to offer to make another appointment when the parent/carer/visitor is calm;
4. to state calmly that the meeting has closed for the day;
5. to request that the parent/carer/visitor leave or the staff leave the room;
6. to call a colleague/line manager or the police if necessary;
7. to log the events in an email to the parent/carer/visitor copying in any other staff members present and the Head of School and member of the Trust.

If the conversation is on the telephone, the response is likely to be in line with the following:

- to state that they will end the conversation if the caller is not polite and calm;
- to put the `phone down if they do not respond to this request – first stating that they are putting the `phone down.

There should be a written record made of all incidents with witness statements attached where appropriate. No meeting at the school may be electronically recorded without the express permission of all parties and the information obtained without such permission will not be admissible in any proceedings.

We trust that parent/carers/visitors will assist the Schools with the implementation of this policy. Together we create a positive and uplifting environment not only for the students but also for all who work and visit our schools.

It is important for parents and carers to make sure any persons collecting their children are aware of this policy.

7. Complaints

Any complaints about this policy from outside the Trust should be made in accordance with the Trust's Complaints Policy. Any other complaints should be brought to the attention of the

Head of School of the relevant School in the first instance. Serious issues could be raised through the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy.

8. Compliance and Performance Monitoring

The Trust Board will review this policy every two years and ensure that practice across all schools is in line with this policy. Any review will take into account the most up-to-date legislation and guidance. The Trust has identified a range of Assurance Methodologies as tools by which compliance with policies can be tested. Those most relevant to this policy include:

- Internal Audit
- Random testing by line managers

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, parents and students. The Trustees at Seckford Education Trust consider social or media websites being used in this way to be wholly unacceptable and not in the best interests of the students, Schools or the Trust.

Any concerns must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, Head Teacher or member of the Trust so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

In the event that any student or parent/carer of a student/s being educated in the Schools is found to be posting libelous or defamatory comments on Facebook or any other social network sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. All social media 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 Trust 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.

The Trust will take very seriously the issue of cyber bullying and the use of social networks by students or parents/carers to publicly humiliate another. The Trust will take and deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying.

Staff and parents should note that:

- no photographs other than of themselves or their children alone may be published online/on social networking sites;
- no information or photographs may be published online/on social networking sites that would reflect badly on themselves or the reputation of the school.

The Trust expects all parents/carers to make all persons responsible for collecting children aware of this policy.

Appendix 2 Example of a written warning

Dear ..

I have received a report about your unacceptable conduct on [DATE] at approximately [TIME] when I have been informed that you [SUMMARY OF INCIDENT, INCLUDING EFFECT UPON STAFF, STUDENTS OR OTHER PARENTS].

I must inform you that Seckford Education Trust will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to defend its teachers, members of staff, students and their parents, and other members of the school community.

I am therefore putting you on notice that, if I receive a further report of unacceptable conduct from you, I will have no option but to instigate the Trust's formal procedure to withdraw your permission to enter or be on the premises of SET [NAME] School.

A copy of the Trust's Policy for Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour on School Premises is attached for your consideration.

I should warn you that, if your permission to enter or be on school premises is withdrawn, you can be removed from the premises by a police officer and you may be prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1997. If convicted under that section, you will be liable to a fine of up to £500.00 and have a criminal conviction recorded against you.

If you have any concerns about the School which have led to your unacceptable conduct, you should raise these with the School in accordance with the Trust's Complaints Policy, a copy of which is attached for your consideration.

I trust that we will now be able to put this matter firmly behind us.

Yours sincerely,

Or

Dear ...

[Further to my letter dated [DATE],]I have received a further report about your unacceptable conduct on at approximately [TIME] when it is alleged that you [SUMMARY OF INCIDENT, INCLUDING EFFECT...]

I must inform you that Seckford Education Trust will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to defend its teachers, members of staff, students and their parents, and other members of the school community. I am therefore instructing you that (for a temporary period) you are not to enter or be on the school's premises.

If you do not comply with this instruction, I shall arrange for a police officer to remove you from the premises and you may be prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1997. If convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.00 and a criminal conviction will be recorded against you.

The withdrawal of permission for you to enter or be on the school premises takes effect immediately. However, the Chief Executive Officer will need to decide whether my decision should be confirmed.

Before the review of my decision takes place, you have the opportunity to provide in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to the report of your conduct. These comments may include any expressions of regret on your part and any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct.

To enable the Chief Executive Officer to review my decision at an early stage, you are asked to send any written comments you wish to make within five school days from the date of this letter, i.e. by [DATE].

The Chief Executive Officer will review my decision within ten school days of the date of this letter, whether or not any written comments are received from you.

If, after considering your written comments, the Chief Executive Officer takes the view that my decision should be confirmed, you will be provided with written details of when a further review of the decision will take place.

A copy of the Trust's Policy for Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour on School premises is attached for your consideration.

Until the review has taken place, you may bring your [son][daughter][children] to school and collect [him][her][them] at the end of the school day, but you must not go beyond the school gate or cross the boundary of the school premises.]

[INSERT ADDRESS]

[INSERT POSTCODE]

[DATE]

UPON STAFF, PUPILS OR OTHER PARENTS]

If you have any concerns about the school which have led to your unacceptable conduct, you should raise these with the school in accordance with the Trust's Complaints Policy, a copy of which is attached for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,