



Parent and Carers Code of Conduct

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1. Introduction

At ACES Academies Trust and Cromwell Academy we believe that pupils benefit most when there are close relationships between home and school. Pupils feel more secure and know that everyone is working to make their lives better so that they can fulfil their potential.

We want to create the best possible outcomes for children. This requires the relationship between home and school to be based on the principles of care, integrity, trust and mutual respect (for all parties involved). At Cromwell Academy we are very fortunate to have a supportive and friendly parent body. Our parents and carers recognise that educating children is a process that involves partnerships between parents, class teachers and the school community. We encourage parents and carers to participate fully in the life of our school.

However, on some occasions, staff have to deal with a small minority of parents and carers who do not display the appropriate conduct.

2. Rationale

Children learn best when there is a positive partnership between home and school and whilst every effort is made to work with parents and carers, this will only be possible where they behave in an acceptable way.

The purpose of this Parent and Carers Code of Conduct is to provide a reminder to all parents and carers of the expectations and the possible consequences of aggressive or threatening behaviour towards members of staff or to other visitors to the school.

The school will take action where behaviour is unacceptable or serious and breaches this Code of Conduct or health and safety regulations.

Note: Parents/Carers should ensure they make all persons responsible for collecting their children aware of this Code of Conduct.

3. Our Expectations of Parents and Carers

As well as holding the above principles in mind, parents and carers are reminded:

- To respect the caring ethos and values of the school
- That both staff and parents need to work together for the benefit of their children.
- To seek to clarify a child's version of events with the school's view to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue.
- To correct their child's actions especially where it could lead to conflict, aggressive or unsafe behaviour – both on and off the school premises.
- To be supportive of the school staff and not share any negative views they may have of staff/ other children with their own children.
- That approaching school staff for help to resolve an issue should be done in an appropriate manner.
- All members of the school community should be treated with respect, using appropriate language and behaviour.
- To use other strategies rather than using 'staff' as threats to change their children's behaviour.
- The Home-School Communication Policy sets out our expectations regarding communication between home and school.

It is an offence under Section 547 of the Education Act 1997 for any person, including parents and carers, to cause a nuisance or disturbance on school premises. The school may authorise the removal of a person if they have reasonable cause to believe that the person is causing a nuisance or disturbance and the police may also be called to assist the school in removing a person.

The school expects its staff to behave professionally in these situations and attempt to diffuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues. However, all staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse and the right, in extreme cases, to appropriate self-defence.

4. Behaviour that will Not be Tolerated

- Disruptive behaviour that interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of a classroom, an employee's office area or any other area of the school grounds.
- Using loud or offensive language, swearing, cursing, using inappropriate language or displaying temper.
- Threatening to do actual bodily harm to a member of ACES staff, Governor, visitor, parent/carer or pupil regardless of whether or not the behaviour constitutes a criminal offence.
- Shouting at ACES staff, either in person or over the telephone.
- Physically intimidating a member of ACES staff.
- Threatening, in any way, a member of school/ACES staff, visitor, fellow parent/carer or pupil.
- Approaching someone else's child to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child towards their own child
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or Trust, any other pupils, parents or staff at the school on Facebook or other social media sites

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

5. Breaching the Code of Conduct

When a parent or carer behaves unacceptably towards a member of staff, the member of staff has the right to explain that they are not happy with the approach.

We have advised staff to use the following text when responding to rude/aggressive/abusive behaviour face-to-face or over the phone:

I'm sorry. In line with our expectation that we treat people with respect at (name of school), I am advised by the school to end any conversation that I find to be rude, aggressive or abusive, so I will end this conversation now.

If you would like to continue the conversation you are welcome to email me via the school office, but please do that courteously, and I will respond courteously.

We have advised staff to use the following text when responding to rude/aggressive/abusive communications in writing:

Dear ?,

We expect the communications we receive to be courteous and respectful. I find your communication to be rude, aggressive or abusive and I am therefore advised not to respond to it.

If you can send a new communication that is courteous, via the school office, I will be able to respond to that.

Thank you.

Any incident where a member of staff has needed to refer to this Code of Conduct in relation to something they have experienced will be raised with the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will liaise with the member of staff concerned to assess the issue that has arisen. The Headteacher or appropriate senior staff will then speak to the parent/ carer concerned and seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation.

If necessary, the parent /carer will receive a letter from Appendix 2 (dependent on the issue/ severity of issue). The Headteacher will discuss this with the Chair of Governors.

6. Social Media

The school will also consider its legal options to deal with any misuse on social networking and other sites. Inappropriate use of Social Network Sites and Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, Headteachers, school staff, and in some cases other parents or pupils.

The Department for Education/Government, ACES Trustees and Governors of (name of school) consider the use of social media websites being used in this way as unacceptable.

Any concerns you may have about the school or your child/children must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors, where they will be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

7. Libellous or Defamatory posts

If any pupil or parent/carer of a child/children at (name of school) 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.

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 pupil removes such comments immediately.

8. Cyber Bullying

We take very seriously the use of cyber bullying by one child or a parent to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social network entry (see peer on peer abuse policy).

We will take and deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying.

9. If the Matter Continues

Where all procedures have been exhausted, and aggression and intimidation continue, or where there is an extreme act of violence, a parent or carer may be banned by the Headteacher, with the agreement of the Governing Body, from the school premises for a period of time, subject to review.

Before being banned the following steps will be taken:

1. The parent will be warned, in writing, that they are banned from the premises subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached.
2. Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the Trust, local authority and the police will be included.
3. The Chair of Governors and CEO will be informed of the ban.
4. Where appropriate, arrangements for pupils being delivered to, and collected from the school gate/office will be clarified.

Any person who is banned from the school premises has the right to appeal the decision.

10. When it is not possible to resolve the matter amicably

Parents/ Carers are reminded that the Trust/school has a 'Complaints Policy' which can be referred to by parents at any time.

11. Appendix 1

Model Letter 1 - Initial warning letter from the headteacher

Dear [parent name],

I've received a report about your conduct on [time and date].

[Summary of incident, include location, its effect on staff, pupils and other parents.]

If the incident is minor, add:

This behaviour is not in keeping with our parent code of conduct. [Please find a copy attached to this letter.]

If the incident is more serious, add:

As written in our parent code of conduct, we do not tolerate this kind of behaviour in our school. [Please find a copy attached to this letter.] We believe that all staff, pupils and parents are entitled to a safe, respectful and inclusive environment, and- that parents are as responsible for creating this environment as school staff.

Continue with:

Further breaches of the code of conduct may result in a ban from the school premises.

If you want to invite the parent in for a meeting, add:

I'd like to invite you in to school to discuss this incident, and how we can work together to prevent similar issues in the future.

Please contact the school office on [phone number] to book an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Model Letter 2 – Parent or Carer Banned from the School Site

Dear [parent name],

I am writing to inform you that, after consultation with the chair of governors, I am banning you from the school site until [date].

You can also choose to ban a parent permanently. In that case, amend the sentence above.

Despite previous correspondence and conversations about your conduct, there have been further breaches of our parent code of conduct.

[Include details of the incidents, including dates, locations and effects on staff/pupils/other parents for every relevant incident.]

If you do not comply with the ban, I will arrange for you to be removed from the grounds and you may be prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996.

If you would like to raise a complaint, you can do so using the school's complaints procedures, which are available on our website.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher