



KEEPING OUR STAFF SAFE
incorporating
PARENTS AND CARERS CODE OF CONDUCT
POLICY

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Review Date: October 2024

Introduction

We are very fortunate to have mainly supportive and friendly parents/carers. We want our parents to recognise that educating children is a process that involves partnership between parents, class teachers and the Academy community.

As a partnership, our parents/carers should 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 Academy.

Parental engagement with their children's learning is important in supporting attainment and progress and parents have a legitimate right to understand what their child is learning at Academy.

However, contact between parents/carers and the Academy must be appropriate proportionate and respectful, both of the professional knowledge, experience and skill of teaching and senior staff at the Academy and of the entitlement of staff at the Academy to some work/life balance.

Scope of this Policy

The staff and pupils of Sir Robert Pattinson Academy ('the Academy') have the right to work in a safe and comfortable environment free from harassment, abuse, hostility and other behaviour and conduct that is unwanted.

The Academy also recognises the rights of parents and the obvious practical and other consequences of barring parents and other third parties from Academy premises. This policy is intended to set out the circumstances where banning is carried out with those principles in mind.

This policy takes into account guidance from the Department of Education. The policy is regarded by the Academy as an extension of our safeguarding responsibility.

Purpose

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

The policy sets out:

- The general principles underpinning the conduct of members of the Academy community.

- How it is expected that communication between parents/carers and the Academy will take place.
- What behaviour towards the Academy and members of the Academy community are deemed unacceptable and open to challenge by the Academy.
- The additional steps the Academy can take in respect of unacceptable behaviour by a parent or carer.

To whom does this policy apply?

- This policy applies to all parents, guardians, contractors, visitors and other third parties who have a reason to visit our academy, or interact with our staff. However, for convenience, we shall mostly refer to these people as 'parents' in this policy.

General Principles

- Remember that the Academy is governed by the Academy rules as decided upon by the Governing Body of the Academy and the Senior Leadership Team.
- Respect the caring ethos and values of our Academy;
- Understand that both teachers and parents need to work together for the benefit of their children;
- Demonstrate that all members of the Academy community should be treated with respect and therefore set a good example in their own speech and behaviour;

Communication

There are many reasons you might want to communicate with the Academy or a member of staff at the Academy. This could be simply phoning in to report a child's absence or just informing the member of staff at the gate when you drop your child off that they have forgotten their PE kit or have been complaining of feeling a little unwell. These short conversations to impart information are entirely necessary.

However, please remember:

- How busy members of staff are during the Academy day, particularly first thing in the morning and, where you need to speak with a member of staff, make an appointment to do so at a time when they can give you their full attention.
- Approach the Academy to help resolve any issues of concern by making an appointment to meet with the class teacher in the first instance or with the teacher's line manager.
- If the matter is still not resolved, follow the procedure in the Academy's Complaints Policy which is available under the heading "Policies" on our website.

- If you wish to correspond by email this should be done through the Academy's central email address at enquiries@srpa.co.uk. This address is monitored regularly during the Academy day and emails forwarded to the appropriate member of staff.
- Ensure that all such communications are polite and that you are always mindful of the right of the recipient to be treated with respect.
- When meeting face to face with members of staff to discuss any matters concerning your child's education or wellbeing in the Academy approach the matter calmly and politely as this will also ensure progress can be made to address any issues or concerns. Remember that if you wish to speak with a member of staff it will normally fall to you to make a mutually convenient appointment.

Behaviour Expectations

Our expectations of parents' behaviour is aligned with the ordinary expectations of behaviour that anyone can reasonably expect. This policy is concerned with 'unreasonable behaviour'. What amounts to unreasonable behaviour is determined by the Academy. There is no definitive list, but the following examples of behaviour are likely to be regarded as unreasonable:

- Shouting and swearing at staff and/or students.
- Verbally abusing or insulting staff including on social media/email
- Making unfair derogatory or defamatory comments about staff or pupils including on social media/ by email
- Using violence or threats of violence including on social media/by email
- Drunkenness, intoxication or otherwise appearing to be under the influence of a substance
- Vexatious complaints
- Harassment and discrimination including on social media/by email
- Ignoring warnings to cease a particular type of behaviour including the use of social media
- Any other conduct that makes staff feel unsafe, upset, threatened, alarmed or distressed
- Attending site when asked not to or when subject to a site ban.

It is important to recognise that the key consideration is the perception of the behaviour and how this makes the recipient feel; a lack of intention to cause upset does not mean that the conduct cannot be regarded as unreasonable. That said, the Academy also recognises that misunderstandings and miscommunications do occur from time to time and will look carefully at the individual circumstances before taking action under this policy.

Whilst on site, we have rules in place from time to time covering matters such as safeguarding, health and safety and COVID-19. Parents must comply with these rules, which can be found on our website. Failure to do so may also be regarded as an example of unreasonable behaviour.

Visitors to the site should be aware that the entire Academy site is under 24 hour CCTV surveillance. Calls to the Academy including voicemails are routinely monitored and recorded.

Unacceptable Behaviour:

- Contacting staff or members of the Governing Body out of Academy hours using their individual email addresses rather than the Academy contact email address above. Staff and Governors are entitled to their own personal and family time.
- Do not send any form of correspondence to members of staff or Governors at the Academy demanding an immediate response or a response within your own time frame as the matter will be addressed, where appropriate, in a time frame deemed appropriate by the recipient.
- Send lengthy, frequent, demanding, or disrespectful emails to staff members as this will seriously undermine their ability to carry out their core role of educating the children in their care.
- When corresponding or speaking with staff in person do not use language that calls in to question their professional abilities or represents any form of personal attack or seek to direct how they carry out their professional roles or run the Academy. The running of the Academy is a matter for the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body of the Academy.
- It is unacceptable to record telephone conversations with staff members or to record meetings with staff and/or Governors at the Academy without making them aware you are doing it and seeking their express permission to capture what could be their personal information and breach their human right to privacy which extends to their workplace.
- Resort to any other form of criticism of the Academy, its staff or Governing Body or any other matters that relate directly to the Academy via a medium other than the Academy's complaints policy. Parents and carers are asked to be aware of the Academy's "social media guidance" as it appears in "Appendix 1".
- When speaking with a staff member or any other member of the Academy community whether in person, on the telephone or by any other means of communication it is entirely inappropriate to raise your voice, invade their personal space, use language that is disrespectful, rude, offensive, aggressive or threatening.
- Do not shout, swear or cause any form of disruption on Academy grounds.

- Any threats of violence or use of violence towards anyone on Academy premises is a criminal offence, as is damage to Academy premises and will be likely to result in the matter being reported to the police.
- Do not smoke or consume alcohol or other drugs on any part of the Academy premises.
- Do not bring dogs onto the Academy premises unless already agreed with the Academy that the dog is a guide dog or other form of assistance dog and consent has been given for the presence of the dog to assist its owner on Academy premises.
- Do not correct your own child's behaviour especially in public where it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive behaviour or unsafe behaviour;
- Avoid using staff as threats to reprimand children's behaviour;
- Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child towards their own child. (Such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and may have legal consequences).
- Do not use disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of a classroom, an employee's office, office area or any other area of the Academy grounds including team matches.

Additional Steps by the Academy:

- The member of staff or Governor concerned may challenge the behaviour by asking the person concerned to respect their personal space, stop shouting or using inappropriate behaviour or may end an unacceptable phone call or ask you to leave the Academy.
- The Academy may correspond in writing with a parent or carer to challenge behaviour that the Academy is finding unacceptable such as, for example, being rude to a member of staff or sending too many emails making demands of the Academy.
- If the Academy decide the matter requires a more formal approach the Academy may instruct its legal advisers to write to the parent or carer, warning them about their behaviour and/or putting in place a communications strategy to restrict their means of corresponding with the Academy and/or banning them from Academy premises if felt to be appropriate.
- Clearly, in serious instances where the peace is breached or the criminal law broken, the Academy will also involve the police.

Legal Considerations

The Academy's premises are private land. As such, visitors do not have an automatic right of entry. Parents have an 'implied licence' to enter our site for the legitimate purposes of dropping off or picking up children or attending formal school events or appointments. However, the implied licence can be withdrawn by the Academy under this policy.

A person who enters our site without permission (that is, a person who does not have an implied licence to enter, or who has had their implied licence revoked under this policy) may be trespassing. Trespassing is a civil offence. A trespasser will be asked to leave. The Academy has the right to take civil action if a person refuses to leave.

Additionally, it is a criminal offence under section 547 of the Education Act 1996 for a person on school premises without lawful authority to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance.

A person contravening section 547 will be referred to Lincolnshire Police. The Academy has a policy of pushing for prosecution of offenders who cause alarm or distress to staff or pupils.

Please note that Academy premises are not public places but private premises and you have an implied right to enter the Academy as a parent or carer of a child at the Academy but it is open to the Academy to remove that right of entry at any time it deems this to be necessary.

We trust that parents and carers will assist our Academy with the implementation of this policy and we thank you for your continuing support of the Academy.

Note: Could parents please ensure they make all persons responsible for collecting their children aware of this policy.

Procedure of barring parents from site

As a general rule, barring a parent from site is not a decision to be taken lightly, but may not necessarily be a last resort. In other words, it is not necessary to completely exhaust all possibilities before resorting to banning. It may, for instance of extreme or urgent cases, be appropriate to ban without any prior warning or dialogue.

In most instances, however, the Academy will engage with the person exhibiting unreasonable behaviour first and seek to establish a dialogue with a view to avoiding banning if at all possible. This may include issuing a warning and providing the parent with a copy of this policy.

The decision to ban a parent from the Academy's premises is taken by the Head Teacher, but may be taken by the Chair of Governors in the Head Teacher's absence.

The ban must be put in place by way of a letter to the parent. The letter should explain the reasons for and extent of the ban and provide the parent with a contact email and postal address to raise any queries about the ban. In all cases, the parent has a right to make representations in writing on the ban, but has no automatic right to a meeting or other in-person appointment.

The following types of ban are permissible:

Provisional ban – a provisional ban may be effective immediately or at a proposed future date and is for a short period of time, usually 28 days. The parent will be invited to make written representations on the ban (or proposed ban) and be given a reasonable timescale to respond. After the initial period, the Academy will review the ban and decide whether to lift (or revoke) the ban or implement another type of ban, taking into account any representations submitted by or on behalf of the parent.

Temporary ban – this is the most typical type of ban. The length of the ban will be determined by the Head Teacher but should be for no longer than 100 days (although a temporary ban may be succeeded by a further temporary ban if this is appropriate). The ban should be periodically reviewed by the Academy for as long as the parent has children on our roll.

Permanent ban – a permanent ban should be a last resort and should only be implemented after a temporary ban has been unsuccessful. A permanent ban should be reviewed periodically for as long as the parent has children on our roll.

Reviewing bans

All bans, except provisional bans, must be reviewed at least once by the Head Teacher during the ban period and lifted if they are no longer appropriate. Bans may be lifted upon the parent agreeing to certain conditions, such as moderating their behaviour or only contacting named members of staff.

Parents subject to a ban may ask for a review. Where a parent wishes to ask for a ban to be reviewed, they should write to the Head Teacher, who will conduct the review within fourteen school days of receiving the request. The Head Teacher should write to the parent and explain the outcome of the review.

A parent may only ask for a ban to be reviewed once within a reasonable period of time. What is a reasonable period of time is for the Head Teacher to determine and will depend on the length of the ban, but would not normally be less than one full school term.

A parent who disagrees with a ban must ask for a review, and may not use the Academy's complaints policy to complain about a ban unless they believe that the ban was implemented unlawfully or for an illegitimate motive, such as discrimination.

Appendix 1: Inappropriate use of Social Network Site

Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against academies, Head Teachers, Academy staff, and in some cases other parents/pupils.

The Academy seeks to teach pupils the importance of appropriate and responsible use of social media and it is therefore vital that everyone in the Academy community, including parents and carers, lead by example.

The Governing Body considers that the use of social media websites to complain about the Academy/individual members of staff or to make personal comments about anyone in the Academy community is unacceptable and not in the best interests of the children or the whole Academy community. Any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels using the Academy Complaints Policy by speaking to the class teacher, the House Team or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned in line with that policy.

In the event that any student or parent/carer of a child/ren being educated in the Academy 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 Academy will also expect that any parent/carer or student removes such comments immediately.

In serious cases, the Academy 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 deal with this as a serious incident of Academy bullying. Thankfully such incidents are extremely rare.

Please note that the inappropriate use of a communications network can give rise to offences under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 or the Communications Act 2003 and if persistent could be deemed to constitute the offence of harassment.