

Code of Conduct for Parents and Visitors on Duncombe Primary Premises

1. Introduction

At Duncombe Primary, we take great pride in developing and maintaining excellent relationships with all our parents and carers, and with visitors. We recognise that the success of the school is dependent on strong partnerships between all members of the school community - children, parents and carers, staff and partners.

We understand that this partnership must be based on mutually polite, positive and respectful relationships. We want all parents to be confident that the school has arrangements to keep their children safe.

As part of this, we have developed this code of conduct for parents and visitors to ensure that behaviour from all members of the school's community is respectful and courteous, always sets a good example to children and does not cause anyone in the school to feel distressed, threatened or unsafe.

We expect our staff and service users to engage with each other in a polite and respectful way. In this context, threatening, violent or abusive behaviour or language towards any members of our school's community is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

This includes using language that is racist, sexist, homophobic, ableist, ageist or transphobic. Raised voices and shouting are also unacceptable.

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Parents and carers have an **'implied licence'** to come on to school premises at certain times, such as dropping off or picking up younger children or to attend a school event. The outcome of unacceptable behaviour may be having that 'implied licence' withdrawn – this means being barred from the school premises.

The school will ask the police to remove a parent or visitor who has been barred but still appears on the school premises. If they cause a nuisance or disturbance while on the premises, they may be prosecuted in the courts under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 which states that [any person who is on school premises without lawful authority and causes or permits nuisance or disturbance to the annoyance of persons who lawfully use those premises is guilty of an offence](#).

Any person convicted of an offence could face a fine of £500 and receive a criminal record.

2. Respect and concern for others and their rights

We expect parents and visitors to show respect and concern for others by:

- supporting the respectful ethos of Duncombe Primary by setting a good example in their own speech and behaviour towards all members of their school community
- working together with teachers for the benefit of children. This includes approaching the school to resolve any issues of concern and to discuss and clarify specific events to bring about a positive solution. This can include seeking to clarify a child's version of events with the school's view to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue
- correcting their own child's behaviour, especially where it could lead to conflict
- avoiding using staff as threats to admonish children
- demonstrating in their own behaviour that all members of the school community should be treated with respect and understand that even if there is conflict due to a member of staff's oversight, parents must remain calm and respectful
- reinforcing the school's [policy on behaviour](#)
- keeping our children safe by showing respect and consideration for our neighbours.

To support a calm and safe school environment Duncombe Primary does not tolerate:

- disruptive behaviour which interferes with the operation of a classroom, an office area or any other part of the school grounds
- using loud and/or offensive language or displaying temper
- threatening harm or the use of physical aggression towards another adult or child. This includes approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them and physical punishment against your own child on school premises (some actions may constitute an assault with legal consequences)
- damaging or destroying school property
- the filming or recording of any abusive, threatening, or aggressive behaviour instigated towards a member of staff or child
- electronic recordings of meetings or telephone calls by parents or staff without the explicit prior permission of all involved, and in agreement with the Headteacher
- abusive, threatening, malicious or inflammatory emails, phone or social network messages to anyone within the school community
- smoking and consumption of alcohol or other drugs or accessing the school site whilst intoxicated
- dogs being brought on to the school premises (other than guide dogs).

The above behaviours on school premises will be reported to the police and a school may prohibit an offending adult (parent/visitor) from entering the school grounds to safeguard their school community.

3. Public Advertisement and social media

Duncombe Primary acknowledges that relevant individuals have a right to express their views on the school's performance. However, Duncombe Primary considers that creating and distributing flyers and posters in the school community that suggest that the school is unsafe and that staff are not suitable to teach children and young adults is counterproductive and is not in the best interests of the children and the whole school community.

Duncombe Primary strongly encourages parents and carers to use the appropriate channels to raise their concerns by speaking to the class teacher in the first instance so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, headteachers, school staff and, in some cases, other parents/pupils. Duncombe Primary considers the use of social media websites in this way as unacceptable and not in the best interests of the children or the whole school community. We will endeavour to seek to prohibit abusive/offensive comments by contacting the police.

If any parent of a child/ren being educated at Duncombe Primary 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.

Duncombe Primary also expects any parent to remove such comments immediately.

In serious cases, Duncombe Primary will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites.

Online activity which Duncombe Primary considers inappropriate:

- identifying or posting images/videos of children
- abusive or personal comments about staff, governors, children or other parents
- bringing the school into disrepute
- posting defamatory or libellous comments
- emails circulated or sent directly with abusive or personal comments about staff or children
- using social media to publicly challenge school policies or discuss issues about individual children or members of staff
- threatening behaviour, such as verbally intimidating staff, or using bad language
- breaching school security procedures.

At Duncombe Primary we take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will deal with any reported incidents appropriately in line with the actions outlined in this policy.

4. What happens if someone ignores or breaks the code?

Stage One

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

In cases where the code of conduct has been broken but the breach was not libellous, slanderous or a criminal matter, the school will then send a warning letter to the parent/visitor setting out what unacceptable behaviour happened when and saying that if this behaviour continues, they will be barred. Duncombe Primary will offer the parent/visitor the opportunity to submit a written response to the school with their version of events.

➤ **See Appendix – Stage One Letter**

If the breach is serious, the school can go straight to Stage 2, whereby the parent or visitor are immediately barred from entering the school. If there is considered to be a serious and potentially criminal matter, the school will contact the appropriate authorities (in the first instance referral to the police). This will include any or all cases of threats or violence and actual violence to any child, staff member or governor in the school. This will also include anything that could be seen as a sign of harassment of any member of the school community,

Stage Two

If it is a serious breach and/or the parent/visitor does not respond to the warning letter and their behaviour breaching the code continues, Duncombe Primary will send a letter withdrawing permission to enter the school premises on a temporary basis. Initially, that period is likely to be around ten school days. The parent/visitor will be given the opportunity to make written representations to the chair of governors and headteacher on the withdrawal of permission within a set period of time determined by the school.

The barring of a parent / visitor will then be reviewed as the period of barring is due to end – the parent / visitor can submit new information in writing for the head and chair to consider. The chair of governors and headteacher will thereafter decide whether the withdrawal of permission is to continue.

➤ **See Appendix – Stage Two Letter**

5. Communication strategies

Duncombe Primary will:

- end a meeting if unacceptable behaviour is displayed
- not reply to communications that are offensive, abusive or derogatory
- if necessary, insist that the parent/visitor communicates with the school through one member of staff only or a designated email address
- seek advice from the local authority legal team regarding further action in cases of conduct where evidence suggests that behaviour would be tantamount to libel or slander.

Duncombe Primary will always respond to an incident in a proportionate way. The final decision for how to respond to breaches of the code of conduct rests with the headteacher/chair of governors.

6. Not following a banning order

Refusing to follow a banning order may constitute a criminal offence under section 547 of the Education Act 1996 (where a person without lawful authority is present on school premises and causes or permits a nuisance or disturbance to the annoyance of persons who lawfully use those premises). Breaching a banning order which has been applied reasonably is likely to constitute causing or permitting a nuisance or disturbance.

If a parent/visitor pursues defamation and malicious communication about the school (including staff and pupils), the law states the following:

- The anti-Social Behaviour Police and Crime Act 2014 Section 7(1) states that anti-social behaviour (ASB) means:
 - a) conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person,
 - b) conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises, or
 - c) conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.

In this case, the behaviour of the parents/visitors by posting the article on social media could be construed as ASB if it can be shown on a balance of probabilities that their behaviour has caused or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person.

7. What happens if a parent has a concern about their child in relation to the school?

- Make an arrangement to speak to the class teacher.
- If the concern remains, contact the key stage phase leader.
- If the problem is not resolved, make an appointment to speak to the Headteacher.
- If the issue is then still not resolved, parents should follow the school's complaints policy and procedures which are likely to involve the chair of governors or a selected committee of governors.
- Governors do not have the authority as an individual to deal with complaints and they will not get involved in your complaint. Governors are required to remain impartial in case they need to consider your complaint at a later stage.

8. Acknowledgement

Please complete the form below to acknowledge that you read and understand the contents of this policy.

I/we..... (Parent/carers full name/s)
parent/s/ carers of:(child's Name),
will behave appropriately at all times while on the premises and comply with Duncombe
Primary's Code of Conduct for Parents and Visitors.

Signature/s of Parent/s

.....,

Headteacher/ Executive Head

Signature.....

Date of agreement.....

Appendix - Islington Parent Barring Letters

LETTER 1 - TEMPLATE LETTER TO PARENT – WARNING BEFORE IMPOSING BAN

[INSERT NAME] [INSERT ADDRESS] [INSERT POSTCODE] [INSERT DATE]

Dear [INSERT]

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

I must inform you that **Duncombe Primary** will not tolerate such conduct 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 school's formal procedure to withdraw your permission to enter or be on the premises of Duncombe Primary.

A copy of the school's **Code of Conduct for Parents and Visitors on School Premises** is attached for your consideration. If your permission to enter or be on school premises is withdrawn and you breach the barring, you can be removed from the premises by a police officer and you may be prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996.

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 wish to submit a written response to the school, addressed to the headteacher, with your version of events, please do this by [date] – a secure email would be the best way to do this or a letter posted to the headteacher (school office).

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 school's Complaints Policy, a copy of which is also attached for your consideration.

I trust that we will now be able to put this matter firmly behind us and now work in partnership to best support [CHILD NAME].

Yours sincerely,

[HEADTEACHER]

LETTER 2 - TEMPLATE LETTER TO PARENT - IMPOSING INTERIM BAN ON ENTERING SCHOOL PREMISES

[INSERT NAME] [INSERT ADDRESS] [INSERT POSTCODE] [INSERT DATE]

Dear [INSERT],

I have received a **report/further report** about your unacceptable conduct on [DATE] at approximately [TIME] when it is alleged that you used offensive language and threatened a member of staff

I must inform you that **Duncombe Primary** 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. This decision will be reviewed on [date].

If you wish to make written representations to the chair of governors and headteacher, please do so by [Date]. A secure email would be the best way to do this or a letter posted to the headteacher (school office). The chair and I will consider whether to revoke the barring decision immediately.

If in the meantime 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 1996.

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.

You will be provided with written details of when a further review of the decision will take place.

A copy of the school's **Code of Conduct for Parents and Visitors 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.

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 school's Complaints Policy, a copy of which is attached for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

[HEADTEACHER]

LETTER 3 - TEMPLATE LETTER TO PARENT - LIFTING BAN ON ENTERING SCHOOL PREMISES

[INSERT NAME] [INSERT ADDRESS] [INSERT POSTCODE] [INSERT DATE]

Dear [INSERT],

I wrote to you on [DATE] confirming the decision to withdraw permission for you to enter and be on the premises of [SCHOOL].

In that letter, I advised you that I would take steps to review the decision again on [DATE].

I have determined that it is now appropriate to revoke the decision to withdraw your permission to enter and be on the school's premises. I am therefore restoring to you permission to come on to the school's premises with immediate effect.

I do, however, remain concerned about your conduct on [DATE], and I must warn you that, if there is any repetition of your behaviour, as Headteacher, I will not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come on to the school's premises again.

I hope that we can now draw a line under this matter and look forward to an improved relationship between yourself and the school in the future.

Yours sincerely,

[HEADTEACHER]

LETTER 4 - TEMPLATE LETTER TO MEMBER OF PUBLIC - IMPOSING BAN ON ENTERING SCHOOL PREMISES

[INSERT NAME] [INSERT ADDRESS] [INSERT POSTCODE] [INSERT DATE]

Dear [INSERT]

I have received a report about your unacceptable conduct on [DATE] at approximately [TIME] when it is alleged that you entered the premises of Duncombe Primary and [INSERT SUMMARY OF INCIDENT, INCLUDING EFFECT UPON STAFF, STUDENTS, PARENTS OR OTHER VISITORS].

You have no lawful authority to enter or be on the school's premises, and I must inform you that the school will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to defend its staff, students and their parents, and other members of the school community.

I am therefore instructing you that you are not to enter or be on the school's premises in the future.

If you do not comply with this instruction, I shall arrange for a police officer to remove you from the school's premises, and you may be prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996.

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.

If you wish to submit a written response to the school, addressed to the headteacher, with your version of events, please do this by [date] – a secure email would be the best way to do this or a letter posted to the headteacher (school office).

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 school's Complaints Policy, a copy of which is attached for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

[HEADTEACHER]