



Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Visitors

This policy was adopted by the Full Governing body.

Reviewed: Summer term 2023
Next review: Autumn term 2025

Signed:

Signed:

Chair of Governors

Headteacher

Date:

Date:

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1. Purpose and scope

At Stonehill School, 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 at all times

At Stonehill School we have many supportive parents who recognise that educating children is a process that involves partnership between home and school. We welcome and encourage parents and carers to participate fully in the life of our school.

The purpose of the **Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Visitors**, is to outline the conduct expected of them so that staff and parents can work together to ensure a safe and positive school environment for our children.

To help us do this, we set clear expectations and guidelines on behaviour for all members of our community. This includes staff (through the Staff Code of Conduct) and pupils (through our Behaviour Policy).

This Code of Conduct aims to help the school work together with parents and carers by setting guidelines on appropriate behaviour.

2. Our expectations of parents and carers

We expect parents, carers and other visitors to:

- Respect the ethos, vision and values of our school
- Where relevant, follow the policies and procedures of our school
- Model appropriate behaviour for our pupils at all times
- Work together with staff in the best interests of our pupils
- Treat all members of the school community with respect – setting a good example with speech and behaviour
- Seek a peaceful solution to all issues
- Correct their own child's behaviour (or those in their care), particularly in public, where it could lead to conflict, aggression or unsafe conduct
- Approach the right member of school staff to help resolve any issues of concern

3. Behaviour that will not be tolerated

- Any form of discrimination against a member of staff, parent, carer or child, and particularly against those with 'protected characteristics' as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.
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- Disrupting, or threatening to disrupt, school operations (including events on the school grounds and sports team matches)
 - Swearing, or using offensive language
 - Aggressive behaviours including shouting at members of staff, pupils or other parents and carers
 - Threatening another member of the school community
 - Deliberate attempts to destroy the reputation of the school or members of the school community through spreading malicious gossip or rumour
 - Sending abusive messages to another member of the school community, including via text, email or social media
 - Filming or any form of recording on school premises without permission from the school
 - Posting defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments about the school, its staff or any member of its community, on social media platforms
 - Use of physical punishment against your child while on school premises
 - Disciplining another person's child. Any concerns regarding another child's behaviour should be discussed with a member of staff, not the child.
 - Smoking or drinking alcohol on the school premises (unless alcohol has been allowed at a specific event)
 - Possessing or taking drugs (including legal highs)
 - Taking photographs, audio or visual recordings of children, adults or members of the school community on or near the school premises without permission from the school
 - Bringing dogs onto the school premises (other than guide dogs)

4. Breaching the Code of Conduct

If the school suspects, or becomes aware, that a parent has breached the Code of Conduct, the school will gather information from those involved and speak to the parent about the incident.

Depending on the nature of the incident, the school may then:

- Send a warning letter to the parent
 - Invite the parent into school to meet with a senior member of staff or the Headteacher
 - Contact the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour)
 - Seek advice from Herts Legal Team regarding further action (in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous)
 - Ban the parent from the school site
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The school 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.

The Headteacher will consult the Chair of Governors before banning a parent from the school site.

Appendix 1: model letters

Initial warning letter from the Headteacher

Dear [parent name],

I have received a report regarding an incident/your conduct on [time and date].

[Include summary of incident, location, impact on staff, pupils and other parents.]

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:]

As written in our Parent Code of Conduct, we do not accept this kind of behaviour in our school.

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.

Further breaches of the Parent Code of Conduct may result in a ban from the school premises.

I would like to invite you in to school to discuss the incident so that we can work together to prevent similar issues in the future.

Please contact the school office on 01462 620262 to book an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

Elaine Close
Headteacher

Model letter banning a parent from the school site

Dear [parent name],

Despite previous correspondence and conversations with you regarding your conduct, there have been further breaches of our Parent Code of Conduct.

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

Following consultation with the Chair of Governors, I am writing to inform you that you will not be allowed on the school site until [date]. This is to ensure the well-being of members of our school community.

[If a ban is permanent amend the sentence above]

If you do not comply with the ban, arrangements will be made for you to be removed from the school grounds/premises and you may be prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996.

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

Yours sincerely,

Elaine Close
Headteacher

Appendix 2: School statement regarding online abuse of individuals and relevant legislation

Social media sites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, Headteachers, school staff and in some cases other parents or pupils. Stonehill School considers the use of social media sites in this way as unacceptable and not in the best interests of the children or the whole school community. Any concerns parents have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, Headteacher or Chair of Governors, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

In the event that any pupil or parent/carer of a child being educated at Stonehill School is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments about the school, its staff or families 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.

In serious cases, the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites. "Cyber bullying" by any member of the school community with the aim of publicly humiliating or bullying another through inappropriate emails, texts or social network entries will be reported to the police.

Online abuse of individuals: relevant legislation

An online or other form of comment might be regarded as defamatory if it is directly about, or refers to, an individual who may be easily identified.

This could give rise to a civil claim for libel.

There are four UK statute laws related to the use of IT in relation to bullying which could apply in this situation. These are:

- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997: this states that it is unlawful to cause harassment, alarm or distress by 'a course of conduct';
- The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994: this defines a criminal offence of intentional harassment, which covers all forms, including sexual harassment;
- The Malicious Communications Act 1998: this states that it is an offence to send an indecent, offensive or threatening letter, electronic communication or other article to another person (originally passed 1988; second impression 1998);
- The Communications Act 2003: under this Act a person is guilty of an offence if he/she sends by means of a public electronic communications network a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character

Additionally, if the comments specifically target individuals who have protected characteristics such as comments about disability, gender, race and sexuality, prosecution could be sought through anti-discriminatory laws.
