

# Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Visitors



# Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Visitors to Moreland Primary School and Children's Centre

## **Purpose and scope**

This code of conduct sets clear expectations and behaviours for parents, carers and visitors about expected conduct so that we can work together to ensure safe and positive environments for our children and staff.

We use the term "parents" and "carers" to refer to:

- Anyone with parental responsibility for a pupil
- Anyone caring for a child (such as grandparents/child-minders/foster carers)

We use the term "visitors" to refer to:

- Contractors And Maintenance Workers (including IT workers)
- Health Professionals
- Local Authority Professionals (social workers, educational psychologist, SEND officers, Officers from the Fair Access team, Teaching and Learning Consultants etc)
- Other external visitors to school (peripatetic tutors, sports coaches, governors, school tutors, alternative education providers etc)

## **Respect and concern for others and their rights**

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

- supporting the respectful ethos of Moreland Primary School and Children's Centre by setting a good example in their own speech and behaviour towards all members of their school community;
- working together with teachers and support staff 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 (which can be found on the school website or in the school office);
- keeping our children safe by showing respect and consideration for our neighbours.

**To support a calm and safe school environment Moreland Primary School and Children's Centre 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 media messages to and about 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 appropriate authorities and a school may prohibit an offending adult (parent/visitor) from entering the school grounds to safeguard their school community.

## **Public Advertisement and social media**

Whilst Moreland Primary School and Children's Centre acknowledges that relevant individuals have a right to express their views on the school's performance, Moreland Primary School and Children's Centre considers that creating flyers and posters that are distributed 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. Moreland Primary School and Children's Centre strongly encourages that any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels 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. Moreland Primary School and Children's Centre considers the use of social media websites being used 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 relevant agencies. Any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the Class Teacher in the first instance so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately, and effectively for all concerned.

If any pupil or parent of a child/ren being educated at Moreland Primary School and Children's Centre 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. Moreland Primary School and Children's Centre will also expect that any parent or pupil removes such comments immediately.

In serious cases Moreland Primary School and Children's Centre 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 any member of a Moreland Primary School and Children's Centre community to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social network entry. We will take and deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying.

Online activity which we consider inappropriate:

- Identifying or posting images/videos of children
- Abusive or personal comments about staff, governors, children or other parents
- Bringing the school in 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 our school we take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will deal with any reported incidents appropriately in line with the actions outlined in this policy.

### **What happens if someone ignores or breaks the code?**

In the event of any parent/visitor of the school breaking this code then proportionate actions will be taken as follows:

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

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

- Send a warning letter to the parent/carer/visitor. In cases where the code of conduct has been broken but the breach was not libellous, slanderous, or criminal matter, the school will send a formal warning letter to the parent/carer/visitor with an invite to a meeting with a senior member of staff or the Headteacher. At this meeting, any parent/carer/visitor being considered for withdrawal of permission to be on the school site will be given the opportunity to make representations.
- If the parent/carer/visitor refuses to attend the meeting then the school will write to the parent/carer/visitor and ask them to stop the behaviour causing the concern and warn that if they do not, permission for them to enter the school premises may be withdrawn. If after this, the behaviour continues, the parent/visitor will again be written to and informed that permission has now been withdrawn. The parent/carer/visitor will be given the opportunity to make written representations on

the withdrawal of permission within a set period of time determined by the school. The school will thereafter decide whether the withdrawal of permission is to continue.

- Withdrawing permission to enter the school premises can be temporarily introduced without having to go through all the steps offered above in more serious cases (for example if a member of staff is physically attacked). In these cases, the parent/visitor will be given the opportunity to make representations on the withdrawal of permission within a set period of time determined by the school. The school will thereafter decide whether the withdrawal of permission is to continue.
- Permission withdrawal will normally be limited in the first instance.
- The Headteacher will consult their chair of governors before withdrawing permission for a parent to enter the school premises.
- End a meeting if the unacceptable behaviour is displayed
- Not reply to communications that are offensive, abusive or derogatory
- Insist that the parent/visitor communicates with the school through one member of staff only or a designated email address
- Contact the appropriate authorities in cases (in the first instance referral to the Police) where the unacceptable behaviour is considered to be a serious and potentially criminal matter. This will include any or all cases of threats or violence and actual violence to any child, staff 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, such as any form of insulting social media post or any form of social media cyber bullying.
- 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.

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/Chair of Governors.

The Head Teacher in discussion with the Chair of Governors and the local authority will take additional actions if parents/visitors refuse to abide by the sanctions implemented by the school. These may include the following:

- When refusing to follow a banning order, parents/carers/visitors are advised that this 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/carer/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/carers/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.

### **What happens if a parent or carer has a concern about their child in relation to the school?**

- Initially contact the class teacher.
- If the concern remains, contact the Key Stage Phase Leader.
- If still unresolved, they should contact the Headteacher prior to following the steps outlined in the schools Complaints Policy (which can be found on the school website or in the school office/reception area).