

ST GABRIEL'S PARISH PRIMARY SCHOOL

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY



Rationale:

The Parent Code of Conduct has been developed to clearly articulate the expectations and aspirations for our school community. The Code highlights the importance of the partnership between school staff and community members for the benefit of the students at school and reflects the school's mission and vision. The Code recognises and respects the diversity of individuals in a learning community and emphasises the importance of the role parents have as educators.

Aims:

At St. Gabriel's we aim to provide an open, welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all. We believe that parents are valuable contributors and participants in the life of our School. This Parent Code of Conduct outlines the way in which our community requires all parents and family members to conduct themselves when visiting our school, participating in school activities and communicating with members of our school community (including students, school staff, other parents and visitors to our school).

Implementation:

This Code applies to all adults including parents, guardians, step-parents, grandparents, extended family, babysitters and any others while involved in activities or communication related to St. Gabriel's School. For convenience, the term "parents" will be used throughout the document. Other School Policies/Legislation That May Be Relevant to Parent Conduct:

- Privacy Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Working with Children Act

Communication: Parents will use courteous and acceptable written and spoken language in all communications with students, staff and other parents and members of the school community. No profane, insulting, harassing, aggressive or otherwise offensive language may be used.

Ethical Conduct: Parents will act in the best interests of students, their families and staff members. They will not engage in malicious or judgemental gossip, and should ensure that anything they say about others is fair and truthful.

Respect: We value our diverse community and respect the rights, religious beliefs and practices of individuals and their families. We respect points of view that are different from our own and all members of our community must refrain from actions and behaviour that constitutes harassment, discrimination or vilification.

When visiting school:

- All visitors to the school during school hours to sign a visitors' register located at the school office, so that their presence in the school is recorded in the event of an emergency.
- Parents will comply with all safety and emergency procedures in place at our School and in the event of an emergency while they are on school grounds they will follow the instructions given by any member of school staff.

- When attending any kind of school assembly or public meeting parents will listen respectfully, in the same manner required of students and staff, and will refrain from creating any noise or disturbance during performances or speeches by students, staff or visitors. Heckling will not be tolerated and a parent who heckles may be asked to leave.
- Parents will treat all other visitors to our school, including Members of Parliament and representatives of the Department of Education, with courtesy and respect.
- A parent may not interrupt or distract a teacher while classroom instruction or learning activities are underway.
- A parent may not discipline a child who is not theirs or speak to a child who is not theirs about their behaviour. This is the role of teaching staff. Being approached by an adult they do not know can be distressing for children. Parents should therefore raise any behavioural, bullying or peer group issues with a member of the teaching staff and it is the teacher's responsibility to deal with these issues. (Common sense would apply in an emergency where a child is at risk of harm or where a parent is supervising a small group of students on an excursion.)
- When visiting a classroom parents accept the authority of the teacher (or teachers) and that they are in attendance on the teacher's terms. Teachers value parental involvement and assistance, but they may ask a parent to leave a classroom or class activity for any reason.

When communicating with school staff:

- All school staff are entitled to a safe and happy work environment. This is in the best interests of our children as well as staff themselves. Parents should therefore ensure that their interactions with staff do not create unnecessary stress and anxiety.
- The priority for school staff is the welfare and education of all children in the school. School staff are therefore not required to respond to emails and telephone calls instantaneously. Normal service standards suggest that an acceptable response time for emails is 2 working days. Responses are not expected outside normal working hours or during school holidays unless it is an emergency.
- The time available for parents to meet with staff is limited and must be scheduled at a time that does not disrupt the classroom. Parents should be mindful of the teacher's time, communicate the reason for the meeting and allow the teacher time to prepare, unless there is a genuine emergency that needs to be discussed.

When communicating with other parents:

- Parents will respect the privacy of other parents' email addresses and will not send unsolicited emails or "spam" to school parents or forward unsolicited emails or spam that they receive to other parents. Parents will not forward other parents' email addresses without their permission. Parents provide their email address to the school in order to receive communications from the school about school related matters and their child. The school will not give out the email address of parents to other parents without permission. Parents give their email addresses to class representatives in order to receive communications about class activities, get together for their child's class, and to establish rosters for classroom help, fundraising activities and so on. Class representatives will not pass on parent email addresses to other parents without permission.
- Apart from the general principles that always apply, parents should be particularly sensitive about the manner in which they provide feedback and ask questions of hardworking volunteers.

When raising an issue:

- Parents have the right to raise issues and concerns related to the education of their child or school matters. Parents should ensure that they raise their issues and concerns with the right person and follow the correct communication channels.
 - Contact the class teacher first – they are in the best position to help you, as they know your child well and are directly responsible for them

- If you still have concerns or are requiring further support, please make an appointment to see the Deputy Principal
- For urgent matters, or if you believe that you have not had the follow up you would like, please make an appointment to see the Principal.
- All of our students have the right to feel safe and comfortable at school. There may be times when you feel that the action of another child has infringed the rights of your own child. All school issues are to be handled by the staff of the school. We attempt to resolve these issues through:
 - Calm discussions between the parties directly involved whilst respecting the dignity of each and every person
 - Being prepared to actively listen to another's point of view.
 - Allowing correct procedures be followed to allow all parties to be heard
 - Parents should not directly approach other students or make contact with their families. This only serves to compound the issues and make them more difficult to resolve. We believe that most situations can be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.
 - Under no circumstances is a parent or guardian to approach another child to discuss or chastise them because of their actions towards their own child. Please try to have a positive and open mind. We all have bad days and at times events occur which don't always appear fair. We are dealing with children and they are learning how to behave. It is often the case that the injustice was not intentional, and many times not even apparent to others.
 - Approach situations in a spirit of co-operation, understanding and genuine partnership.

Consequences of a Breach of Parent Code of Conduct:

- Any parent, member of school staff or student may notify the Principal or Deputy Principal of a possible breach of the Parent Code of Conduct. The Principal or Deputy Principal will investigate the complaint and if satisfied that a breach has occurred:
 - provide a first and final warning that a breach of the Code of Conduct has occurred and that a further breach will not be tolerated;
 - determine whether a breach may be rectified by the parent making a private or public apology, depending on the circumstances, to an individual or group of individuals;
 - where the breach concerned unacceptable behaviour on a visit to the school, issue a trespass warning to the parent, which, if the behaviour continues, may accelerate to a trespass notice requiring the parent to stay away from the school unless on the school grounds with the express permission of the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- Correspondence that is in breach of this Code of Conduct, because of the language and expression used or the manner in which it is sent or delivered, will not be responded to.

Nothing in this Policy precludes any person from exercising their individual legal rights in respect of obtaining restraining and intervention orders, reporting assault, bringing action for defamation, exercising rights under vilification or discrimination laws or in any other way.