

PARENTAL CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Mr M. Dinsmore
Principal

Mrs A. Harvey
Chairperson of the Board of Governors

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This policy document was produced in consultation with parents, school staff and governors.

Contents	Page
Introduction	3
Aims of the Parental Code of Conduct Policy	4
Expectations	4
The Scope and Application of this Policy	5
Procedures	6
Monitoring and Review	7
Appendices	
Appendix A: Procedures Flow Chart	8
Appendix B: Poster	9
Appendix C: Parent/Carer Interaction Guidelines	10
Appendix D: Letter 1 – Record of Verbal Warning/Meeting	11
Appendix E: Letter 2 – Formal Written Warning	12
Appendix F: Letter 3 – Withdrawal of Permission pending review	13
Appendix G: Letter 4 – Restore permission after review	14
Appendix H: Complaints’ Procedure	15-16

**** Please note:** Throughout this policy, wherever the word ‘parent’ is used, it refers to parents or those with parental responsibility.

Introduction

We at St Patrick’s Primary School, are very proud of the great partnership we have with parents and we are lucky to have a supportive and friendly parent body.

Our parents recognise that educating children is a process that involves partnership between parents, teachers and the school community. It is important to have a good working relationship between home and school to equip children with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons, we continue to encourage all parents to participate fully in the life of our school.

Our School will include in its prospectus advice to parents that there is a Parental Code of Conduct Policy, which is available via the school’s website or a hard copy available upon request from the school office.

The Parental Code of Conduct policy does not affect the right of parents or other parties to make complaints or raise concerns to the school in an appropriate fashion and it should be read in conjunction with the ‘Complaints Procedure Policy’. The school’s Complaints Procedure Policy allows parents’ complaints about school issues to be dealt with efficiently and sensitively and at the appropriate level.

The school expects all parental concerns and complaints to be taken seriously and to be dealt with comprehensively and as far as possible in confidence. In most cases we hope that all complaints and concerns can be resolved through open dialogue with members of staff as appropriate.

Where you are not satisfied with responses received however, we would ask that you then follow the school Complaints Procedure Policy, which is on the school website or upon request.

1. Aims of the Parental Code of Conduct Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide a reminder to all parents/visitors to our school about the expected conduct in order that we can continue to support and nurture our children in an atmosphere of respect and mutual understanding. What is important is how we behave together and resolve issues in a constructive manner through open, positive dialogue.

The school is dedicated to ensuring that all pupils achieve their potential and will work in partnership with all stakeholders to achieve these aims. The school is therefore required to have a policy to address parent/visitor behaviour that is unacceptable and has a detrimental effect on the good order and safety of the school. The school has a duty of care for staff, pupils and visitors to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

The Parental Code of Conduct Policy aims to clarify the types of behaviour that will not be tolerated and also sets out the actions and sanctions the school can take should this code be ignored or where breaches occur.

2. Expectations

We expect that parents/visitors:

- Respect the caring ethos and values of our school.
- Understand that both teachers and parents need to work together for the benefit of their children.
- Demonstrate that all members of the school community should be treated with respect and therefore set a good example in their own speech and behaviour, as everyone in school is a ‘duty bearer’ (positive role model). This includes when on or close to the school grounds.
- Seek to understand a child’s version of events and also school’s view, in order to bring peaceful solutions to any issue.
- Correct own child’s behaviour especially where it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive or unsafe behaviour.
- Approach school to help resolve any issues of concern. This should be done through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, member of the Senior Leadership team, Principal or the Chair of Governors so issues can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.
- Parents should not warn children they will report them to the school/teacher as a means of correcting or admonishing their misbehaviour outside of school.

3. The Scope and Application of this Policy

All members of our school community have the right to expect that their school is a safe place in which they develop and learn. There is no place for intimidation, violence, threatening behaviour, verbal or physical abuse or harassment in our school.

Our school will take the appropriate action to deal with any unacceptable behaviour on the school premises, which may include seeking legal advice where necessary.

In order to support a peaceful and safe school environment the school cannot tolerate parents, carers and visitors exhibiting the following:

- Disruptive behaviour, which interferes or threatens to interfere with any of the school's normal operation or activities anywhere on the school premises.
- Any inappropriate behaviour on the school premises, as deemed by the Principal.
- Using loud or offensive language or malicious comments.
- Racist or any other forms of discrimination.
- Intimidation and harassment of others.
- Displaying aggressive behaviour.
- Threatening in any way, a member of staff, visitor, fellow parent or pupil.
- Damaging or destroying school property.
- Unwarranted and unnecessary correspondence taking up undue teaching and administrative time.
- Sending abusive or threatening emails, text/voicemail/phone messages, or other written communications (including social media) to anyone within the school community.
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the students/parents/staff/governors at the school on social media sites.
- The use of physical, verbal or written aggression towards another adult or child. This includes physical punishment of your own child on school premises. 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).
- Smoking, taking illegal drugs or the consumption of alcohol on the school premises or arriving under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol.
- Dogs being brought on to the school premises. (Other than guide dogs).

Should any of the above occur on the school premises or in connection with school, the school may feel it is necessary to take action by contacting the appropriate authorities and/or consider preventing the offending adult from entering the school premises altogether.

****Please note:** Parents/carers must ensure that all persons collecting their children are aware of this policy.

4. Procedures (See Procedures Flow Chart: Appendix A)

The school has a range of strategies to employ with any parent who persists with unacceptable conduct. Whilst these sanctions are set out in the Parental Code of Conduct policy by way of a sequential process, they can be initiated at any stage if, in the judgement of the Principal the severity of the behaviour warrants such a level of intervention.

In addition, the school will ensure that:

- All correspondence is retained.
- All valid concerns are fully investigated.
- Any decisions are fully communicated to the parent/visitor.
- Any parent behaving unlawfully will be reported to the police

4.1. Verbal Warning/Mediation Meeting

A parent who displays any of the behaviour outlined in Section 3 will be asked politely to desist and they will be offered the opportunity to discuss the matter in person on the first occasion.

4.2. One Formal Written Warning

A formal written letter will be sent to the parent/visitor where they continue to act unacceptably. This is signed by the Principal and circulated to relevant internal parties to ensure that an informed and consistent approach can be adopted. This letter is kept on file of the student at the school (whose parents have received the warning) for a period of time the child attends this school.

4.3. Legal Sanctions

If a parent breaches the expected standard of behaviour as set out in the Parental Code of Conduct despite a formal written warning, then the school will seek support from external agencies and/or legal advice.

A ban from the school can be introduced without having to go through all the steps offered above in cases that are more serious.

5. Monitoring and Review

The Principal will communicate to staff and to the Governing Body when required, on the number and type of incidents and behaviours displayed by parents received and their outcomes.

This policy will next be reviewed October, 2026 or sooner at either the discretion of the Principal or the Board of Governors.

Thank you for adhering to this policy in our school.

Appendix A: Procedures Flow Chart

Verbal Warning/Mediation Meeting

A parent who displays any of the behaviour outlined in Section 3 of this policy, will be asked politely to desist and they will be offered the opportunity to discuss the matter in person on the first occasion.



One Formal Written Warning

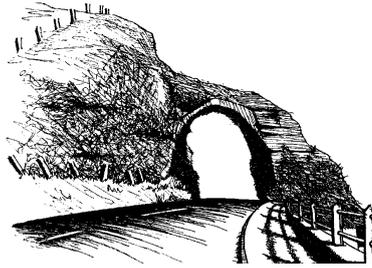
A formal written letter will be sent to the parent/visitor where they continue to act unacceptably following a verbal warning/mediation meeting. This is signed by the Principal and circulated to relevant internal parties to ensure that an informed and consistent approach can be adopted. This letter is kept on file of the student at the school (whose parents have received the warning) for a period of time the child attends this school.



Legal Sanctions

If a parent breaches the expected standard of behaviour as set out in the Parental Code of Conduct despite a formal written warning, then the school will seek support from external agencies and/or legal advice.

A ban from the school can be introduced without having to go through all the steps offered above in cases that are more serious.



We welcome visitors to our school.

- **We will act to ensure it remains a safe place for pupils, staff and all other members of our community.**
- **If you have concerns, we will always listen to them and seek to address them.**
- **Please be aware, however, that abusive, threatening or violent behaviour will not be tolerated in this school.**

Visitors behaving in this way will be asked to leave the premises.

Parent/Guardian Interaction Guidelines

You have the right to be treated with respect... so do we.

Your rights as a parent/guardian making a complaint

In dealing with your complaint, we will ensure that you receive:

- Fair treatment
- Courtesy
- A timely response
- Accurate advice
- Respect for your privacy – concerns will be treated as confidentially as possible allowing for the possibility that we may have to consult with other appropriate agencies about your complaint
- Reasons for our decisions
- Where there are grounds to your complaint, we will acknowledge this and address the issues you have raised. Similarly, we will ensure that you are clearly advised where we believe that there are no grounds to your complaint.

If you feel that I am unable to deal with this situation I will refer your concern to a more senior member of staff.

Your responsibilities as a parent/guardian making a complaint

In raising an issue we would expect that you:

- Treat our staff as professionals, acting in a non-threatening manner and with respect and courtesy
- Provide accurate and concise information in relation to the issue you raise.

We reserve the right to end the conversation if a parent/guardian causes the member of staff to feel uncomfortable because of aggressive or threatening behaviour.

**Appendix D: Letter 1 – Record of Verbal Warning/Mediation Meeting
(Sent by Principal/Chair of Board of Governors)**

Dear (insert name),

Following our meeting about your conduct on (insert date and time), I would like to provide you with a record of the discussion.

[Add summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, students, and other parents].

We believe staff, parents and children are entitled to a safe and protective environment in which to work. Behaviour that will cause harassment, alarm or distress to users of the premises is contrary to the aims of the school. I must inform you that St Patrick's Primary School will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to defend its staff and students.

I am therefore informing you that should the school staff have any further concerns about your behaviour formal procedures as set out in Section 4 of the school's Parental Code of Conduct will be followed.

For the future I must inform you that any repetition of such behaviour towards any of the school staff, pupils or others connected with the school will be followed by a formal written warning. I must also remind you immediate withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises can be introduced without having to go through all the steps in Section 4 in cases that are more serious.

Yours sincerely,

Principal/Chair Board of Governors.

**Appendix E: Letter 2 – Formal Written Warning
(Sent by Principal/Chair of Board of Governors)**

Dear (insert name),

I have received a report about your conduct on (insert date and time).

[Add summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, students, and other parents].

We believe staff, parents and children are entitled to a safe and protective environment in which to work. Behaviour that will cause harassment, alarm or distress to users of the premises is contrary to the aims of the school. I must inform you that St Patrick's Primary School will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to defend its staff and students.

I am therefore informing you that should the school staff have any further concerns about your behaviour formal procedures as set out in Section 4 of the school's Parental Code of Conduct will be followed.

For the future I must inform you that any repetition of such behaviour towards any of the school staff, pupils or others connected with the school will be followed by an immediate withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises.

In the circumstances I must ask you not to approach any of my staff directly until further notice, though you will still be able to make contact through me.

Yours sincerely,

Principal/Chair Board of Governors.

**Appendix F: Letter 3 – Withdrawal of Permission pending review
(Sent by Principal/Chair of Board of Governors)**

Dear (insert name),

We have been made aware on unacceptable conduct on (insert date and time).

[Add summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, students, and other parents].

We believe staff, parents and children are entitled to a safe and protective environment in which to work. Behaviour that will cause harassment, alarm or distress to users of the premises is contrary to the aims of the school.

As consistent with our Parental Code of Conduct Policy, I must inform you that St Patrick's will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will continue to act to defend its staff and students.

I am therefore instructing you that until I have reviewed this incident, you are not to reappear on the school premises.

The withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises takes effect immediately and will be in place for (insert number) school days in the first instance, after which time a review will take place.

In the circumstances I must ask you not to approach any of my staff directly until further notice, though you will still be able to make contact through me.

Yours sincerely,

Principal/Chair Board of Governors.

**Appendix G: Letter 4 – Restore permission after review
(Sent by Chair of Governors)**

Dear (insert name),

I wrote to you on (insert date) confirming that permission for you to come onto the premises of St Patrick's Primary School had been withdrawn until further notice. I also advised you I would take steps to review this decision by (insert date).

I have now completed the review. After consultation with the Principal I have decided that it is now appropriate to restore permission for you to come onto the school premises with immediate effect.

I trust that you will now work together with the school and there will be no further difficulties of the kind which made it necessary to restrict your access to the school premises.

(Optional) I must warn you, however, that if it should become necessary in the future, I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the school premises once again.

Yours sincerely,

Chair Board of Governors

Appendix H: Complaints Procedure – At A Glance



Time Limit

Please contact the school as soon as possible, unless there are exceptional circumstances, complaints will normally only be considered within 6 months of origin of the complaint to the school.

Stage One

When making a complaint, contact the school Principal who will arrange for the complaint to be investigated. *If the complaint is about the Principal, proceed to Stage Two.* The school requires complaints to be made in writing, where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support you with this process (*see guidance notes for further information*).

Please provide as much information as possible including;

- name and contact details;
- what the complaint is about;
- what has already been done to try to resolve it; and
- what you would like the school to do to resolve the complaint.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 5 school working days and a response normally made within 20 school working days of receipt of the complaint. This response will be issued in writing by the Principal and will indicate with reasons whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.

If you remain unhappy with the outcome at Stage 1, the complaint may be progressed to Stage 2 which is overseen by the Board of Governors.

Stage Two

If the complaint is unresolved after Stage One, write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors (*care of the school and marked 'private and confidential'*). Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support the complainant with this process. The Chairperson will convene a committee to review the complaint. Please provide as much detail as possible as indicated above.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 5 school working days and a final response normally made within 20 school working days from date of receipt of the complaint. The response will be issued in writing by the Chairperson of the committee.

These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)

If following Stage Two you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you can refer the matter to the Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO).

The Ombudsman provides a free, independent and impartial service for handling complaints about schools in Northern Ireland. You have the right to complain to the Ombudsman if you feel that you have been treated unfairly or have received a poor service from a school and your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction.

A complaint should normally be referred to NIPSO within six months of the final response from the School. The school must advise in its concluding letter that the complaint may be referred to the NIPSO if you remain dissatisfied.

Contact details for NIPSO are:

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman
Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services
Ombudsman Progressive House
33 Wellington Place
Belfast
BT1 6HN

Freepost: FREEPOST

NIPSO Telephone: 02890

233821

Freephone: 0800 34 34 24

Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk Web: www.nipso.org.uk