

Code of Conduct for Meetings

(for Parents, Carers and Visitors)



At Chilthorne Domer Church School, we are proud and fortunate to have a dedicated and supportive school community. This code of conduct aims to help us work together with parents and external professionals by setting guidelines on appropriate behaviour during meetings held at our school.

We use the term 'parents' to refer to:

- Anyone with parental responsibility for a pupil
- Anyone caring for a child (such as grandparents or a child minder)
- Those with parental responsibility (e.g. a social worker for children that are looked after)

At our school the staff, governors, parents, and carers all recognise that the education of our learners is a firm partnership between home and school. For this partnership to work successfully we believe it is important to:

- Work in partnership with parents and external professionals to support our learners
- Create a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for learners, staff, and parents
- Model appropriate behaviour for our learners at all times
- Communicate openly and respectfully if and when there are challenges or problems
- Work together to get the best outcomes for our learners

To help us do this, we set clear expectations and guidelines on behaviour for all member of our community. This includes staff (through the staff code of conduct) and learners (through the school's behaviour and relationship policy).

2. Our expectations

We expect parents and other visitors to:

- Respect the ethos, vision, and values of our school
- Work together with staff in the best interest of our learners
- Treat all members of the school community with respect – setting a good example with language and behaviour
- Seek a peaceful solution to all issues
- Approach the right member of school staff to help resolve any issues of concern.

3. Unacceptable behaviour

Whilst we are confident that all parents and external professionals will work in respectful partnership with us, it is important to be clear that certain behaviours will not be tolerated. These include:

- Disrupting, or threatening to disrupt, school operations
- Swearing or using offensive language
- Displaying a temper, or shouting at members of staff, learners or other parents and professionals
- Any aggressive behaviour (including verbally or in writing) towards another learner or adult
- Smoking or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Inappropriate use of social media*

*If any parent of a learner or visitor to the school is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments through any medium, they will be reported to the school. The school will expect that any parent or visitor removes such comments immediately.

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Any concerns that parents or other visitors who have attended a visit or meeting at the school must be made through the appropriate channels by contacting the relevant teacher, Head teacher or the Chair of the Governing Body, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately, and effectively for all concerned.

Meetings between staff, governors, parents, and visitors are an important aspect of the partnership to provide an effective education in school.

Sometimes the focus of these meetings will be on sensitive or emotive issues: therefore, to maximise the effectiveness of the discussion, the school expects a formal meeting to be conducted as follows:

- The meeting will be held in a location which can enable confidential or sensitive issues to be discussed without undue interruption
- Identify who will Chair the meeting
- Each party is entitled to be accompanied by a representative if they wish (for example, a parent can be accompanied by a friend or legal representative)
- A clear understanding by all parties of the objectives of the meeting should be established at the beginning of the meeting
- Where appropriate, a maximum length of the meeting will be agreed by both parties at the beginning of the meeting
- Each party should listen to the other party without interrupting unnecessarily
- The use of electronic equipment to record meetings is not permitted but minutes may be taken and shared
- Each party will contribute positively to the discussions, always focused on reaching mutual agreement to seek a resolution
- Using intimidating or offensive language or aggressive or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated; the meeting will be ended immediately should such language or behaviour occur.

4. Breaching the code of conduct

If the school suspects, or becomes aware, that a parent or external professional has breached this Code of Conduct, the school will gather information from those involved in the first instance and speak to the relevant person about the incident.

Depending on the nature of the incident, the school may then follow the actions below. An escalation to more serious consequences may occur without working through the following:

- Invite the parent into school to meet with a senior member of staff or the Headteacher
- Send a warning letter to the parent or visitor
- Contact the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour)
- Seek advice from the local authority's legal team regarding further action (in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous)
- Ban the parent or visitor from the school site or from future meetings.

There is no place for violence, threatening behaviour or abuse in schools. All school staff have the right to expect that their school is a safe place in which to work and learn (Keeping all school staff safe from Abuse, Threats, and Violence Guidance for Schools, January 2020)