



Leigh Academy
Dartford



Little Birds
Nursery



LEIGH
Academies Trust

Parent and Carer Code of Conduct

Date written: January 2023

Reviewed September 2024

Date of next review: September 2025

1. Purpose and scope

In our academy, we believe it's 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

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 for appropriate behaviour.

We use the terms 'parents' and 'carers' to refer to:

- Anyone with parental responsibility for a pupil (See Appendix A for information and the Trust's response to Parental Responsibility and Family Court matters).
- Anyone caring for a child (such as grandparents or childminders)

2. Our expectations of parents and carers

We expect parents, carers and other visitors to:

- Respect the ethos, vision and values of our school
- Work together with staff in the best interests of our pupils
- Follow our agreed communication methods only and respect that our team will endeavour to respond to communication within 48 working hours where possible.
- Speak with school staff who approach them at the end of the school day to address any concerns so that these can be resolved before the next day
- Attend formal parental consultations, as determined by the academy, in respect of the needs of their child
- 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

- Support our safeguarding strategies and the guidelines that we have to follow
- Follow our absence procedures and respect that we follow the NHS guidelines as to when your child is well enough to be in school

3. Behaviour that will not be tolerated

- Disrupting, or threatening to disrupt, school operations (including events on the school grounds, in the community such as school trips or sports team matches)
- Swearing, or using offensive language
- Displaying a temper, aggression, or shouting at members of staff, pupils or other parents
- Threatening another member of the school community
- Sending abusive messages to another member of the school community, including via text, email or social media
- 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
- Any aggressive behaviour (including verbally or in writing) towards any child or adult
- Disciplining another person's child – please bring any behaviour incidents to a member of staff's attention using our info@dartford.latrust.org.uk email address
- Smoking or vaping on the school premises
- Drinking alcohol on the school premises (unless alcohol has been allowed at a specific event)
- Possessing or taking drugs (including legal highs)
- Bringing dogs or any other animals onto the school premises (other than guide dogs)
- Spitting

4. Incidents in the Community:

We expect that all parents and carers promote positive relationships within the community and that children have the ability to access good examples of conflict resolution with others from the adults who care for them.

In the event of aggressive or threatening behaviour from adults outside of the school premises, we stress the importance of contacting community agencies with

a specialism to support and maintain safety for all involved. This includes local police, Community Police or Local Council for advice and assistance.

5. 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 principal
- Contact the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour or Child Protection concerns) with or without parent or carer consent where appropriate including the police and children's services
- Seek advice from our Trust legal team regarding further action (in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous)
- Ban the parent from the school site

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 Academies Director or CEO before banning a parent from the school site.

Appendix 1:

Our practice has been developed in accordance with the DFE guidance, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility> -September 2018 and <https://www.gov.uk/parental-rights-responsibilities>.

Everyone who is a parent or has legal parental responsibility (whether they are a resident or non-resident parent) has a right to participate in decisions about a child's education and receive information about the child (even though for day-to-day purposes the school's main contact is likely to be a parent with whom the child lives on school days).

As a school we must treat all parents equally, unless there is a **court order** limiting an individual's exercise of parental responsibility. Individuals who have parental responsibility whether they are the resident parent or not have the right to:

- information, e.g. pupil reports/attendance
- to participate in activities, e.g. vote in elections for parent governors
- to be asked to give consent, e.g. to the child taking part in school trips
- to be informed about meetings involving the child (e.g. Parent Consultations) where we expect parents and carers to attend together unless a court order prevents this

Where a parent's actions, or proposed actions, conflict with our ability to act in the child's best interests, we will try to resolve the problem with that parent but avoid becoming involved in conflict or offer biased support in favour of either parent. However, there may be occasions when a school needs to decline requests for action from one or more parents, in these extreme circumstances we will use the first priority as listed on your child's initial admission application.

In cases where there is conflict between separated parents, we will advise the parent to pursue the matter through the Family Court. We urge parents to engage in appropriate systems to resolve their conflicts and avoid making impulsive decisions that may affect the child's wellbeing. While we will honour the terms of a court order, issues around residency and contact arrangements remain a civil matter to be agreed between the parents and will not be facilitated by members of our staff.

Court orders under section 8 of the Children Act 1989 (often called section 8 orders) settle areas of dispute in relation to the exercise of parental responsibility or a child's care or upbringing, and can limit how an individual exercises their parental responsibility. It must be noted that a Court order limiting a parent's exercise of their parental responsibility does not necessarily prevent or restrict us from continuing to carry out our duties under education law including Safeguarding.