

Inclusion is at the
heart of our trust



Parent Code of Conduct

September 2022



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Oak Learning Partnership Trust ('the trust') is committed to running world class schools in an inclusive environment.
- 1.2 We have a responsibility to ensure that we treat people with respect, openness and care, including children, parents/carers, and staff. We believe children learn best in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment based on respect underpinned by an effective partnership between parents/carers and trust staff.
- 1.3 Appropriate behaviour is expected from pupils. Staff are expected to act professionally at all times. The positive support of parents and carers is needed and highly valued by the school. We expect parents and staff to model the behaviour we expect to see in our children.
- 1.4 This Code of Conduct reminds all parents/carers and visitors to our schools of the conduct which is expected of them both on trust premises and on social media sites. It sets out the expected standards of conduct, and the ways in which any inappropriate conduct will be addressed so that we can all work in a spirit of partnership and so that relationships can flourish.
- 1.5 It should be understood that at times, school may need to raise queries with parents. This is not a reflection of parenting skills or the school not understanding the pupils' needs. It is the case of having a good working relationship which focuses on the child's happiness.
- 1.6 Please also understand that schools have the right and legal responsibility to share any concerns with social care through a social worker or MASH referral. This again is not staff making judgement or making assumptions: it is the framework within which we work in and staff will always have the best interests of the child as their priority.

2. Expectations

- 2.1 Parents/carers, visitors and adults authorised by parents/carers to be present on trust premises are expected to:
 - Respect the caring ethos and values of the trust and its individual schools.
 - Be tolerant of each other's views, beliefs and opinions.
 - Work together with staff for the benefit of their children.
 - Treat all members of the school communities with respect using appropriate language and behaviour.
 - Approach the school to help resolve any issues of concern and follow the trust complaints procedure where necessary.
 - The involvement of other agencies such as the police, the LADO, local authority or OFSTED is a parental right but we welcome open dialogue in the first instance to allow school staff to address the issue directly.
 - Where appropriate, clarify a child's version of events with the school's view in order to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue.
 - Promote good pupil behaviour at all times, especially where it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive or unsafe behaviour.

- 2.2 It is inevitable that at times there will be disagreements, fall outs and incidents between pupils in school. To ensure that these incidents are dealt with safely and effectively, we ask that parents/carers speak to school staff rather than approaching the other child or parent directly or through social media to reprimand them.
- 2.3 Email contact with staff is used in our schools as a way to support collaboration. However, there is no expectation that staff must respond to emails within a specific timescale and staff may choose not to respond to any aggressive emails.
- 2.4 Public communication regarding any of our schools (e.g. on social media) should be factual and where there is a concern this concern should be shared with the school in the first instance to enable resolution. No member of staff deserves to be named directly in a negative way on any social media platforms and this will be challenged by the school or trust.
- 2.5 In order to support a peaceful and safe school environment, the trust will not tolerate parents, carers or visitors behaving in a way that threatens or harms the wellbeing of our pupils or staff. This includes the following:
- Disruptive or other inappropriate behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with any of our school's operations or activities anywhere on school premises.
 - Approaching another parent or child in order to discuss or reprimand them because of an issue between pupils – please talk to a member of staff to resolve any problems.
 - Using loud or offensive language or displaying temper.
 - Threatening, in any way, a member of staff, visitor, fellow parent/carer or child.
 - Using physical or verbal aggression towards another adult or child, including the parent/carer/visitor's own child.
 - Any other behaviour, verbal or otherwise, which could be considered to be inappropriate, offensive, or abusive.
 - Sending abusive or threatening e-mails, text/voicemail/phone messages, or other written communications to anyone within the school/trust community.
 - Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the pupils/parents/carers/staff at the school or trust on Facebook or other social media platform.
 - Damaging or destroying trust property.
 - Arriving on school premises partially clothed.
 - Smoking (including e-cigarettes), taking illegal drugs or consuming alcohol on school premises.
 - Entering school premises under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
 - Bringing dogs (except for registered assistance dogs) or other animals into the school environment without prior agreement.
 - Driving unsafely in the vicinity of trust schools.
 - Taking photographs with phones or other devices on school premises without permission from the school.
 - This list is not exhaustive.

- 2.5 Where the above expectations are not upheld, the initial response will usually involve a conversation with the parent/carer or visitor. Where this is not sufficient to resolve the issue, the school may have to consider further action. This could include: banning from site for a fixed time (see 'barring from the school premises' below); contacting the police or seeking legal redress through the courts; restricting channels of communication (e.g. no longer allowed to email staff directly). In the case of defamatory comments posted online, we would also report the post to the site's admin. In some cases, we may also need to refer to Social Care if the behaviour of a parent/carer or visitor indicates that they may be unsafe around children.

3. Social Media Sites

- 3.1 The trust recognises the value social media brings to the school communities and would encourage the distribution of positive comments and messages about its schools and pupils. We ask that parents/carers demonstrate tolerance and respect towards other people's opinions and beliefs when posting on a school social media site, or on a site not controlled by the school.

3.2 Inappropriate use of social network sites

3.2.1 Social network websites and online systems are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools and staff including Headteachers, and in some cases other parents/pupils. The use of social network sites being used in this way is viewed as unacceptable and is not in the best interests of pupils or school communities and can seriously harm an individual's wellbeing. Any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, senior leader or the Headteacher so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned and at the earliest opportunity.

3.2.2 In order to avoid inappropriate social network activity, the following actions will be considered a breach of the Code of Conduct:

- Making complaints, negative comments or factually inaccurate statements about the trust or any of its schools.
- Posting photographs of the pupils taken on school premises or on a trip or visit without permission from the parents/carers of those pupils.
- Creating a social network page/forum in the name of the Trust of one of its schools/using official logos to imitate the trust or any of its schools or posting comments in the guise of the trust or any of its schools.
- Posting photographs of staff including photographs of staff available on trust or school websites.
- Making negative comments about other parents/carers, pupils and staff. Any comments or concerns should be raised with the Trust or individual school directly.
- Using defamatory and inappropriate language in relation to other parents/carers, pupils and staff.

3.2.3 If any pupil or parents/carers of a pupil are found to be posting defamatory comments on Facebook or other social network sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the social network site. It is likely that the police will also be informed. All social network sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted on the site and they provide robust mechanisms to report content or activity which breaches them. Each school will also expect that any parent/carer or pupil removes such comments immediately when requested. In some cases, it may be necessary for the trust to seek legal advice on comments or posts and this may result in a warning letter being sent to the individual responsible. If the content is still not removed legal action may be taken against those responsible for the content.

3.2.4 The safety and wellbeing of the trust's school communities are paramount to the operation of the schools. We take very seriously the issue of cyber bullying by a child or a parent to publicly humiliate another parent, child or member of staff as serious inappropriate social network use. We will deal with this as a serious incident of bullying. In serious cases the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites.

5. BARRING FROM SCHOOL PREMISES

5.1 The public has no automatic right of entry to any school in the trust. The trust will act to ensure that all its schools remain safe places for pupils, staff and other members of their community.

5.2 If a parent/carer's behaviour is a cause for concern, a senior leader can ask him/her to leave school premises. In serious cases, the Headteacher can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the parent/carer may wish to make to the Headteacher. The parent/carer will have the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing.

5.3 During the barring period all contact should go through the School Business Manager or a named member of staff either by email or telephone.

5.4 The Headteacher's decision to bar should be reviewed by the CEO. They should take into account any representations made by the individual and decide whether to either confirm or lift the bar. If the decision is confirmed, the individual should be notified in writing, with details of:

- how long the bar will be in place
- when the decision will be reviewed

5.5 Once the school's appeal process has been completed, individuals may be able to apply to the Civil Courts. Individuals wishing to exercise this option should seek independent legal advice.

5.6 Any ban should be reviewed at the end of the agreed timescale as outlined above.

6. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Complaints Policy
- School Behaviour for Learning Policy

We expect that parents, carers and visitors will assist the trust with the implementation of this policy and we thank you for your continuing support of our schools. We ask that parents and carers ensure they make all persons responsible for collecting their children aware of this policy.

