

Parent Code of Conduct

Preamble

As a Catholic community we share a belief about the dignity of the human person which calls all members of the school including staff, students and parents to treat one another with care and respect. Our Catholic school community contains a wide variety of individuals and groups who strive to work together to educate students to become confident, well-educated young people and prepared to lead happy, successful lives and make contributions to local and global communities. These shared community values enable the members of the community to work together and enjoy the fellowship that arises from their collaborative efforts.

Staff and students are required to adhere to a Code of Conduct. This document aims to provide similar guidelines for parents. Specifically, this Code of Conduct is intended to:

1. provide a set of general principles to guide parents in their interaction with staff, students and other parents;
2. communicate the School's expectation as to how parents conduct themselves when on the School grounds or at School events; and
3. explain how parents can direct their concerns.

Scope

This code will apply to all adults including parents, guardians, step-parents, grandparents, extended family, care-givers and any others while involved in activities or communication related to Diocese of Lismore Schools and Colleges. For the purpose of this code, the term "parent" refers to all caregivers as listed above.

Ethical Conduct

Parents play a key role in the education of their children and should act in the best interests of students, their families, staff and the School community. The School values its diverse community and respects the rights, beliefs and practices of individuals and their families. Parents are students' most significant role models. Accordingly, the School expects a high standard of personal behaviour from parents when they are on School grounds, attending events or communicating with staff or other students. For example:

- Supporting the Catholic ethos and values of our school
- Refraining from engaging in malicious or judgmental gossip (either directly or online).
- Refraining from actions and behaviour that constitutes bullying, harassment, discrimination or vilification.
- Refraining from offensive, insulting or derogatory language or conduct. This includes wearing clothing with offensive language or insignia.
- Dressing appropriately according to the occasion.
- Not smoking on School grounds or within 5 metres of the School boundary. (*Smoke-free Environment Act 2000*)
- Not possessing alcohol on School grounds, unless the event has been sanctioned by the School.
- Not attending School events if affected by alcohol or any other intoxicant.

- Showing proper care and regard for School property, the property of others and Work, Health and Safety considerations.

Communication and interaction with staff, other parents and students

Parents are expected to interact civilly with staff, students and other parents at all times.

- Written and spoken communication should be courteous and respectful. Abusive language, raising your voice, insulting or violent behaviour to anyone on School grounds or at any School-related event, is not appropriate.
- Parents are expected to ensure that relationships with students are strictly in accordance with appropriate roles and that favouritism and special treatment are avoided. Parents are expected to ensure that physical contact with students is appropriate given the age of, and relationship with the student such that questions of impropriety do not arise.
- Whilst interaction between students can be unruly it is not appropriate to discipline another parents' child whilst on school grounds, unless there is a reasonable health and safety concern. Physical contact should be avoided unless there is a reasonable health and safety concern.
- In some circumstances parents are required by law to advise the School of areas of potential conflict, such as parenting and family court orders. The School expects parents to behave lawfully on School grounds and observe the terms of any order, obligation or undertaking they may be subject to.
- Respect teachers' preparation time before school and make an appointment for long discussions at a mutually convenient time. If you wish to speak to a teacher, please do not expect a meeting before school unless pre-arranged
- Respect teachers' rights to have a life outside of school. While we understand that the best time for you to email staff is after 5pm when you have returned home from work and had an opportunity to talk with your children, please do not expect a response from teachers that night. Like you they have only just returned home from work and are also enjoying family time.

What parents can expect from a staff member if communication becomes inappropriate

In cases where a parent does not interact civilly with staff, either in person in or outside of the school grounds, during a phone call, or via email, the staff member may take one of the following actions:

- Request that the parent cease their inappropriate communication in order to allow the communication to proceed.
- Inform the parent that unless the inappropriate communication ceases, the staff member may put an end to the phone call, meeting or discussion.
- Request another staff member be present for the remainder of the meeting, if deemed necessary to proceed with such.
- Lodge a complaint against the offending parent.
- Contact the police in the event of any threatening behaviour.

Use of Social Media

Social media can be defined as how we use technology to communicate and connect with others. Despite the range of positive uses for social media, there are also a number of ethical and legal issues associated with its use. Many people may hold the mistaken belief that anything published online will be without legal consequence. However, parents should be aware that there are a number of potential legal liabilities that may arise, particularly in relation to issues pertaining to reputational damage, and defamation. Parents can ensure they abide by the laws and the School expectations of its parents, by complying with the following:

- The School, its staff and members of its community should not be mentioned or discussed in a negative or defamatory way.
- Photographs of students in school uniform represent the School and its students, and should not be posted if they have the potential to bring negative connotations towards the Schools or its staff and students.
- Photographs containing other students should not be posted without the express consent of the other child/children's parents.
- Email addresses of parents, staff and students should not be given to other people without their express consent.
- Parents should avoid making contact with other students via any form of social media without the express consent of the student's parents.

What parents can expect from the School

The School/College takes seriously any issues that are brought to its attention. If parents express their concerns to the School, they can expect to be treated with courtesy and respect in order to try and resolve the matter. As a general guide, minor issues may be raised with your child's teacher or year supervisor. Cases of more serious inappropriate conduct or misconduct ought to be directed to the Assistant Principal or Principal or the Catholic Schools Office. Each situation will be considered as it arises and based on the issues. The School will act in accordance with its Complaints Resolution Policy when dealing with complaints.

Breaches of this Code of Conduct

With these guidelines in place it is hoped that parents can appropriately direct their concerns and contribute to a harmonious school community that reflects and builds on the School's values. The consequences for breaches of this Code of Conduct will be determined by the Principal and may include one of the following:

- The School may ban a parent from entry to School grounds or from attending co-curricular activities or other events.
- The School may direct that a parent may only communicate with members of staff through a nominated School representative.
- In cases of extreme or prolonged breach of this Code of Conduct by a parent, the School may terminate the enrolment of the child of that parent.
- The School may, where appropriate, involve other authorities.
- The School may take other such steps as it deems appropriate according to the nature of the breach.