

# NEWMAN SCHOOL

## **Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Visitors**

# Guidance

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# **Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Visitors**

**May 2023**

Date for Review: November 2024

**Newman School**

## Statement of intent

At **Newman School** we strive to build a strong relationship with parents in order to help create a stimulating learning environment which continues from school to home, providing all pupils with the opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability.

In order to create a welcoming and safe learning environment, the school implements a specifically designed set of rules regarding behaviour and conduct which parents and visitors are expected to act in accordance with. As a special school with significant and often unseen needs as a characteristic of our pupils we expect high standards to apply to parents and visitors for reasons that may not always be obvious.

This code of conduct is written in line with other Newman School policies and procedures.

This document outlines the manner in which parents are expected to act whilst on school premises, as well as detailing the type of behaviour which will not be tolerated to protect staff and pupils. This is so we can continue to flourish, progress and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding.

The information in this code of conduct is under constant review and is updated to reflect changes to government guidance as it is released, particularly in circumstances such as the coronavirus pandemic.

This updated code of conduct includes the COVID-secure measures that Newman School must take to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of both pupils, parents and staff.

## Legal framework

This code of conduct has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 2011
- The Education Act 1996
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Children Act 2004
- Coronavirus Act 2020

This code of conduct also has due regard to statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- **DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education'**
- DfE and PHE (2020) 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing social distancing in education and childcare settings'
- DfE (2021) 'Operational guidance for educational settings'
- DfE 'Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and school staff' (September 2022)
- DfE 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for schools' (July 2022)

## Introduction

Sites which form part of **Newman School** are very fortunate to have a supportive and friendly parent body. Our parents recognise that educating children is a process that involves partnership between parents, schools staff and the school community. As a partnership, our parents understand the importance of a good working relationship to equip

children with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons we continue to welcome and encourage parents/carers to participate fully in the life of our school.

However, it is important that parents understand that school has the right to discipline children in school in accordance with:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (section 89 – ‘regulate the conduct of pupils’)
- DfE guidance ‘Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and school staff’ (September 2022).

The Newman School Behaviour and Relationships Policy (found on the school website) gives clear expectations and procedures to follow on issues of behaviour. Teaching staff have power to discipline pupils for misbehaviour which occurs in school and, in some circumstances, outside of school.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

**Parents, carers and visitors** have the responsibility to:

- Abide by COVID-secure measures whilst on school premises and in relation to their child displaying symptoms of coronavirus
- Observe procedures to ensure the health and safety of members of the public, children, colleagues and themselves at all times.
- Observe their safeguarding responsibility to the children in school by providing proof of ID and DBS as requested and adhere to the safeguarding policies and procedures whilst in school
- Ensure their child(ren) attend school every day and on time.
- Report all occurrences of violence, aggressive/threatening behaviour and serious verbal abuse and near misses to the Headteacher.
- Conduct themselves appropriately in line with this policy.
- Ensure that school meals are paid for in advance, along with other charges for such things as school trips

**The Headteacher** has the responsibility to:

- ensure that all protective measures are in place to ensure the safety of the school community, this includes parents, children and staff.
- take appropriate action in the event of a violent, aggressive or threatening behaviour happening at the school to ensure its reoccurrence is prevented as much as reasonably practical.

## **Parental Responsibility**

Everyone who is a parent, as recognised under education law can participate in their child’s education.

All parents can also receive information about the child. However, for day-to-day purposes, the school's main contact is likely to be a parent with whom the child lives on school days.

Individuals who have legally obtained parental responsibility for, or care of, a child have the same rights as biological parents. For example to:

- receive information – such as pupil reports
- participate in statutory activities – such as voting in elections for parent governors
- be asked to give consent - such as to the child taking part in school trips
- be informed about meetings involving the child - such as a governors' meeting on the child's exclusion

School must treat all parents equally - unless a court order limits a parent's ability to make educational decisions, participate in school life or receive information about their children. School require a copy of this report for their records.

All parents also have legal obligations. For example, to ensure that a child of compulsory school age receives a suitable full-time education.

### **Obtaining consent**

Where school need parental consent to outings and activities, they will obtain the consent from the resident parent unless the decision is likely to have a long-term and significant impact on the child, or the non-resident parent has requested to be asked for consent in all such cases.

### **Medical treatment – seeking consent following accident or injury**

School may experience problems when a child has had an accident and consent might be needed for emergency medical treatment. The **Children Act 1989** provides that people who do not have parental responsibility but nonetheless have care of a child may **do what is reasonable in all the circumstances of the case for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting the child's welfare.**

This allows school to act 'in loco parentis', in place of a parent, or allow them to seek consent from a parent who may not hold parental responsibility.

### **Expected Behaviour**

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

We expect parents, carers and visitors to:

- Respect the caring ethos of our schools
- Understand that both school staff 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.
- Use the correct school channels to address any issues or complaints, rather than raise the issue on social media
- Correct their own child's behaviour appropriately whilst on the school premises, especially where it could lead to conflict, aggressive behaviour or unsafe behaviour.

- To be fully responsible for the care and well-being of their children prior to handing them over to teaching staff or Corporate transport at the start of the school day and once teaching staff or Corporate Transport have handed them over at the end of the school day.
- Follow recommended health and safety guidance for the safety of their children whilst in school, this includes rules medications (see also Medication Policy).
- Approach the school to help resolve any issues of concern, in particular to check a child's version of events with the school.
- Avoid using staff as threats to warn or correct children's behaviour.
- Respect the school environment by keeping it clean and tidy
- Follow parking rules, as well as rules for dropping-off or collecting pupils from school
- Use the appropriate payment methods to ensure that all schools meals are paid for prior to the child eating a school dinner on that day. (see Appendix 2).

### **Inappropriate Behaviour**

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

- Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of a classroom or any other area of the school grounds including sporting events.
- Misusing social media to malign/disrespect school staff or the school's reputation
- Using loud/or offensive language, swearing, cursing, using irrelevant or disrespectful language or displaying bad temper.
- Discrimination against any individual, whether a staff member, pupil or another adult, on the basis of their age, race, ethnicity, religion, cultural belief, attainment, disability, gender or background.
- Threatening to do harm to a member of school staff, Governor, visitor, fellow parent/carer or pupil regardless of whether or not the behaviour constitutes a criminal offence.
- Bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse, will not be tolerated under any circumstances.
- The use of physical aggression towards another adult or child. This includes physical punishment against your own child on school premises.
- Damaging or destroying school property or the property of another person.
- Abusive or threatening e-mails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communication to Governors, visitors, fellow parents/carers or pupils.
- 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. Parents should approach a school member of staff if they wish to discuss the actions of another child).
- Smoking and consumption of alcohol or other drugs whilst on school property, or being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs whilst on school property.
- Dogs being brought onto the site, unless express permission is sought from the school Headteacher/Site Lead.

### **Use of social media – also see [Appendix 1](#)**

It is expected that parents:

- are expected to act in accordance with the school's IT and Communications Systems Policy when discussing the school on social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- must not post content which is damaging to the school or any members of the school community. In the event of defamation, the school will take legal action.
- are encouraged to use social media responsibly in order to set a positive example for pupils.
- will not post on social media anonymously or under an alias in order to evade the guidance given in this policy.
- will not record any meetings or conversation with staff, other parents or other pupils without prior consent

Any cases of social media use that breach the guidelines of this policy will be reported to the Headteacher immediately. Cyber bullying of any kind will not be tolerated and will be dealt with as a serious incident.

The Headteacher will report offending individuals using the appropriate 'report abuse' section on the specific social media site, and will arrange a meeting with the individuals concerned to discuss their use of social media.

The individual will be advised to remove any posts or comments that are harmful, immediately.

The Headteacher may contact the police for legal action where necessary.

### **Procedure**

Should any of the above behaviour occur the school may take possible action to deal with it.

Where possible the school will resolve or diffuse violent/aggressive situations through discussion with the individual/s involved. The Headteacher may feel it necessary to issue a warning letter to the individual stating that 'repeats of such behaviour may well lead to a ban from the school'.

Where conflict cannot be resolved or diffused, or there is the possibility of imminent physical harm towards an individual or school property, the school reserves the right to call the local police station to intervene or in cases of extreme emergency by dialling 999, or to call the appropriate authorities.

If necessary, the school may ban the offending adult from entering the school grounds. If such a ban is felt necessary the school will arrange for someone to meet your child or children at the school gate, and to return them to the school gate at the end of the school day. The Headteacher will discuss and agree with the Chair of the Governing Body before a ban is put in place. Where a ban is decided necessary the Headteacher will issue a letter the individual stating that a ban has been put in place. The Headteacher is responsible for determining the length of the ban. The letter to the individual will specify the length of the ban or in some instances may state that the ban is 'open ended' initially until an appropriate amount of time has elapsed for all concerned. Headteachers are responsible for writing follow up letters to individuals who have been banned to confirm the end of the ban or with an update to the length of the ban.

Parents who have been banned from the school premises have a general right to receive school information in relation to their child's welfare and education progress.

Parents who feel they have been unreasonably banned should in the first instance discuss with the school or alternatively may consider asking for the decision to be reviewed under the complaints procedure.

We trust that parents and carers will assist our school with the implementation of this policy and we thank you for your continuing support of the school.

### **Monitoring and Review**

This code of conduct will also be reviewed on an annual basis by the **Designated Safeguarding Lead**; any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of Newman School staff.

Members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programmes.

Next review due: **October 2024**

## APPENDIX 1

### **Inappropriate use of Social Network Sites**

Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, Headteachers, school staff, and in some cases other parents/pupils. The Headteacher and Governors consider the use of social media websites being used in this way as unacceptable and not in the interests of the children or the whole school community. Any concerns you may have should be raised with the class teacher, the Headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

In the event that any pupil or parent/carer of a child/ren is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on social network sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. 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 this. The school will also expect that any parent/carer or pupil removes such comments immediately.

Where members of staff receive complaints, insults or abusive comments via online sites they are responsible for reporting it to the appropriate 'report abuse' section on the website in order to get the comments removed, they are also responsible for informing Senior Management within the school as soon as possible, and if applicable taking the appropriate steps for getting the listing removed.

In serious cases the school may also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites.

## APPENDIX 2

### School Meals Debt Policy for Parents

Newman School has adopted a **NO DEBT** policy relating to the school meal service. If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for them. This can mean that money which should be spent on the children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents. Every parent will agree that this is not acceptable and we request that all parents give this policy their full support.

#### Free School Meals

If parents believe that their children may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals please contact Free Schools Meals Service on 01709 382121 for Rotherham, 0114 2734567 for Sheffield, 01226 787787 for Barnsley and 01302 736000 for Doncaster.

This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify. Help is available with your application either at the school office or by contacting any of the above numbers.

#### Paying for School Meals

Parent/s must pay in advance for the school lunch using the cashless system in place in the school. Children will not be provided with a school lunch unless it is paid for, except those that are entitled to free school meals.

If a parent genuinely forgets to pay in advance, this debt must be paid next day and future meals may have to be paid in advance before any further meal is provided. If the debt is not cleared, parents must either provide a packed lunch or take the child home for lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, the head teacher will phone the parent to ask them to come to school with the money or ask them to pay online immediately. Otherwise they must provide sandwiches before lunch time or arrange to take their child home for lunch.

We hope that by implementing this debt policy we are able to help parents manage school dinner money better and at the same time ensure that all money that is for children's learning is available.