

# Spires Federation

## Policy

OPENING  
DOORS



OPENING  
MINDS

## Code of Conduct for Parents and Visitors Policy

Date : Updated June 2024

Review Date: November 2025

## **Our Vision is:**

To provide an aspirational education which inspires all in our community so that they are happy, confident and equipped for life in all its fullness.

The Spires Federation is proud to be a family of friendly, caring schools where children feel valued and secure. Our enthusiastic and dedicated staff work in partnership with parents, governors and the community, to provide a well-planned and challenging education for all, helping each and every pupil achieve high standards. The children are at the centre of everything planned in our schools and we look to support their development socially, emotionally and morally as well as academically. We value parents as partners in the education process and there are many occasions when we welcome families into our schools to share our activities.

At the Spires Federation, we 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, class teachers and the school community. As a partnership, our parents will 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 schools.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a reminder to all parents, carers and visitors to our school about the expected conduct. This is so we can continue to flourish, progress and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding.

The policy sets out:

- The general principles underpinning the conduct of members of the school community.
- How it is expected that communication between parents/carers and the school will take place.
- What behaviour towards the school and members of the school community are deemed unacceptable and open to challenge by the school.
- The additional steps the school can take in respect of unacceptable behaviour by a parent or carer.

## **General Principles**

- Remember that the school is governed by the school rules as decided upon by the Governing Body of the school and the Senior Leadership Team.
- Respect the caring ethos and values of our school;
- Understand that both teachers 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

## **STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Our schools encourage close links with parents and the community. We believe that students benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one. The majority of our parents, carers and others visiting our schools are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. However, sometimes a parent can have a negative attitude towards school, pupils and one another and, on occasion, this can result in aggression, verbal and/or physical abuse towards school staff and each other.

The schools expect the staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to defuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues. However, all staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse.

The school expects parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable and respectable way towards school staff and others. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where parents' behaviour is unacceptable.

## **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
- 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 and not discussing these concerns with other parents outside of school.
- Any concerns parents have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, the Head Teacher or the Chair of Governors, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

## **COMMUNICATION**

There are many reasons you might want to communicate with the school or a member of staff at the school. This could be simply phoning in to report a child's absence or just informing the member of staff at the gate when you drop your child off that they have forgotten their PE kit or have been complaining of feeling a little unwell. These short conversations to impart information are entirely necessary.

However please remember:

- How busy members of staff are during the school day, particularly first thing in the morning and where you need to speak with a member of staff make an appointment to do so at a time when they can give you their full attention.
- Approach the school to help resolve any issues of concern by making an appointment to meet with the class teacher in the first instance or with the teacher's line manager which in our school is the head teacher.
- If the matter is still not resolved follow the procedure in the school's Complaints Policy which is available under the heading "policies" on our website.

- If you wish to correspond by email this should be done through the school's central email address at [admin@spiresfederation.co.uk](mailto:admin@spiresfederation.co.uk). This address is monitored regularly during the school day and emails forwarded to the appropriate member of staff or Governor.
- Ensure that all such communications are polite and that you are always mindful of the right of the recipient to be treated with respect.
- When meeting face to face with members of staff to discuss any matters concerning your child's education or wellbeing in school approach the matter calmly and politely as this will also ensure progress can be made to address any issues or concerns. Remember that if you wish to speak with a member of staff it will normally fall to you to make a mutually convenient appointment.

## BEHAVIOUR

Some types of behaviour and conduct are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of unacceptable behaviour:

- Contacting staff or members of the Governing Body out of school hours using their individual email addresses rather than the school contact email address above. Staff and Governors are entitled to their own personal and family time.
- Do not send any form of correspondence to members of staff or Governors at the school demanding an immediate response or a response within your own time frame as the matter will be addressed, where appropriate, in a time frame deemed appropriate by the recipient.
- Send lengthy, frequent, demanding, or disrespectful emails to staff members as this will seriously undermine their ability to carry out their core role of educating the children in their care.
- When corresponding or speaking with staff in person do not use language that calls in to question their professional abilities or represents any form of personal attack or seek to direct how they carry out their professional roles or run the school. The running of the school is a matter for the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body of the school.
- Racist or sexist comments
- Breaking the school's security procedures

Unacceptable behaviour could result in Lincolnshire County Council and the Police being informed of the incident.

## PROCEDURE

When a parent or member of the public behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school staff, pupils or other parents, the Executive Headteacher or appropriate senior staff member will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If necessary, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. Where all procedures have been exhausted, and aggression or intimidation continue, or where there is an extreme act of violence, a parent or carer may be banned by the Executive Headteacher from the school premises for a period of time, subject to review.

### Additional Steps by the school:

- The member of staff or Governor concerned may challenge the behaviour by asking the person concerned to respect their personal space, stop shouting or using inappropriate behaviour or may end an unacceptable phone call or ask you to leave the school.
- The school may correspond in writing with a parent or carer to challenge behaviour that the school is finding unacceptable such as, for example, being rude to a member of staff or sending too many emails making demands of the school.
- If the school decide the matter requires a more formal approach the school may instruct its legal advisers to write to the parent or carer warning them about their behaviour and/or putting in place a communications strategy to restrict their means of corresponding with the school and/or banning them from school premises if felt to be appropriate.
- Clearly in serious instances where the peace is breached or the criminal law broken the school will also involve the police.

Please note that school premises are not public places but private premises and you have an implied right to enter the school as a parent or carer of a child at the school but it is open to the school to remove that right of entry at any time it deems this to be necessary.

## **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:

- Discuss the concern with the parent either face to face or over the phone (as appropriate)
- Send a warning letter to the parent
- Request the parent attends a meeting in school with a senior member of staff or the Executive Headteacher
- Contact the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour)
- Seek advice from the Local Authority 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 Executive Headteacher.

The Executive Headteacher will consult the chair of governors before banning a parent from the school site.

If a ban is deemed necessary, the following steps will be taken:

1. The parent will be warned, in writing, that s/he is banned from the premises, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, eg that an injunction may follow.
2. Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to Lincolnshire County Council and the Police will be included.
3. The Chair of Governors will be informed of the ban.
4. Where appropriate, arrangements for students being delivered to, and collected from, the school gate will be clarified.

## Appendix: Inappropriate use of Social Network Sites

Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, Head Teachers, school staff, and in some cases other parents/pupils.

The school seeks to teach pupils the importance of appropriate and responsible use of social media and it is therefore vital that everyone in the school community, including parents and carers lead by example.

The Governors considers the use of social media websites to complain about the school or individual members of staff or make personal comments about anyone in the school community is unacceptable and not in the best interests of the children or the whole school community. Any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels using the Schools Complaints Policy by speaking to the class teacher, the Head Teacher or the Chair of Governors, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned in line with that policy.

In the event that any student or parent/carer of a child/ren being educated in the school is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other 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 student removes such comments immediately.

In serious cases the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly is the issue of cyber bullying and the use by one child or a parent to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social network entry. We will take and deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying. Thankfully such incidents are extremely rare.

Please note that the inappropriate use of a communications network can give rise to offences under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 or the Communications Act 2003 and if persistent could be deemed to constitute the offence of harassment.

The Spires Federation follows the County Council policy on the taking of photographs and the filming of pupils. This means that we allow parents to take photographs and videos at school events but only if this is for the family's enjoyment only. At school events, we regularly remind parents that they must not post these images on any form of social network. This is to protect the other children who may be in the photographs and films, some of whom may not be allowed on social media due to child protection issues.