



Ribblesdale School

Parental Interaction Policy

The Ribblesdale Way

Respect

Inspire

Be Kind

Be Proud

Invest In Learning

Excel

Introduction

At Ribblesdale School, we strive to build a strong relationship with parents to help create a stimulating learning environment that continues from school to home, providing all pupils with the opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability. This is underpinned by the Ribblesdale Way, the cornerstone of which is respect. We work hard to ensure that our pupils treat each other and staff with respect and feel strongly that this level of respect should extend to interaction with parents in both directions.

All staff members have the right to work without fear of violence or abuse; physical attacks or threatening behaviour. As such, abusive or insulting language is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This document outlines the manner in which parents are expected to behave whilst on the school premises, when speaking to staff on the telephone or communicating through email. To create a welcoming and safe learning environment, the school implements a specifically designed set of guidelines regarding behaviour and conduct. It is our expectation that all parents will conduct themselves in accordance with these guidelines. Whilst we have harmonious relationships with the vast majority of parents and we appreciate that difficult conversations can sometimes result in emotions being tested, we have a duty to protect our staff and pupils from the inappropriate behaviour of a very small minority. As part of the school's business operations ALL phone calls, in and out, are recorded and stored for a period of time.

1. Legal framework

This document operates in conjunction with other school policies (including policy for dealing with persistent or vexatious complaints, Visitors' policy, Acceptable Use policy and Smoke Free policy). It has also given due regard to all relevant legislation.

Parents can view all relevant policies and procedures on the school website

2.a. Expectations

Our school expects parents to:

- Act in accordance with this Parental Interaction Policy at all times.
- Support and reflect 'The Ribblesdale Way' through their behaviour.
- Set a good example to pupils through their behaviour and the way they interact with staff, pupils and other adults.
- Work together with staff for the benefit of their child.
- Treat all governors, staff members, pupils, other parents and any other individuals connected to the school with dignity and respect.
- Work with staff members to resolve any issues of concern and, where appropriate, clarify their child's version of events with the school to bring about a positive solution to any issue.
- Support school by addressing inappropriate behaviour displayed by their child and collaborating with us to support your child in improving that behaviour.
- Organise meetings for a mutually convenient time rather than arriving at school without an appointment.
- Accept that, unless it is an emergency, school staff will not respond to emails and telephone calls immediately. It may be a few days before a teacher is able to respond to specific questions raised.

2.b. Remote Learning and Virtual Meetings

Under certain circumstances during and in the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, it may be necessary for pupils to learn from home through 'live' lessons taught via Microsoft Teams. Similarly, it may be necessary or beneficial (due to the pandemic or otherwise) for meetings to be conducted remotely using software platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Skype or SchoolCloud (used for online Parents' Evenings). The school respects that in such cases pupils and parents are physically situated within their own home or workplace. However, as the lessons and/or meetings constitute vital elements of the school's core business (this being the provision of education and support for our pupils) we would ask that pupils and parents treat them as such and comply with the expectations we would have for any lesson or meeting taking place on the school site. So that all parties can feel safe and comfortable we would ask that the following expectations are adhered to:

- Parents and pupils access lessons / meetings from an appropriate shared area of the home, e.g. kitchen, dining room or living room, and never from a bedroom.
- That pupils and their parents are appropriately dressed.

- That language used is appropriate for the context of a lesson or other meeting with professional persons.
- That food and alcohol are not consumed during meetings.

3. Inappropriate behaviour

The school takes instances of inappropriate behaviour whether in person or on the telephone very seriously and will not tolerate any circumstances that may make pupils, staff members and other members of the school community feel threatened. Parental behaviour that the school does not tolerate includes the following:

- Using foul, abusive or offensive language; raising voices inappropriately at another individual.
- Questioning the integrity and professionalism of an individual.
- Using aggressive hand gestures, e.g. raising fists and fingers.
- Making racist or sexual comments.
- Sending abusive or threatening messages, emails or other communications to any member of the school community.
- Trespassing on school property without prior permission or implied licence or causing intentional damage to school property.
- Physically intimidating an individual or using physical violence on the school premises or towards a member of the school community, e.g. hitting, slapping, punching, kicking and pushing.
- Writing or posting abusive, offensive or defamatory comments about an individual or the school, including on social media or posting content on social media that is damaging to the school's reputation (see Appendix 2).
- Displaying disruptive or other inappropriate behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with any of the school's operations or activities.
- Approaching another parent or pupil to discuss or reprimand them because of an issue between pupils .
- Smoking/vaping on the school premises/site.
- Taking photographs or videos on the school premises without permission from the school.

4. Managing inappropriate behaviour

Instances of parents displaying inappropriate behaviour will be managed in a variety of ways, depending on the severity of the situation. When a parent has behaved inappropriately, they will be contacted by the headteacher or another appropriate member of the senior team to discuss their behaviour and to attempt to resolve the issue.

Where this initial contact or a meeting is not sufficient to resolve the issue, the headteacher, in collaboration with other staff and relevant agencies, will consider what further action may be required. This action, depending on the situation, could include the following:

- Barring the parent from the school premises.

- Contacting the police.
- Seeking legal redress through the courts.
- Restricting the parent's channels of communication to the school, e.g. no longer allowing the parent to send emails to a staff member directly or contact staff by telephone.
- Reporting content the parent has posted online to the website's administrator.
- Referring the case to children's social care, where the behaviour indicates that the parent poses a risk to children.

Any child protection and safeguarding concerns will be addressed in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy.

The school reserves the right to instruct staff to end any telephone conversation that becomes abusive or aggressive and the right to escort anyone off the premises who is displaying aggressive or disruptive behaviour.

5. Barring from the school premises

The school has the right to bar a parent from the premises to keep the school community safe. If a parent is displaying inappropriate or concerning behaviour, they will be asked to leave the school premises.

The school will either:

- Bar the parent temporarily, until the parent has had the opportunity to formally present their concerns.
- Inform the parent that they intend to bar them and invite them to present their concerns.

The headteacher will send a letter to the parent, informing them of the following information:

- Why they have been temporarily barred or face a bar.
- The nature of the bar, i.e. if they are temporarily barred pending their representation or if they must present their concerns before the decision to bar can be made.
- That they have the right to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing to the chair of governors within 10 working days.

The headteacher's decision to bar the parent will be reviewed by the chair of governors. The chair of governors will take account of any representations made by the parent and decide whether to confirm or lift the bar. The parent will be notified in writing of the decision to uphold or lift the bar. If the decision is confirmed, the parent will be notified in writing, explaining:

- How long the bar will be in place.
- When the decision will be reviewed.

Decisions to bar will be reviewed at the end of the agreed timescale, in line with the process outlined above. Following a review, the bar may be lifted or, if there are grounds for continued concern regarding the parent's conduct, it may be extended. Once the appeal

process has been completed, parents that remain barred may be able to apply to the Civil Courts. If a parent wishes to exercise this option, they should seek independent legal advice.

6. Monitoring and review

This document will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Deputy Headteacher and any changes made will be communicated to all parents and staff at the school.

The next scheduled review date for this document is October 2024.

Appendix 1

Parent Code of Conduct Agreement

I..... (name), parent/ carer of (name of child), declare that I have received, read and understood the terms and conditions of this code of conduct.

I understand my obligations under this code of conduct and agree to comply fully with them.

I will ensure that my conduct does not breach this code in any way, including not:

- Being abusive or threatening to any member of the school community in person or on the telephone.
- Dressing in an inappropriate manner.
- Behaving inappropriately or aggressively in any way; questioning the integrity or professionalism of staff.
- Being discriminatory towards any member of the school community.
- Trespassing on the school property.
- Smoking, drinking alcohol or taking any illegal or harmful substances on the school premises.
- Sending inappropriate, abusive or aggressive messages to school staff.
- Requesting to 'follow' or 'friend' school staff on social media.

Please return this slip to Reception as soon as possible.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2

Inappropriate use of Social Network Sites

Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against staff working in schools, and in some cases, against other parents / pupils. The Governors consider the use of social media websites in this way as 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 by speaking to relevant staff or the Chair of Governors, 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 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 website. All social network sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted. The school will also expect that any parent / carer or pupil removes such comments immediately

In serious cases the school will also consider its legal options regarding any such misuse of social networking and other sites. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, there is the possibility that such behaviour may, in extreme cases, constitute cyberbullying i.e. the use of social media by one child or parent to publicly humiliate another. We will take and deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying. Thankfully, such incidents are extremely rare.