



Walthamstow School For Girls

"Neglect not the gift that is in thee"

Policy Document

Parent and Carer Code of Conduct

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I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

At Walthamstow School for Girls, we are committed to working in partnership with parents so that together we can bring out the gift in every student in our care. To this end, we:

- Work in partnership with parents/carers to support their child's learning
- Encourage parents/carers to participate fully in the life of the school and warmly welcome them as visitors
- Create a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for students, staff and parents/carers
- Ensure that we are courteous and polite at all times, treating visitors with respect, and modelling the behaviour we expect from our students
- Listen to parents/carers and if we get it wrong, we will work with you to put things right as soon as possible.
- Demonstrate our values of courage, compassion, aspiration and integrity through our conduct and actions.

In return, we ask our parents and carers to follow this code of conduct and treat our staff with respect and courtesy when on the site, when calling the school and in any other dealings with us.

We set clear expectations and guidelines about behaviour for all members of our community. This includes staff (through the staff code of conduct) and students (through our behaviour policy) and governors (through its code of practice). This code of conduct aims to help the school work with parents and carers by setting out guidelines for appropriate behaviour.

We use the term 'parents and carers' to refer to:

- Anyone with parental responsibility for a student
- Anyone caring for a child (such as grandparents or child-minders).

2. OUR EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS AND CARERS

We expect parents and carers to:

- Respect the ethos, vision and values of our school
- Understand that parents/ carers and staff need to work together in the best interests of their child
- Demonstrate that all members of the school community have a right to be treated with respect
- Set a good example with their own speech and behaviour
- Talk politely and respectfully at all times when on the school site
- Seek to clarify a child's version of events with the school's view in order to bring about a peaceful solution to any issues
- Correct their child's behaviour, especially in public where it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive or unsafe behaviour
- Avoid acting independently and always approach the school first to help resolve any issues of concern

- Understand that staff are not immediately available without an appointment and that it is always better to call ahead or use the info@ email address, rather than turn up unexpectedly
- Approach the correct member of school staff to help resolve any issues of concern, understanding that the school may suggest an alternative person whom they believe is more suited to dealing with the issue. If you are not sure, please contact the info@ email address and we will be able to direct your query to the most appropriate member of staff, notifying you that we have done so
- Understand that the school must be a safe, secure building, where visitors and parents may only enter the building by invitation and be supervised by a member of staff.

3. CONDUCT IN MEETINGS

- Meetings and telephone conversations with parents/carers must always be carried out in a calm and courteous manner
- We will all listen to each other's points of view
- Voices will not be raised, and appropriate language will be used by all parties
- Meetings to discuss a child will only involve persons named and identified with parental responsibility
- Permission to allow any other adult into a meeting must be agreed with the school in advance
- Meetings must be carried out in the spirit of mutual trust
- Meetings and telephone calls with school staff must not be recorded on any kind of electronic device

If a visitor, parent or carer's behaviour or language causes alarm, concern, or a member of staff feels threatened, the conversation will be terminated and the visitor asked to leave the school site. Similarly, telephone conversations will be terminated if rude or inappropriate language is used, or the member of staff feels threatened or bullied.

Meetings and telephone conversations will be terminated if it becomes apparent that a parent or carer is, or has been, attempting to record the conversation, or if the member of staff feels threatened by the way that a parent or carer is speaking to them.

Any concerns over parent/carer conduct will be referred to the Headteacher and may be dealt with as below.

4. BREACHING THE CODE OF CONDUCT

If the school suspects, or becomes aware, that a parent has breached this 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:

- If a parent/carer behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the Headteacher or appropriate senior leader will assess the level of risk before deciding on a future course of action (Appendix 1)

- The Headteacher/senior leader may seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation.
- This may include meeting the parent/carer, clarifying the school's expectations and agreeing strategies to prevent or manage future incidents (Appendix 2)

If necessary, the school's complaints procedure will be followed.

- Where all procedures have been exhausted and aggression or intimidation continues OR where there is an extreme act of violence, then further action may be taken including banning the individual from school premises.
- In some circumstances, the individual would be advised in writing by the Headteacher that following an incident of unacceptable behaviour, a ban is being considered. The individual concerned would then be given an opportunity to explain their actions, after which a decision would be made about imposing the ban.

In more serious circumstances a parent/carer may be banned from the school premises by the Chair of Governors for a specified period of time, subject to review.

- In this situation the parent/carer will be given an opportunity to explain their behaviour, after which a decision will be taken to confirm, remove or extend the ban.
- If the individual comes on to school premises after a ban has been imposed, , the Police would be called immediately. (Appendix 3)
- The Governing Body would then decide, in conjunction with the local authority whether to consider taking out a Court Injunction preventing this from happening again.
- Throughout this process, thorough record keeping is critical (Appendix 4).
- The school will always respond to an incident in a proportionate way. The final decision about how to respond to breaches of this Code of Conduct rests with the Headteacher.
- The Headteacher will consult the Chair of Governors before banning a parent from the school site.

5. BANNING PROCEDURE

When imposing a ban, the following steps will be taken:

- The parent/carer will be informed in writing that she/he is banned from the premises (subject to review) and what the consequences would be if the ban is breached.
- Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the local authority and the police will be included.
- The local authority will be informed of the ban.
- Where appropriate, arrangements for pupils being delivered to, and collected from the school gate, will be clarified by the appropriate member of staff.
- A review date for consideration of the ban will be decided upon and communicated to the parent/carer
- Following the review, the outcome will also be communicated to the parent/carer
- Model letters for all the above steps can be found in Appendix 5

6. CONCLUSION

The local authority may also take action where behaviour has been unacceptable, or there have been serious breaches of our parent/carer code of conduct or health and safety legislation.

In implementing this policy, the school will seek advice from the Local Authority's education, health and safety and legal departments, as appropriate, to ensure fairness and
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consistency.

This policy will be reviewed annually. It should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Communications policy
- Complaints policy

APPENDIX 1: RISK ASSESSMENT

In the event of a parent behaving in an inappropriate way, each situation will need to be considered individually by the Headteacher or by a designated senior leader. The following factors should be taken into account as part of a risk assessment, in addition to any records of the incident, before deciding on the most appropriate course of action:

- Has the parent/carer been verbally aggressive/threatening/intimidating?
- Has the parent/carer been physically aggressive/threatening/intimidating?
- What evidence is there? What do witnesses say happened?
- Does the parent have a known previous history of aggression/violence? (Information can only be sought from the police when an official complaint has been made).
- Do members of the school staff/community feel intimidated by the parent's behaviour?
- Have students witnessed aggressive/threatening/intimidating behaviour from the parent/carer?
- Have students been approached inappropriately by the parent/carer?
- Has the parent/carer been abusive to school staff, students or visitors?
- Has the parent/carer been persistently abusive to school staff, students or visitors?
- Was the parent/carer provoked in **any** way prior to their behaviour and/or does the parent/carer claim to have been provoked?
- Is there evidence of provocation?
- How frequently have the behaviours occurred, or is this the first occurrence?
- Is there a risk (low, medium, or high) that the behaviour may be repeated?

APPENDIX 2: **OPTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION**

Inviting the parent to a meeting to discuss events

This could be helpful where a planned and structured meeting has either not been held before, or has previously been productive. Skilled facilitators may need to be used. A full restorative meeting may be considered, but if it is not safe to bring all the parties together at a meeting, a restorative process can still take place through the exchange of information.

The safety and wellbeing of those attending such a meeting must be carefully considered. It is strongly recommended that members of school staff should be accompanied by at least one other colleague at any such meeting. Consideration should be given to the seating arrangements, and care taken to ensure exits cannot be blocked by a parent/carer who could potentially become aggressive.

The main points of discussion and any agreed actions should be noted, and a follow-up letter sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions.

Clarifying to the parent what is considered acceptable behaviour by the school

In some instances, it may be appropriate simply to ensure the parent is clear about the behaviour standards expected by the school. This could be explained at a meeting, or by letter, however any verbal explanation should be followed by a written confirmation of the discussion and the standards of behaviour outlined clearly.

Forming strategies to manage future situations of potential conflict

It is sometimes possible to identify situations of potential conflict and to plan for these in a way that minimises potential risks. For example, where a parent/carer persistently engages in arguments with staff at the beginning or end of the school day, the parent/carer could be informed that any discussions with school staff must be held by prior appointment.

Alternatively, the parent/carer may be asked not to approach the teacher but should instead arrange to meet the Headteacher (or other member of the senior leadership team), who will address their concerns.

In more serious cases, a further option may be to advise the parent/carer that in future their concerns should be dealt with only by written communication. Any such arrangements should be confirmed in writing to the parent/carer.

Withdrawing permission for the parent to enter the school site and/or buildings

In more serious cases of actual or threatened aggression/violence, or persistent abuse/intimidation, the Headteacher may need to consider whether it is safe for the parent/carer to continue to come onto the school site or enter the buildings.

APPENDIX 3 CALLING FOR POLICE ASSISTANCE

- In an emergency, police assistance should be sought.
- In cases where a ban is in place but is ignored and the person comes onto the school site, the police should be notified immediately. (Staff will need to be aware of the ban and have agreed procedures in place should the person come onto the school site).
- In situations where there is no immediate threat to staff, students, other members of the school community or the school's property, Headteachers may still wish to make their local community police officer (e.g., neighbourhood support team, youth intervention officer) aware of the situation.
- The police could give consideration to warning the offender of formal action, which may include legal proceedings.

APPENDIX 4 – RECORD KEEPING

- There should be clear and detailed records of all events which must be kept up to date. Any witness statements (where appropriate) and notes of any subsequent meetings held to discuss the events should also be retained. Notes should be signed and dated.
- Any physical evidence should be bagged and labelled, and witnesses should be asked to make a record of exactly what they saw and heard at the earliest opportunity.
- It is also advisable to ensure that in every case, even where a formal letter is not required, parents/carers receive a written confirmation of the events and the Headteacher's response.

- If the police are asked to deal with an incident as a criminal investigation, there are a number of actions that may thwart this process. Witness details should not be made known to suspected offenders or their families. Groups of witnesses or suspects should not be left together, or allowed to discuss what happened, before the police interview them. If in doubt, always seek the advice of the police officer first.
- An incident recording form is attached below.

INCIDENT RECORDING FORM

Date & time of incident	
Incident reported by	
Brief outline of incident <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name of person causing incident• Status (parent/carer/visitor)• Description of incident• Location• Any injuries/harm• Damage to school property	
Any possible contributory factors	
Details of any witnesses	

Witness statements attached? Y/N	
Is the perpetrator known to have been involved in any previous incidents? (If yes, give details)	
Were measures in place to try to prevent an incident of this type occurring? (Could these be improved? If no measures were in place, could action be taken now?)	
Name and contact details of police officer(s) involved.	
Incident number/ crime reference number	
Any other relevant information	
Initial action/outcome	
Subsequent actions	
Form completed by (name and role)	
Date Completed	

APPENDIX 5 MODEL LETTERS

Model letter 1:

This is an initial warning letter which can be sent by the Headteacher when it is felt that further serious incidents may warrant a ban.

Model letter 2:

It is suggested that this letter is sent by the Chair of Governors when, after full consideration, it is felt a ban is necessary.

Normally this would follow on from a warning (letter 1). **Although there may be occasions where it is appropriate to move directly to a ban – it is strongly recommended that the LA is consulted in such cases.**

At this point consideration should also be given to any practical issues, in particular to ensure that the student(s) concerned can be properly accompanied to and collected from school, and to ensure there can be an effective exchange of necessary information between the school and parent/carer.

At this stage, the ban takes effect immediately, but as the letter indicates, the parent/carer must be enabled to make representations. A period of a week is recommended to allow for this, at the end of which the Chair of Governors should consider any representations made, then make a decision to either confirm the ban or discontinue it (see model letters 3a and 3b).

Model letters 3a and 3b:

These letters confirm the outcome of a review of the ban by the Chair of Governors. If the decision is made to confirm the ban, a date should be included for a further review. This should be for a reasonable period, possibly extending up to three months, but preferably not longer than six months.

If the parent is dissatisfied with this decision, it is suggested in the model letter that the matter is then considered by a panel of school governors.

Model letter 4a and 4b:

These letters can be used to confirm the outcome of further reviews of decisions where the ban has been extended. When a review is due to take place, it is advisable to notify the parent/carer in advance and invite them to make any representations.

Letter 1 Warning (sent by Headteacher)

Recorded delivery

Dear

I have received a report about your conduct at the school on **(enter date and time)**.

(Add factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, students, and other parents/bystanders.)

I must inform you that the local authority/ governing body **(delete as appropriate)** will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to protect its staff and students.

If, in the future, I receive any further reports of conduct of this nature, I will be forced to consider removing your licence to enter the school grounds and buildings. If you do not comply with that instruction, I will be able to arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted under this section of the Act, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

Nevertheless, I wish to give you an opportunity to send me in writing your own comments or observations in relation to the report which I have received about your conduct. These comments may include any expressions of regret on your part and any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct. To enable me to take a decision on this matter promptly, you are asked to send me any written comments you wish to make by **(state date ten working days from the date of letter)**.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

cc: Chair of Governors

**Letter 2 Withdraw permission pending review
(sent by Chair of Governors)**

Recorded delivery

Dear

I have received a report from the Headteacher about your conduct on
..... at

(Add summary of incident and its effect on staff and students)(optional reference to first letter from Headteacher)

I must inform you that the governors, in line with our policy, will not tolerate conduct of this nature on the school premises and will act to defend school staff and students in order to ensure the school is a place of safety.

On the advice of the Headteacher, I am therefore instructing you that until I have reviewed this incident, you are not to reappear on the school premises. If you do not comply with this instruction, I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises. If you cause a nuisance or disturbance on the premises, you may be prosecuted under section 547 of the Education Act 1996; and if convicted under this section of the Act, you are liable to a fine of £500.

The withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises takes effect immediately and will be in place for 15 school days in the first instance. I still need to decide whether it is appropriate to confirm this decision. Before I do so, I wish to give you an opportunity to send me in writing any comments or observations you wish to submit in relation to the report that I have received from the Headteacher. These comments may be to challenge or explain the facts of the incident, and/or to express regret and give assurances about your future good conduct. To enable me to take a decision on this matter, please send me any written comments you wish to make by **(date 10 school days from date of letter)**.

If on receipt of your comments, I consider that my decision should be confirmed, you will be supplied with details of how to pursue a review of your case.

I am copying this letter to the Headteacher and to the Local authority.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

cc: Headteacher

cc: Local authority

**Letter 3a Withdrawal of permission confirmed
(sent by Chair of Governors)**

Recorded delivery

Dear

On I wrote to inform you that on the advice of the Headteacher, I had withdrawn permission for you to come onto the school premises. To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by [date] .

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you [delete as applicable] dated, the contents of which I have carefully considered.

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Headteacher's report, I have determined that the decision to withdraw permission for you to come onto school premises should be confirmed. I am therefore instructing that, until further notice, you are not to come onto the premises of the school without the prior knowledge and approval of the Headteacher.

If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises of the school. If you cause a nuisance or disturbance on the premises, you may be prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996; and if convicted under this section of the Act, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

Even though we have taken this decision, the Headteacher and staff remain committed to the education of your child/children, who must continue to attend school as normal.

This decision will be reviewed again**(insert review date which should be within a reasonable period and no longer than six months)**. When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the withdrawal of permission to come onto the school premises, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with this decision, including any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from you; and any evidence of your co-operation with the school in other respects.

[If applicable]Finally, I would advise you that I have asked the Headteacher to ensure that your complaint that..... is considered under the appropriate stage of the school's complaints procedure. The school will contact you about this in due course.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

cc: Headteacher
cc: Local authority

**Letter 3b Restore permission after review by Chair of Governors
(sent by Chair of Governors)**

Recorded delivery

Dear

On I wrote to inform you that on the advice of the Headteacher, I had temporarily withdrawn permission for you to come onto the school premises.

To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by.....

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you [delete as applicable] dated, the contents of which I have carefully considered.

In the circumstances, and after consulting further with the Headteacher, I have decided that it is not necessary to confirm the decision and I am therefore restoring permission for you to come onto the school premises, with immediate effect.

[Optional] I must warn you, however, that if it should become necessary again in the future, I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the school premises .

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

cc: Headteacher

cc: Local authority

**Letter 4a Continue ban after second review
(sent by Chair of Governors)**

Recorded delivery

Dear

I wrote to you on confirming that permission for you to come onto the School premises had been withdrawn until further notice. I also advised you that I would take steps to review this decision by

I have now completed the review. However, after consultation with the Headteacher, I have determined that it is not yet appropriate for me to withdraw my decision. **[Add brief summary of reasons.]**

I therefore advise that the instruction that you are not to come onto the school premises without the prior knowledge and approval of the Headteacher remains in place (insert date).

If you do not comply with this instruction, I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises and you may be prosecuted under section 547 of the Education Act 1996; and if convicted under this section of the Act, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

I shall undertake a further review of this decision by **[insert review date which should be within a reasonable period and no longer than six months.]**

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

cc: Headteacher
cc: Local authority

**Letter 4b Restore permission after later review
(sent by Chair of Governors)**

Recorded delivery

Dear

I wrote to you on confirming that permission for you to come onto the School premises had been withdrawn until further notice. I also advised you I would take steps to review this decision by

I have now completed the review. After consultation with the Headteacher, I have decided that it is now appropriate to restore permission for you to come onto the school premises with immediate effect.

I trust that you will now work productively with the school and there will be no further difficulties of the kind which made it necessary to restrict your access to the school premises.

[Optional] I must warn you, however, that if it should become necessary again in the future, I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the school premises.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

cc: Headteacher