



# **ARCHBISHOP BENSON C of E SCHOOL**

## **Parent Code of Conduct**

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1. Vision:

With **fun and learning**, **hand in hand**, **all things are possible**.

“I can do **all things** through **Him** who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)

#### Values:

**RESPECT**      **CREATION**      **FELLOWSHIP**      **WISDOM**      **HOPE**

At Archbishop Benson School, we are proud to be a Church of England school rooted in our local community. In keeping with our inclusive vision and values, we are committed to being the school of first choice for all local families providing an excellent education for all our pupils. Our policies and procedures are focused on ensuring that we all enjoy and achieve within a nurturing and enriching school community.

### 1.2 School Aims:

To help fulfil this vision the school has the following aims:

To enable each child to achieve his or her full potential in levels of academic maturity, creativity, spirituality, physical development and independence

To educate pupils in the principles of the Christian faith, promoting respect for moral values, differing races, religions and ways of life

To awaken and develop every child's sense of self worth

To develop respect, commitment and responsibility for others, to equip children to be able to make a positive contribution to the community in which they live

To provide a wide variety of activities, visits and special events which enrich children's learning

### 1.3 School Ethos

Archbishop Benson's Three Rules		
<b>We care</b>	<b>We share</b>	<b>We repair</b>
Respect, Creation	Fellowship	Hope, Wisdom

As a Church of England school, we are committed to being a faith-based community. We value our strong relationships with parents and carers. Together this helps us achieve the very best for the children in a mutually supportive partnership. As school partners, our parents understand the importance of a good working relationship to equip their children with the necessary skills for adulthood.

For these reasons we continually welcome and encourage parents or carers to participate fully in the life of our school. To truly create the best outcomes for children requires the relationship between home and school to be based on the principles of care, integrity, trust and mutual respect. The maintenance of this relationship is important to ensure that our children are safe and not open to undue distress or anxiety.

## 2.0 Purpose and scope

At Archbishop Benson School, we believe it's important to:

- Work in partnership with parents and carers to support their child's learning
- Create a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for pupils, staff, parents and carers.
- Model appropriate behaviour for our pupils at all times

To help us do this, we set clear expectations and guidelines on behaviour for all members of our community. This includes staff (through our Staff Code of Conduct) and pupils (through our Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy). The aim of the document is to remind all parents, carers and visitors to our school of the expectations around their conduct. In this way we can continue to flourish and progress to achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding, supporting the school's values.

We use the term 'parents' to refer to:

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

### **3.0 Our expectations of parents, carers and visitors**

We expect parents, carers and other visitors:

- To respect and model the caring ethos, vision and values of our school whenever on the school's premises or when communicating directly with the school.
- To understand that school staff and parents need to work together in the best interests of our pupils and for the benefit of all.
- To treat all members of the school community with tolerance and respect using appropriate language and behavior which sets a good example for their children.
- To approach staff in an appropriate manner (whether verbally or in writing) and at an appropriate time, when seeking help to resolve an issue.
- To be supportive in allowing the school the time and space to clarify versions of events and to investigate incidents fully in order to bring about an appropriate solution to an issue
- To seek to clarify a child's version of events with the school's view to bring about a peaceful solution to all issues
- To approach the right member of school staff to help resolve any issues of concern.
- To correct their child's actions especially where it could lead to conflict, aggressive or unsafe behaviour – both on and off the school premises.

### **4.0 Behaviour that will not be tolerated**

Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with any of the school's normal operation or activities anywhere on the school premises will not be tolerated.

This will include

- Disproportionate, rude or hostile parental reaction to communication (by phone, in writing or in person) they may receive from the school to do with their child's punctuality, attendance and/or behaviour or issues that may arise in relation to clubs or Benson Buddies.
- Displaying a temper or using verbal aggression (e.g. shouting, swearing or using loud, intimidating or offensive language) at a member of the school community.
- Threatening behaviour, in any way, a member of the school community
- Sending abusive, aggressive or threatening e-mails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communications to any member of the school community.
- Posting defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any member of the school community on Facebook or other social media platforms.
- The use of physical aggression or hostility towards another adult or child. This includes physical punishment against their own child on school premises.
- 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).
- Misusing, damaging or destroying school property.
- Smoking, taking illegal drugs or the consumption of alcohol on school premises. (Alcohol may only be consumed during authorised events).
- Bringing dogs on to school premises (other than guide dogs)
- Any other inappropriate behaviour on the school premises.

### **5.0 Breaching the code of conduct**

All members of the school community have the right to operate in a safe and supportive working environment where their physical safety and their mental health and wellbeing are assured.

Inappropriate parental conduct can

- impact negatively on staff resulting in illness, absence and resignations.
- damage home-school relationships during a family's remaining time at the school
- unfairly harm the reputation of the school (and individuals) in the wider community.
- The staff at Archbishop Benson School are a team and we will act/re-act to support and protect each other.

Staff will intervene in any situation where they feel that parental conduct is inappropriate and all staff have been advised to disengage politely for any situations where parental engagement has become difficult and to refer the matter to a senior leader.

Senior leaders, supported by the Governing Board, will be proactive in applying this code of conduct to protect every member of our school community and to ensure the recruitment and retention of our highly valued team of staff. In the event of an inappropriate, intimidating or aggressive incident, staff will challenge parental behaviour.

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 and the initial response by the parent, carer or visitor, the school may then implement the following protective measures:

- Invite the person in to school to meet with a senior member of staff, the headteacher and/or a school governor to have a constructive, face-to-face meeting.
- Send a response letter or warning letter to the parent, carer or visitor.
- Discontinue electronic communication, verbal communication and/or face-to-face contact with the parent, carer or visitor until such time as issues can be appropriately resolved and it is safe for communication and contact to resume again.
- Introduce new, protective measures to ensure safer communication and contact in the future e.g. use of an agreed phrase or statement to remind a parent or carer when their conduct may be lapsing, the presence of an additional member of staff at meetings with a parent or carer.
- Explore the need for a ban parent, carer or visitor from the school site or implement a ban
- Contact the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour).
- Seek advice from the Local Authority's legal team regarding further action (in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous)

A ban in the first instance will normally be time-limited and would be applied for a period of half a term. A ban will be implemented by a member of the school's Leadership Group. Parents or carers can make representation to the school about a ban using our Complaints Procedures.

A ban from the school can be introduced without having to go through all the steps indicated above in more serious cases. The Leadership Group will consult with the Chair of Governors before banning a parent from the school site.

In the event of parental non-engagement with these protective measures, then the school will write to the parent/carers and ask them to desist with the inappropriate behaviour and inform them that if they do not, then they may be banned from the school premises. If the behaviour continues, the person will be written to again and informed that a ban is now in place.

The school will always look to respond to any incident of misconduct in a proportional way. The final decision for how to respond to breaches of this code of conduct rests with the headteacher. If the incident is serious enough, then the school will follow recommended police advice and either contact our local PCSO for support or ring 999, if support is required immediately.

## **6.0 Social media**

### **6.1 Social media usage**

The school's social media accounts provide a platform for celebration and sharing news and information for parents and carers. They are not a platform for discussion, queries or to voice concerns or complaints.

We absolutely respect the right of our parents to use social media to communicate. We understand that our parents/carers wish to set up independent channels to help them stay on top of what's happening in their child's class, e.g. class/year Facebook groups, email groups, or chats (through apps such as WhatsApp). We know and appreciate that the vast majority of our parents do so in a proactive and supportive manner.

However, social media platforms are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, the headteachers, school staff, and in some cases other parents or pupils. Closed social media platforms like WhatsApp, which are not open and accessible to schools, can encourage inappropriate parental communication. When communicating with the school via official communication channels, or using private/independent channels to talk about the school, we expect our parents/carers to:

- Be respectful towards members of staff, and the school, at all times
- Be respectful of other parents/carers and children
- Direct any complaints or concerns through the school's official channels, so they can be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure

We encourage everyone, including our pupils, to think before communicating through social media. People should ask themselves the following questions before posting (taken from the Forbes Social Media Etiquette Checklist):

1. Is this appropriate for a social media platform, or would it best be communicated another way?
2. Will I be okay with absolutely anyone seeing this?
3. Have I thought about who I am sharing this message with? Is it appropriate to share with everyone on this platform? Should I be selecting a specific audience?
4. Is this really something I want to share, or is it just me venting?

5. Is this post too vague? Will everyone understand what I'm saying?
6. Will anyone really care about this content besides me? How will it reflect on me?
7. Is this reactive communication or is it well thought-out?
8. Will I offend anyone with this content? If so, who? Does it matter?

People should run through these questions in their minds before sending any written communication.

We do not expect our parents/carers to:

- Use private groups, the school's Facebook page, or personal social media to complain about or criticise the school or members of staff. This is not constructive and the school cannot improve or address issues if they are not raised in an appropriate way.
- Use private groups, the school's Facebook page, or personal social media to complain about, or try to resolve, a behaviour issue involving other pupils. Parents/cares should contact the school via the school office and speak to the appropriate member of staff.
- Upload or share photos or videos on social media of any child other than their own, unless they have the direct permission of the other children's parents/carers

Online activity by parents & carers on personal or school accounts which we consider inappropriate include:

- Identifying or posting school images/videos of pupils other than their own child(ren)
- Posting inaccurate, speculative and/or harmful comments or allegations of a personal nature about staff, other pupils or other parents or the school as a whole.
- Using foul and abusive language in a post directed towards another pupil/parent/member of staff/school.
- Posting defamatory or libellous comments about another pupil/parent/member of staff/school.
- Using social media to challenge school policies and procedures.
- Using social media to persistently harass another pupil/parent/member of staff/school

## **6.2 Malicious communication**

The school will take appropriate protective actions where cyber-bullying of any member of the school community occurs or the posting of libellous or defamatory comments on social media sites or platforms,

- We take very seriously the use of cyber bullying by a parent or carer to publicly humiliate someone else within the school community by inappropriate social media entries. We will take and deal with this as a serious incident of harassment or bullying.
- The school will contact parents & carers directly and seek for comments to be taken down which may be false, inaccurate, libellous or defamatory.
- We will identify and contact directly the administrator of any social media account and request them to take down such postings. We expect the administrator to monitor, intercept and review the postings and activities within that account to ensure that expected standards are being met by those using the account (including where this is necessary to prevent or detect crime).
- -All social network sites & platforms have clear rules about the content which can be posted and the school will use their reporting mechanisms to report contact or activity which breaches this. They have processes in place for such situations, and can remove the content and even close down the person's account.
- The school may consider reporting malicious, harassing or bullying messaging to the police.
- The Department for Education and the Governors of Archbishop Benson School consider social media being used in this way as unacceptable. Inappropriate use of social media by a parent or carer to publicly humiliate, criticise or fuel complaints/grievances against another parent, pupil, member of staff, governor or the school is taken extremely seriously. The school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse on social networking and other sites. We will seek and invoke legal advice to protect the position of the school, where necessary.

## **7.0 Safeguarding**

At Archbishop Benson, we take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will deal with any reported incidents of unsuitable parental conduct appropriately, and in line with the actions outlined above. This could involve the school having to implement safeguarding procedures and/or see professional safeguarding advice

## **8.0 Concerns or complaints**

This code of conduct does not prevent parents and carers from raising a legitimate concern or complaint. In the vast majority of cases, we know that concerns and complaints can be resolved through open dialogue, using the correct channels to speak to the right party, so that they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

If parents or carers have a concern or a complaint, they should

- Contact and engage with the class teacher in the first instance.
- If the concern remains, they should contact and engage with the phase leader, Assistant Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher
- If the concern persists, they should contact and engage with the Headteacher.
- If the concern is still unresolved, they can contact the Board Governors or the Complaints Procedure can be followed.

Thank you for abiding by this code of conduct. By working together, we create a positive and uplifting environment not only for the children but also for all who work and visit our school.

**Note:** Can parents please ensure they make all persons responsible for collecting their children aware of this policy.