



PEAK EDGE

ACADEMY TRUST

Parent Code of Conduct

1 Aims of the Policy

- 1.1 Peak Edge (“the Trust”) aims to make sure that all pupils receive an excellent education and are fully prepared for the next stage of their life. We work closely with parents and other partners to achieve this, and we really value the positive and supportive relationships we have with the vast majority of our parents and carers.
- 1.2 We also have a responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both staff and pupils. We ask that everyone in our school community treats each other with respect. On the rare occasions when behaviour from a parent is inappropriate or disrupts the smooth running or safety of our schools, we may need to take action. This policy explains what behaviour is not acceptable and what steps the Trust may take if needed.
- 1.3 This policy should be read alongside the Trust’s Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedure. Most issues can be resolved quickly and positively by following that procedure. If a complaint is repeated, has no reasonable grounds, or is pursued in an unreasonable way, it will be managed through the Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedure.
- 1.4 In this policy, ‘parent’ means a parent, carer, or anyone with legal responsibility for a child. The principles in this policy also apply to any other family members of pupils or other visitors to a school.
- 1.5 If a parent is acting in a voluntary capacity, for example as a local governor or as part of a school’s Parent Teacher Association, they are still subject to the scope of this policy as a parent.

2 Key principles

- A strong partnership between parents and the school is essential to ensuring every pupil’s success and wellbeing.
- Nothing in this policy will ever compromise the education or wellbeing of the child whose parent is involved.
- Any decisions made under this policy will be explained clearly to the parent, along with the reasons for those decisions.
- Parents are always entitled to share their views or make representations about any actions taken by the Trust or its schools.
- If any restrictions are put in place, they will only last for a set period of time and will be reviewed regularly.

3 The Scope and Application of this Policy

- 3.1 This policy covers unacceptable behaviour which is committed by a parent:
 - in any Trust or school buildings or on a Trust or school site
 - by telephone to the Trust or a school

- by email to the Trust or a school
- on social media and any other public electronic media platforms (e.g. websites, or messaging apps e.g. Whatsapp) referring to the Trust or a school or a member of staff of the Trust or school
- in any other setting which, in the reasonable opinion of the CEO or Chair of Trustees (or any person authorised by them), should be regulated by this policy.

3.2 The following behaviours are considered unacceptable by the Trust:

Unacceptable conduct

3.2.1 Unacceptable conduct includes:

- verbal or written threats of violence or harm
- swearing or the use of other abusive, offensive or threatening language
- intimidation, coercion or humiliation
- aggressive or disruptive behaviour
- harassment, bullying or causing distress
- physical violence, including damage to property or injury to individuals
- discriminatory conduct or use of discriminatory language (sexist, racist, other)
- frequent, unwarranted and/or unnecessary correspondence which is hindering the proper running of the Trust or its schools
- making deliberately false, malicious or vexatious accusations
- consumption of alcohol (unless alcohol has been allowed at a specific event) or use of illegal drugs on the Trust or a school's premises, or accessing the Trust or a school's premises whilst intoxicated
- any behaviour that violates the law or school policies
- incitement of others to do any of the above

This list is not a complete list, but it gives examples of the types of behaviour that may be considered unacceptable. The Trust will look at each situation carefully and will make the final decision about whether conduct is deemed unacceptable.

Any communication that puts the safety or wellbeing of staff or pupils at risk will be taken very seriously and responded to straight away. Our priority is always to protect everyone in our Trust and school communities.

Covert recordings

- 3.2.2 Unless we have specifically agreed in writing, the Trust does not give permission for parents to make audio or video recordings of staff, trustees, local governors, or school volunteers – whether in face-to-face meetings, virtual meetings, or phone calls. Making recordings without consent breaks the relationship of trust and mutual respect between the parent and the school.
- 3.2.3 If a parent is found to be recording a conversation, staff members have the right to bring the meeting or phone call to an end straight away.
- 3.2.4 If a parent records a member of staff, trustee, local governor, or volunteer without consent, the Trust may issue a restricted communication plan (see below).
- 3.2.5 If a parent records audio or video on the school site without permission from the individuals involved, the parent may be immediately banned from the school premises (see below), and external agencies may need to be involved.

Inappropriate use of social media or messaging platforms

- 3.2.6 The Trust encourages parents to speak directly with staff if they have concerns and to use the Trust's Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedure when an issue needs to be taken further. We kindly ask parents not to raise concerns about the Trust, its schools, or its staff on social media or via messaging apps e.g. Whatsapp. Posting concerns publicly can unintentionally harm the reputation of the Trust or its schools, and may unfairly call staff integrity into question. Negative or critical posts can also cause distress and are often unhelpful in achieving the shared goal of supporting pupils' education. In addition, comments about individual staff members may be considered defamatory or could amount to cyber-bullying.
- 3.2.7 It is a criminal offence to publish information that could identify a teacher who is subject to an allegation of misconduct, unless they have been formally charged or the Secretary of State for Education has released information about the case (Education Act 2011). It is important that everyone in the school community understands this, as publishing such information online could lead to prosecution and a fine.
- 3.2.8 If the Trust becomes aware that a parent is using social media to target the Trust, a school, or members of staff, the Trust may (or may authorise a school to):

- report the post(s) to the social media platform
- contact the parent or page owner to ask for the post to be edited or removed
- issue a restricted communication plan (see below)
- inform the police or other relevant agencies, where appropriate to):

4 Procedures

The Trust has a range of approaches it may use when a parent behaves in a way that is not acceptable. Although these steps are listed in order, the Trust may begin at any stage if, in the reasonable judgement of the CEO or Chair of Trustees (or someone authorised by them), the behaviour is serious enough to require a higher level of response.

If the behaviour is so severe that it puts the immediate safety or wellbeing of staff or others at risk, the matter will be referred straight away to the police and/or the Trust's legal team.

4.1 Verbal warning

If a parent shows any of the behaviours described in this policy, they will be asked to stop and will be given the opportunity to discuss the issue in person.

4.2 Mediation meeting

Where appropriate, the parent may be invited to meet with the CEO or the Headteacher (or someone authorised by them) to talk through the concern face-to-face in a calm and constructive way.

4.3 Formal written warning(s)

A formal written warning may be sent to the parent's home address.

This letter will be signed by the CEO, the Headteacher, or the Chair of Trustees (or someone authorised by any of them) and shared with relevant staff so a consistent approach can be taken.

The letter will be kept for twelve months, and then managed in accordance with the Trust's Data Retention Policy. More than one written warning may be issued where appropriate.

4.4 Legal sanctions

If a parent continues to behave inappropriately, or commits a serious breach of expected behaviour, the Trust may consider one or more of the following actions (or may authorise a school to do so):

A Restricted communication plan

The parent may be placed on a communication plan, which limits how they can contact the Trust or a school. This may include:

- requiring all communication in writing
- limiting contact to a named member of staff or a specific email address
- restricting telephone calls to set days or times
- restricting communication to writing only

B Ban from a school's premises

A parent's general permission to enter school premises may be removed or restricted for a set period of time.

If this happens, parents may need to make alternative arrangements for transporting their child.

Entering the school site after a ban, and causing a nuisance, is a criminal offence under section 547 of the Education Act 1996. Anyone breaching the ban may be removed by the police or authorised staff.

C An injunction under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997

The Trust may seek a legal injunction requiring the parent to stop the behaviour in question.

5 Monitoring and Review

The CEO and Headteachers will update staff from time to time and will provide an annual report to the Trustee Board (and to local governing boards or committees where appropriate). This report will summarise the number and type of incidents involving unacceptable behaviour from parents, how the Trust or school responded, and what the outcomes were. The Chair of Trustees may request an earlier report if needed.

6 Records

We will keep a record of any correspondence, actions or decisions for at least twelve months, and then manage them in line with the Trust's Data Retention Policy.

All correspondence, statements, and records relating to individual cases will remain confidential except where:

- access is requested by the Secretary of State
- information must be shared as part of a school inspection
- an individual has a legal right to access their own personal data contained in the record
- under other legal authority

Our school is a **safe** and **welcoming** place for everyone. We ask all visitors to speak kindly and respectfully to our staff.

SAFE
KIND
INCLUSIVE

Together, we set a positive example for **our children** - thank you for helping us create a school we can all be proud of.



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peakedge.org.uk

Trust | Collaboration | Ambition | Responsibility | Innovation