



## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND VISITORS**

Selworthy School is a nurturing learning community. We believe learners learn best in a safe and supportive environment based on respect and trust and underpinned by an effective partnership between parents, carers, staff and the wider school community. High standards of behaviour are required and staff are expected to act professionally at all times. The positive support of parents and carers is needed and highly valued by the school.

This 'Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Visitors' provides a reminder to all parents, carers and visitors to our school about the conduct expected of them. It sets out both what they should aim to do, and conduct which will not be tolerated. Embedding these expectations enables us to flourish, progress and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding.

This code complements the school's 'Complaints Policy' which is designed to handle parental concerns or complaints in a sensitive and mutually supportive manner (see the school website or contact the school office).

### **Expectations**

We expect parents and carers (and, where appropriate, visitors) to:

- Respect the caring ethos and values of our school
- Work together with school staff for the benefit of their children
- Treat **all** members of the school community with respect using appropriate language and behaviour
- Approach the school, to help resolve any issues of concern
- Where appropriate, clarify a child's version of events with the school's view in order to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue

**To support a peaceful and safe school environment, the school will not tolerate parents, carers or visitors exhibiting the following:**

- Disruptive or other inappropriate behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with any of the school's operation or activities anywhere on the school premises
- Approaching another parent or child to discuss or chastise them because of an issue between the children, (Such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and may have legal consequences) – please talk to a member of staff to resolve problems
- Using loud or offensive language or displaying a temper in person or over the phone
- Threatening, in any way, a member of school staff, visitor, fellow parent/carer or learner
- Using physical or verbal aggression towards another adult or child, including physical punishment of your child on school premises

- Any other behaviour, verbal or otherwise, which could be considered to be inappropriate, offensive, or abusive
- Sending aggressive, abusive or threatening e-mails, text/voicemail/phone messages, or other written communications to anyone within the school community
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the learners/parents/carers/staff at the school on Social Media (See Appendix below)
- Damaging or destroying school property
- Smoking, taking illegal drugs or the consumption of alcohol on school premises
- Taking photographs with phones or other devices on school premises without permission from the school

If we are unable to resolve issues reasonably, the school may have to ban parents/carers/visitors from entering the school grounds. In extreme cases, we may need to involve the Police.

We trust that parents, carers and visitors will assist Selworthy School with the implementation of this policy, and we thank you for your continuing support of the school.

**We ask that parents and carers ensure they make all persons responsible for collecting their children aware of this policy.**

## **Appendix:**

### **Harassment**

Situations can arise where staff find themselves, or other adults, subjected to a pattern of persistent and unreasonable behaviour from individual parents which is not abusive or overtly aggressive but which may be perceived as intimidating and oppressive. In these circumstances, staff may be faced with a barrage of constant demands or criticisms which, while not particularly taxing or serious when viewed in isolation, can have the cumulative effect over time of undermining their confidence, well-being and health. In extreme cases, the behaviour of the parent may constitute an offence under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. If so, the school will take appropriate action, such as writing to or meeting the parents, involving the Police if necessary. If a parent's behaviour is unreasonable, the parent's implied permission to be on the school premises may be withdrawn, and they will become a trespasser (see the section on Trespass). The school may also decide to use the following possible legal measures:

- Section 222 Local Government Act 1972
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Criminal Damage Act 1971

- Section 39 of Criminal Justice Act 1988
- Section 47 of the Offences against the Persons Act 1861
- Offences against the Public Order Act 1986
- Section 31 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Criminal Justice Act 1988

## **Trespass**

Schools are not public places and anyone who enters without permission of the Headteacher (who has day to day management of the school) is trespassing, unless there is a recognised “right of way” across the school site. Some groups of people, such as parents, have an “implied licence” to enter school premises. A number of people may have good reason to be on the school premises and therefore possess an “implied licence”. This would apply to registered learners of the school during school hours or by agreement of the Headteacher e.g. after school clubs and sports. However, Learners who have been excluded could, however, be trespassers.

## **All visitors to Selworthy School**

(Parents, carers, Governors, Ofsted inspectors, Local Authority staff, site staff, contractors, and those using facilities provided as part of a school “let”)

Signs are in place to indicate that access to the site is restricted and that all visitors should report to reception.

If a trespasser refuses to leave the school premises or enters after being required to leave or causes a disturbance, their behaviour may give rise to a criminal offence under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. As a general rule, anything done by trespassers where it disrupts the routine of the school or the duties of its staff will be an offence. Where an individual has an “implied licence” to enter school premises this can be withdrawn by the Headteacher, provided authority to do so is delegated to the Headteacher by the governing body. A ban will be effective immediately. A refusal to accept a ban from school premises may lead to consideration being given to applying to the court for an injunction and/or to the taking of action under Section 547 of the 1996 Act.

## **Inappropriate use of social network sites**

Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, Headteachers, school staff, and in some cases other parents/learners. The school consider the use of social media websites being used 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 the class teacher, the Headteacher or the chair of governors so that they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

### **Libellous or defamatory posts**

If any learner or parent/carer of a child being educated at 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 contact or activity which breaches this. The school will also expect that any parent/carer or learner removes such comments immediately.

### **Cyberbullying**

We take the issue of cyberbullying very seriously by one child or a parent to humiliate another by inappropriate social media entry publicly. We will deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying. Thankfully such incidents are extremely rare. In serious cases, the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social media and other sites.