



Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Visitors for children attending school during the COVID-19 pandemic

June 2020

Date for Review: September 2020

James Montgomery Academy Trust

Statement of intent

At the **James Montgomery Academy Trust (JMAT)** we strive to build a strong relationship with parents in order to help create a stimulating learning environment which continues from school to home, providing all pupils with the opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability.

In order to create a welcoming and safe learning environment, the school implements a specifically designed set of rules regarding behaviour and conduct which parents and visitors are expected to act in accordance with.

This document outlines the manner in which parents are expected to act whilst on school premises, as well as detailing the type of behaviour which will not be tolerated. This is so we can continue to flourish, progress and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding.

Context of Update

The JMAT understands that we face a time of great uncertainty during the pandemic and, as a trust, we are doing all we can to provide clarity and safety for the school community.

From 1st June 2020, schools were asked to prepare for wider re-opening for priority groups. This included early years, year 1 and year 6 children. This is in addition to the children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response and children who are vulnerable.

This updated code of conduct includes provisions which the school will have due regard for during the coronavirus pandemic. The information in this code of conduct is under constant review and is updated to reflect changes to government guidance as it is released.

This updated code of conduct includes the COVID-secure measures that JMAT schools must take to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of both pupils, parents and staff.

Legal framework

This code of conduct has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 2011
- The Education Act 1996
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Children Act 2004

This code of conduct also has due regard to statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2019) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE 'Behaviour and discipline in schools' 2016
- DfE and PHE (2020) 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing social distancing in education and childcare settings'
- PHE and DfE (2020) 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for educational settings'

This code of conduct will be implemented in line with the school's Business Emergency and Continuity Plan (outbreak of disease)

Introduction

Schools who form part of **The James Montgomery Academy Trust (JMAT)** are very fortunate to have a supportive and friendly parent body. Our parents recognise that educating children is a process that involves partnership between parents, schools staff and the school community. As a partnership, our parents understand the importance of a good working relationship to equip children with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons we continue to welcome and encourage parents/carers to participate fully in the life of our school.

However, it is important that parents understand that school has the right to discipline children in school in accordance with:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (section 89 – ‘regulate the conduct of pupils’)
- DfE guidance ‘Behaviour and discipline in schools’ 2016.

The JMAT/school Behaviour for Learning Policy (found on the JMAT and school websites) gives clear expectations and procedures to follow on issues of behaviour. Teaching staff have power to discipline pupils for misbehaviour which occurs in school and, in some circumstances, outside of school.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents, carers and visitors must observe the COVID-secure measures put in place by school. This includes:

- abide by COVID-secure arrangements for dropping off and collecting children, for example, not entering school building and obeying 2m social distancing rules.
- follow all signs and instructions whilst on school site
- inform school promptly if their child or other household member display COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive
- ensure child attends testing if child displays symptoms at school and a test is booked by school
- ensure that their child correctly presents themselves in clean clothes daily
- ensure they pick up their child promptly if requested to do so, due to their child displaying symptoms

IT IS IMPORTANT FOR PARENTS TO NOTE THAT ANY NON-COMPLIANCE WITH COVID-SECURE MEASURES WILL RESULT IN THE WITHDRAWAL OF YOUR CHILD’S PLACE IN SCHOOL – THIS IS DUE TO THE LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY PLACED ON SCHOOL TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF ALL DURING THE PANDEMIC.

Parents, carers and visitors also have the responsibility to:

- Observe procedures to ensure the health and safety of members of the public, children, colleagues and themselves at all times.
- Observe their safeguarding responsibility to the children in school by providing proof of ID and DBS as requested and adhere to the safeguarding policies and procedures whilst in school
- Ensure their child(ren) attend school every day and on time.
- Report all occurrences of violence, aggressive/threatening behaviour and serious verbal abuse and near misses to the Headteacher.
- Conduct themselves appropriately in line with this policy.

The Headteacher/Head of School has the responsibility to:

- ensure that all protective measures are in place to ensure the safety of the school community against coronavirus, this includes parents, children and staff.
- take appropriate action in the event of a violent, aggressive or threatening behaviour happening at the school to ensure its reoccurrence is prevented as much as reasonably practical.

Parents who are key workers or have vulnerable children accessing childcare provision

If your child is accessing a school place, **and is not included in the targeted year group provision**, parents should be aware that school will continue to provide childcare provision only, not learning in line with national curriculum requirements.

Parental Responsibility

Everyone who is a parent, as recognised under education law can participate in their child's education.

All parents can also receive information about the child. However, for day-to-day purposes, the school's main contact is likely to be a parent with whom the child lives on school days.

Individuals who have legally obtained parental responsibility for, or care of, a child have the same rights as biological parents. For example to:

- receive information – such as pupil reports
- participate in statutory activities – such as voting in elections for parent governors
- be asked to give consent - such as to the child taking part in school trips
- be informed about meetings involving the child - such as a governors' meeting on the child's exclusion

School must treat all parents equally - unless a court order limits a parent's ability to make educational decisions, participate in school life or receive information about their children. School require a copy of this report for their records.

All parents also have legal obligations. For example, to ensure that a child of compulsory school age receives a suitable full-time education.

Obtaining consent

Where schools need parental consent to outings and activities, they will obtain the consent from the resident parent unless the decision is likely to have a long-term and significant impact on the child, or the non-resident parent has requested to be asked for consent in all such cases.

Medical treatment – seeking consent following accident or injury

Schools may experience problems when a child has had an accident and consent might be needed for emergency medical treatment. The **Children Act 1989** provides that people who do not have parental responsibility but nonetheless have care of a child may **do what is reasonable in all the circumstances of the case for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting the child's welfare**.

This allows school to act 'in loco parentis', in place of a parent, or allow them to seek consent from a parent who may not hold parental responsibility.

Expected Behaviour

All members of the school community have the right to expect that their school is a safe place in which they work and learn. There is no place for violence, threatening behaviour, verbal or physical abuse or intimidation or harassment in the JMAT.

We expect parents, carers and visitors to:

- Respect the caring ethos of our schools
- Understand that both school staff and parents need to work together for the benefit of their children.
- Demonstrate that all members of the school community should be treated with respect and therefore set a good example in their own speech and behaviour.
- Use the correct school channels to address any issues or complaints, rather than raise the issue on social media
- Correct their own child's behaviour appropriately whilst on the school premises, especially where it could lead to conflict, aggressive behaviour or unsafe behaviour.
- To be fully responsible for the care and well-being of their children prior to handing them over to teaching staff at the start of the school day and once teaching staff have handed them over at the end of the school day.
- Approach the school to help resolve any issues of concern, in particular to check a child's version of events with the school.
- Avoid using staff as threats to warn or correct children's behaviour.
- Respect the school environment by keeping it clean and tidy
- Follow parking rules, as well as rules for dropping-off or collecting pupils from school

Inappropriate Behaviour

In order to support a peaceful and safe school environment the school will not tolerate parents, carers and visitors exhibiting the following:

- **Deliberate ignoring social distancing or other protective measures put in place by school**
- Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of a classroom or any other area of the school grounds including sporting events.
- **Misusing social media to malign/disrespect school staff or the school's reputation**
- Using loud/or offensive language, swearing, cursing, using irrelevant or disrespectful language or displaying bad temper.
- Discrimination against any individual, whether a staff member, pupil or another adult, on the basis of their age, race, ethnicity, religion, cultural belief, attainment, disability, gender or background.
- Threatening to do harm to a member of school staff, Governor, visitor, fellow parent/carers or pupil regardless of whether or not the behaviour constitutes a criminal offence.
- Bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse, will not be tolerated under any circumstances
- The use of physical aggression towards another adult or child. This includes physical punishment against your own child on school premises.
- Damaging or destroying school property or the property of another person
- Abusive or threatening e-mails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communication to Governors, visitors, fellow parents/carers or pupils.
- 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. Parents should approach a school member of staff if they wish to discuss the actions of another child).
- Smoking and consumption of alcohol or other drugs whilst on school property, or being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs whilst on school property.
- Dogs being brought onto the site, unless express permission is sought from the school Headteacher/Head of School

Use of social media – also see Appendix 1

It is expected that parents:

- are expected to act in accordance with the school's Social Media Policy when discussing the school on social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- must not post content which is damaging to the school or any members of the school community. In the event of defamation, the school will take legal action.
- are encouraged to use social media responsibly in order to set a positive example for pupils.
- will not post on social media anonymously or under an alias in order to evade the guidance given in this policy.
- will not record any meetings or conversation with staff, other parents or other pupils without prior consent

Any cases of social media use that breach the guidelines of this policy will be reported to the headteacher immediately. Cyber bullying of any kind will not be tolerated and will be dealt with as a serious incident.

The Headteacher/Head of School will report offending individuals using the appropriate 'report abuse' section on the specific social media site, and will arrange a meeting with the individuals concerned to discuss their use of social media.

The individual will be advised to remove any posts or comments that are harmful, immediately.

The Headteacher /Head of School may contact the police for legal action where necessary.

Procedure

In the circumstance of parents failing to observe COVID-secure protective measures, then immediate action will be taken by school. This will include a phone call to parents to inform them their child is no longer eligible for a place in school for the remainder of this school year.

Should any of the above behaviour occur the school may take possible action to deal with it.

Where possible the school will resolve or diffuse violent/aggressive situations through discussion with the individual/s involved. The Headteacher/Head of School may feel it necessary to issue a warning letter to the individual stating that 'repeats of such behaviour may well lead to a ban from the school'.

Where conflict cannot be resolved or diffused, or there is the possibility of imminent physical harm towards an individual or school property, the school reserves the right to call the local police station to intervene or in cases of extreme emergency by dialling 999, or to call the appropriate authorities.

If necessary, the school may ban the offending adult from entering the school grounds. If such a ban is felt necessary the school will arrange for someone to meet your child or children at the school gate, and to return them to the school gate at the end of the school day. The Headteacher/Head of School will discuss and agree with the Chair of the Governing Body before a ban is put in place. Where a ban is decided necessary the Headteacher/Head of School will issue a letter the individual stating that a ban has been put in place. The Headteacher/Head of School is responsible for determining the length of the ban. The letter to the individual will specify the length of the ban or in some instances may state that the ban is 'open ended' initially until an appropriate amount of time has elapsed for all concerned. Headteachers/Heads of School are responsible for writing follow up letters to individuals who have been banned to confirm the end of the ban or with an update to the length of the ban.

Parents who have been banned from the school premises have a general right to receive school information in relation to their child's welfare and education progress.

Parents who feel they have been unreasonably banned should in the first instance discuss with the school or alternatively may consider asking for the decision to be reviewed under the complaints procedure.

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

Monitoring and Review

This code of conduct will also be reviewed on an annual basis by the **Safeguarding Director** in conjunction with the **Designated Safeguarding Lead**; any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of JMAT staff.

Members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programmes.

Next review due: **September 2020**

APPENDIX 1

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/pupils. The Directors of the JMAT consider the use of social media websites being used in this way as unacceptable and not in the interests of the children or the whole school community. Any concerns you may have should be raised with the class teacher, the Headteacher, the Chair of the Local Governing Body or the CEO of the JMAT, 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/ren 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 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 content or activity which breaches this. The school will also expect that any parent/carer or pupil removes such comments immediately.

Where members of staff receive complaints, insults or abusive comments via online sites they are responsible for reporting it to the appropriate 'report abuse' section on the website in order to get the comments removed, they are also responsible for informing Senior Management within the school as soon as possible, and if applicable taking the appropriate steps for getting the listing removed from Google.

In serious cases the school may also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites.