

## PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

### POLICY SUMMARY

At St James' Anglican School, we aim to provide an open, welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all. A school community contains a wide variety of individuals and groups who strive to work together to educate students to become confident, well-educated young girls and boys and prepared to lead happy, successful lives and make contributions to local and global communities. Shared community values enable the members of the community to work together and enjoy the fellowship that arises from their collaborative efforts.

The best education for a child involves a strong and respectful collaboration between parents and school staff.

To ensure such cooperation and support, the Parent Code of Conduct outlines the School's expectations for all parents with students enrolled at the School.

Parents are expected to uphold the School's core values at all times.

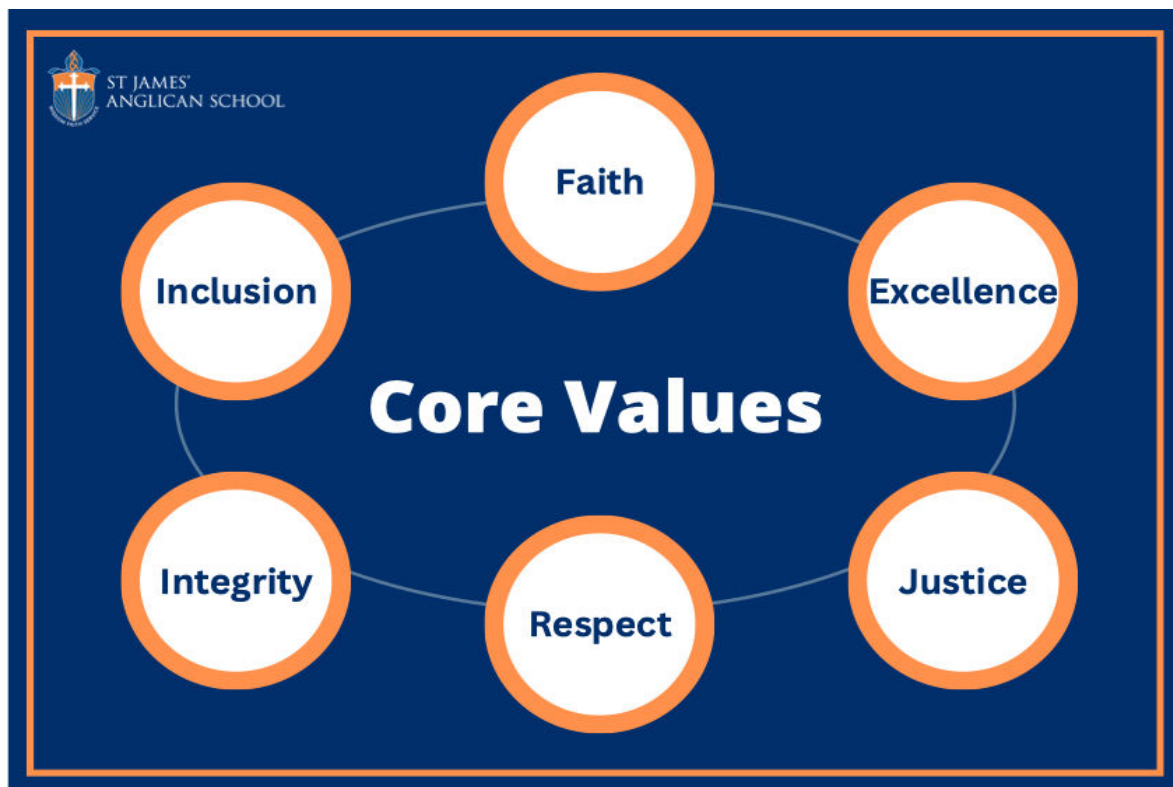
This Code should be read in conjunction with the ASC Communications Guidelines: Parents.

### Definition of a Parent

For the purpose of this Policy, a Parent includes guardians, stepparents, grandparents, extended family, caregivers, people who exercise parental responsibility for a student and any others while involved in activities or communication related to the School.

### Application

This Parent Code of Conduct applies to all parents. The application of this Parent Code of Conduct is not limited to the School site and School hours. It extends to all activities and events that are school-related. The Parent Code of Conduct also requires that parents' actions do not bring the School into disrepute at any time regardless of whether the action occurs within or outside of School activities.





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The School takes seriously any issues that are brought to its attention. If parents express their concerns to the School, they can expect to be treated with courtesy and respect to try and resolve the matter.

For most discussions, the classroom teacher will be the parents' first point of contact. However, where conversations involve conflict, other families or dissatisfaction with any aspect of the school, members of the school leadership team must be involved. Either a staff member or a parent may request the involvement of the school leadership team at any time, who will then review the concern before a course to resolve any matter is identified.

As a general guide, minor issues may be raised with your child's teacher. Cases of more serious inappropriate conduct or misconduct ought to be directed to the Head of Junior or Senior School or eventually the Principal. (Please refer to the Disputes and Complaint Resolution Policy and Procedures).

Each situation will be considered as it arises and based on the matter at hand.

The School will act in accordance with its Disputes and Complaint Resolution Policy and Procedures when dealing with complaints.

### PARENT CONDUCT

Parents are expected to:

- abide by conditions of enrolment;
- be respectful and supportive of the School's Anglican Identity, ethos and values;
- be considerate of the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves and others;
- abide by all health and safety policies and procedures operating within the School and at other locations which they may visit e.g., school excursions;
- refrain from behaviour which would not uphold the positive reputation of the School;
- respect the authority of members of staff and observe School rules as required;
- strictly adhere to the School's policies and procedures;
- refrain from all forms of bullying and harassment;
- communicate politely and respectfully at all times, including in-person, on email and by all other electronic means;
- recognise and respect personal differences;
- ensure their child attends school;
- support the Student Code of Conduct;
- recognise every student is important to the School;
- contribute to positive school culture;
- work together with staff to resolve issues or concerns;
- respect people's privacy;
- support all curriculum activities of the School, including camps.



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### UNACCEPTABLE CONDUCT

Unacceptable conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- language or conduct which is likely to offend, harass, bully or unfairly discriminate against any member of staff, another parent or student;
- the use of inappropriate, disrespectful or profane words or gestures and images;
- any form of physical or verbal violence including fighting, assault or threats of violence;
- referring to staff or the School in a negative manner on social media/slandering or defaming the School or school staff on social media.
- any form of cyber bullying or cyber abuse, sending/sharing inappropriate, offensive or explicit text messages, photos or videos;
- persistent, demanding or aggressive emails;
- smoking, vaping, consumption of alcohol or any illicit drugs or other substances on school grounds, or while attending a school activity e.g., parent helper at a school excursion;
- NB: the consumption of alcohol by adults may be approved at some events, by the Principal;
- attending School, social, sporting or other functions of the School whilst under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs or other substances.
- not showing proper care and regard for school property, the property of others, and Work, Health and Safety considerations.

### REPORTING BEHAVIOUR

Any parents, members of staff or students may report any case of unacceptable behaviour, or behaviour in breach of this conduct, to a teacher or member of staff. Reporting can be verbal, written or by electronic means. All reports will be confidential.

Whilst interaction between students can be unruly it is not appropriate to discipline another parents' child whilst on school grounds unless there are a reasonable health and safety concern. Physical contact should be avoided unless there is reasonable health and safety concern.

In some circumstances parents are required by law to advise the School of areas of potential conflicts, such as parenting and Family Court orders. The School expects parents to behave lawfully on School grounds and observe the terms of any order, obligation or undertaking they may be subject to.

### USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can be defined as how we use technology to communicate and connect with others. Despite the range of positive uses for social media, there are also several ethical and legal issues associated with its use. Many people may hold the mistaken belief that anything published online will be without legal consequence. However, parents should be aware that several potential legal liabilities may arise, particularly concerning issues about reputational damage, and defamation.

Parents can ensure they abide by the law and the School's expectations of its parents, by complying with the following:

- the School, its staff and members of its community should not be mentioned or discussed in a negative or defamatory way.
- photographs of students in school uniform represent the School and its students and should not be posted if they have the potential to bring negative connotations towards the School or its staff and students.



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- photographs containing other students should not be posted without the express consent of the other child/children's parents.
- email addresses of parents, staff and students should not be given to other people without their express consent.
- parents are not permitted to make contact with other students via any form of social media without the express consent of the student's parents.

### ETHICAL CONDUCT

Parents play a key role in the education of their children and should act in the best interests of students, their families, staff and the School community.

The School values its diverse community and respects the rights, beliefs and practices of individuals and their families.

Parents are students' most significant role models.

Accordingly, the School expects a high standard of personal behaviour from parents when they are on School grounds, attending events or communicating with staff or other students. For example:

- refraining from engaging in malicious or judgmental gossip (either directly or online) and ensuring that anything they say about others is fair and truthful.
- refraining from actions and behaviour that constitutes bullying, harassment, discrimination or vilification.
- refraining from offensive, insulting or derogatory language or conduct. This includes wearing clothing with offensive language or insignia and dressing appropriately according to the occasion.
- not smoking/vaping on school grounds.
- not possessing alcohol on school grounds, unless the event has been sanctioned by the School.
- not attending school events if affected by alcohol or any other intoxicant.
- showing proper care and regard for school property, the property of others and Work Health and Safety considerations.

### **WHAT PARENTS CAN EXPECT FROM THE SCHOOL**

The School takes seriously any issues that are brought to its attention. If parents express their concerns to the School, they can expect to be treated with courtesy and respect to try and resolve the matter.

The following list aims to cover all possible scenarios but there will always be exceptions. As long as parents appreciate and know the school listens, cares and responds, and is made up of hard-working and dedicated professionals. We have found over time even the most challenging of circumstances can be worked through:

- Regular communication from the school (e.g. fortnightly electronic newsletters).
- Scheduled opportunities to meet with the classroom teacher (e.g. Term 1 classroom meetings, three-way student conferences).
- Other opportunities to meet with the teacher by appointment.
- Updates about important developments in the child's class (e.g. excursions)
- Notification of any serious single issue or ongoing issues concerning your child.
- Opportunities to provide feedback (e.g. through confidential surveys); and
- Parent communications acknowledged within one working day and responded to within two working days. More serious matters would receive higher priority.



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### **WHAT PARENTS CANNOT EXPECT FROM THE SCHOOL**

Teachers are family members too and like all professionals, they work at their optimum when they have a quality life-work-social balance. Parents should not expect:

- School staff returning calls after work hours.
- Emails to be answered in the evenings or weekends; or
- Access to teachers' private phone numbers or emails.

#### **When should you contact your child's teacher?**

- Changes in family circumstances.
- Medical issues that change or arise.
- Safety issues or changes in behaviour at home.
- If you have concerns about your child's academic or social progress.
- When you can't keep a scheduled appointment.
- When homework takes much more time than expected, or your child is unable to do most of the homework independently; or
- If your child has head lice or a contagious disease.

### **COMMUNICATION THAT INTERFERES WITH TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- During the school day without an appointment.
- Visiting the classroom during the teacher's preparation time before school, or speaking to the teacher disrespectfully or angrily, especially in front of your child or other students.
- Using social media platforms inappropriately; and
- Talking to other parents rather than discussing issues directly with staff members.

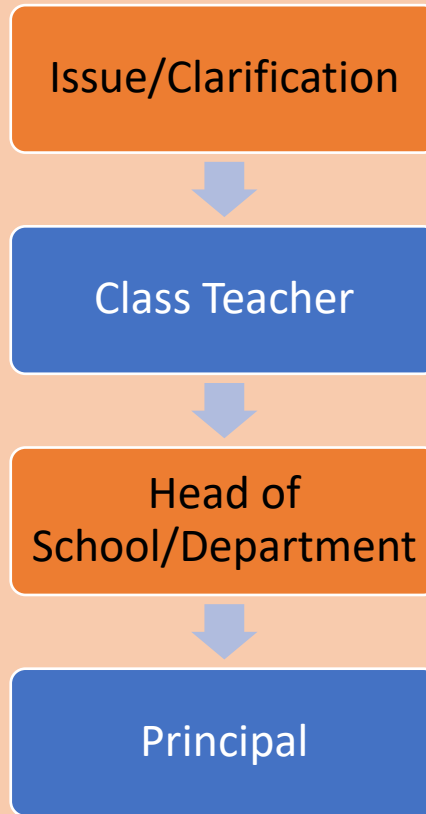
Remember that you are the model of how you want your child to communicate.

### **WHEN IS A FACE-TO-FACE MEETING APPROPRIATE?**

Electronic communication, such as email, is highly convenient and can be used for short, non-urgent and positive forms of communication. However, electronic communication is not appropriate for more complex or emotional situations. In these cases, parents should request a face-to-face interview so that your issues can be given the time and attention that they deserve. If in doubt, schedule a meeting.

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### WHEN SHOULD I CONTACT A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM?



### RAISING CONCERNS APPROPRIATELY AND PRODUCTIVELY

If a parent is not satisfied with the School's response, the Dispute and Complaint Resolution Policy and Procedures is available on the School website. This Policy sets out how concerns and grievances may be raised with the School, who they should be raised with, and how the School will deal with these in a respectful and timely manner. Refer to the ASC Communications Guidelines: Parents.

The School respects a parent's rights to formally raise a grievance. However, parents who refuse to engage in constructive processes that may resolve their grievances, or who choose to publicly air their grievances about the School (and in particular about staff or students) on social media or in public, are not behaving respectfully and are in breach of the Parent Code of Conduct.



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### **BREACHES OF THIS CODE OF CONDUCT**

With these guidelines in place, it is hoped that parents can appropriately direct their concerns and contribute to a harmonious school community that reflects and builds on the School's values.

In cases where a parent does not interact civilly with staff, either in person in or outside of the school grounds, during a phone call, or via email, the staff member or school may take one or more of the following actions.

In serious cases the consequences for breaches of this Code of Conduct will be determined by the Principal and may include one or more of the following:

- Insisting the relevant conduct immediately cease.
- Providing a first and final warning that a breach of the Parent Code of Conduct has occurred and that a further breach will not be tolerated.
- Determining whether a breach may be rectified by the parent making a private or public apology, depending on the circumstance, to an individual or group of individuals.
- Excluding a parent from School activities or events.
- The School may ban a parent from entry to School grounds or from attending co-curricular activities or other events.
- The School may direct that a parent may only communicate with members of staff through a nominated school representative.
- In cases of extreme or prolonged breach of this Code of Conduct by a parent, the School may terminate the enrolment of the child of that parent.
- The School may, where appropriate, involve other authorities.
- The School may take other such steps as it deems appropriate according to the nature of the breach.
- Requesting another staff member be present for the remainder of the meeting if deemed necessary to proceed with such.

Staff and volunteers are empowered to take steps to protect their own health and wellbeing. If they feel that a Parent is being inappropriate, they are encouraged to indicate this and ask that it stop. If it does not, or if a staff member feels that a Parent's actions are posing a risk to their or someone else's health and wellbeing, they are empowered to remove themselves from the situation. This may include by immediately concluding a meeting or phone call, or by requiring that a Parent immediately leave the School grounds (or School event).

A teacher/staff member may inform the parent that unless the inappropriate communication ceases, the staff member may put an end to the phone call, meeting or discussion.

Parents should understand that one emotionally charged interaction, especially an aggressive email late at night can permanently fracture a relationship. This is not conducive to a positive relationship that will benefit the child.



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### Policy Version Control

Version	Date	Summary of Changes
1	February - 2021	Policy reviewed
2	February - 2023	Policy reviewed The policy was updated in line with the ASC Policy. The School Values were included in this policy. New format to include 'policy version control' table Review date amended
3	May - 2023	The policy was updated in line with the new ASC Policy.