The Hawksmoor Learning Trust

("the Trust")

Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct

Bracken Leas Primary School · The Radstone Primary School · Nicholas Hawksmoor Primary School · Marie Weller Primary School

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Key

* Publication on website:

	THLT website		School website
1	Statutory publication	A	Statutory publication
2	Mandatory publication	B	Mandatory publication
3	Good practice	C	Good practice
4	Not required	D	Not required

** Policy level:

1. Trust wide: this one policy is relevant to everyone and consistently applied across all schools and Trust departments with no variations. Approved by the THLT Board of Trustees.

2. Trust core values: this policy defines the values to be incorporated fully in all other policies on this subject across all schools and Trust departments. It forms the basis of a localised school or department policy that also contains relevant information, procedures and processes contextualised to that school or department. Approved by the THLT Board of Trustees as a Trust Core Values policy, and by school or department governance bodies as a contextualised policy.

School / department policies: defined independently by schools or departments as appropriate. Approved by school or department governance bodies.

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Introduction

1. The schools of The Hawksmoor Learning Trust (the Trust) are very fortunate to have supportive and friendly parents and carers. Our families recognise that educating children is a partnership between home and school, and that a good working relationship helps children develop the skills they need for the next stage of their education and for adulthood.
2. This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour we expect from all parents, carers and visitors, so that we can work together to keep our schools safe, calm and positive places for children to learn.
3. The Code applies to all Trust schools. It covers conduct on school premises, at school events and trips, and in any communication with or about the school, its staff, pupils or families, whether in person, by telephone, in writing or online.
4. The Code should be read alongside the Trust's Complaints Policy, which sets out how concerns and complaints are raised and resolved.

Our shared priority

5. The time of our staff, and the public funding that pays for it, exists to educate and care for all of our pupils. We will always listen to your concerns and respond in a way that is proportionate to the issue.
6. We ask parents and carers to recognise that repeated, excessive or unreasonable contact from a small number of people takes staff away from the children they are here to teach and support. Following this Code helps us keep our focus where it belongs: on every child's education and welfare.

Respect and concern for others

7. We expect all parents, carers and visitors to show respect and concern for others, including pupils, other parents and staff, by:
    - 7.1. supporting the respectful ethos of our schools by setting a good example in their own speech and behaviour towards all members of the school community;
    - 7.2. working with staff for the benefit of children, including raising any concern calmly and constructively, through the right channels, so that it can be resolved;
    - 7.3. supporting the school's Behaviour Policy and other policies;
    - 7.4. respecting the learning environment, both in school and off site;
    - 7.5. accepting that staff will make professional judgements and that day-to-day operational decisions are made by the Headteacher; and
    - 7.6. driving safely and parking considerately and legally when dropping off and collecting children.

Communicating with the school

8. **Always use the school office email.** Parents and carers should always use the school office email for written communication with the school. This makes sure your message is logged, reaches the right person and receives a reply. Please do not use staff members' individual email addresses, social media, messaging apps or personal phone numbers to contact staff.
9. **When to expect a reply.** The school will acknowledge your email as soon as it is able to, and within three working days for non-urgent matters. A full reply may take longer where information needs to be gathered or the right member of staff is teaching. Emails sent during school holidays will be picked up when the school reopens.
10. **Urgent matters.** For anything urgent on the day, including a matter affecting your child's safety or welfare, please telephone the school office.
11. **Safeguarding.** If you have a safeguarding concern about any child, telephone the school straight away and ask for the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Do not wait for a reply to an email.

12. **Working hours.** Staff are not expected to read or reply to emails outside their working hours, at weekends or during school holidays.
13. **Drop-off and collection.** At the start and end of the day, teachers are responsible for the safety of the children in their care. Brief messages can be passed on at these times, but anything that needs discussion should be arranged as an appointment through the school office.
14. **One matter, one thread.** Please keep correspondence about one matter in a single email thread, and avoid sending repeated messages about the same issue while it is being dealt with. Repeated messages do not speed up a response and can delay it.
15. **Recording.** Conversations and meetings with staff may only be recorded with the agreement of everyone present. Recordings must not be shared or used in ways that cause harm, distress or intimidation.

Raising concerns and complaints

16. Most concerns are resolved quickly by speaking to the class teacher. Please contact the class teacher through the school office email, or ask the office to arrange a time to talk.
17. If this does not resolve the matter, please follow the stages in the Trust's Complaints Policy. A formal complaint should be sent to the Headteacher through the school office email.
18. Contacting senior leaders, the Chief Executive, governors or trustees directly does not bypass these stages. Any such contact will be passed back to the school and dealt with at the correct stage. Governors and trustees cannot act on individual concerns, and approaching them may prevent them from hearing a complaint later.
19. Day-to-day operational decisions, such as class organisation, uniform and PE kit, timetabling, routines and arrangements for drop-off and collection, are made by the Headteacher. Disagreeing with a decision that was properly made is not, in itself, grounds for a complaint. The school will explain the reasons for a decision if you ask. Where a complaint about such a decision is escalated, the Trust will review the grounds on which the decision was made and whether it was made fairly and reasonably, taking account of the relevant information, the needs of the children involved and any applicable policy. The Trust will not substitute its own judgement for that of the Headteacher.
20. A request for information or a first report of an everyday issue (for example lost property or a query about an event) is not a complaint and will be dealt with as part of the school's normal business.
21. **Check with the school, not the group chat.** Please read the information the school sends home, including letters, emails, newsletters and the school website. If you are unsure about anything, always ask the school directly through the school office email rather than asking in a parent messaging group or on social media. This helps avoid incorrect information spreading and prevents misunderstandings. Please do not use social media or parent messaging groups to raise concerns or complaints about the school, its staff or other families. See Appendix 1.
22. **Issues involving other children or families.** If you have a concern about something that has happened in school involving another child, please do not approach that child or their parents or carers directly, whether in person, at the school gate, by message or in a parent messaging group. Tell the class teacher through the school office email so that staff can find out what happened and deal with it fairly for all the children involved. Approaching other families directly often makes situations worse and can be upsetting for children.

Behaviour that will not be tolerated

23. To keep our schools peaceful and safe for everyone, the Trust will not tolerate:
    - 23.1. disruptive behaviour which interferes with the running of a classroom, office or any other part of the school or its grounds;
    - 23.2. using loud, aggressive, intimidating or offensive language, or displaying temper, towards any member of the school community;
    - 23.3. intimidating behaviour of any kind, in person, by telephone, in writing or online. This includes standing over or blocking staff, following staff, raising your voice at staff in front

of children or others, making veiled or direct threats, gathering others to confront staff, and persistent contact designed to pressure staff into a decision;

23.4. harassment, threatening harm, or physical aggression towards any adult or child. This includes approaching someone else's child to discuss or reprimand them, confronting another parent or carer about an incident in school, or physically punishing your own child on school premises. Some actions may be criminal offences;

23.5. damaging or destroying school property;

23.6. sending, forwarding or taking part in abusive, threatening, malicious or inflammatory emails, phone calls, messages, voice notes or social media posts, whether these are sent directly to staff or are about staff and sent to others, including in parent messaging groups (see Appendix 1);

23.7. taking photographs, videos or voice recordings on site, or recording staff (including voice recordings of conversations, meetings or phone calls), without permission;

23.8. smoking or vaping, drinking alcohol or taking drugs on school premises, or coming onto the school site while under the influence of alcohol or drugs; or

23.9. bringing dogs onto school premises, unless the dog is an assistance dog supporting a person with a disability, or the Headteacher has given express permission for a specific purpose.

Unreasonable, persistent or vexatious contact

24. We welcome contact from parents and carers and will not normally limit it. However, the Trust may act where contact or complaints become unreasonable. Examples include:

24.1. repeatedly raising the same issue after it has been answered or has completed the complaints procedure;

24.2. sending a large number of emails or making frequent calls, or expecting immediate replies;

24.3. contacting several members of staff, governors or trustees about the same matter;

24.4. refusing to accept a decision, or changing the basis of a complaint as it is being dealt with;

24.5. raising large numbers of detailed but minor questions and insisting they are all answered in full;

24.6. making demands that are unrealistic or cannot be met; or

24.7. making unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with an issue.

25. In these circumstances the Headteacher or Chief Executive may put in place a communication plan. This may limit contact to a single named person, to written contact only, to a set number of contacts or to set times. It may also confirm that the school will not correspond further on a matter that has been concluded.

26. Any communication plan will be confirmed in writing, with reasons, and will be reviewed, normally within one term. You may ask for the decision to be reviewed. Before making a plan, the school will consider whether any needs or circumstances should be taken into account.

27. A communication plan will never stop the school from receiving a safeguarding concern or a genuinely new concern, and will not affect the ordinary information you receive about your child, such as reports and parents' evenings.

What happens if this Code is not followed

28. Where this Code is not followed, the school or Trust will respond in proportion to what has happened. This may include:

28.1. a conversation with the Headteacher or a senior member of staff to explain what is expected;

28.2. a written warning;

28.3. a communication plan, as described above;

28.4. conditions on, or withdrawal of, permission to come onto school premises. Parents are normally given the chance to make written representations first, and any restriction will be reviewed. Alternative arrangements will be made so that your child's attendance and education are not affected; and

28.5. reporting the matter to the police or other authorities.

29. Serious incidents, including any threat or act of violence, will be reported to the police and may lead to immediate removal from the site. The Trust will act in line with the DfE's guidance on controlling access to school premises and on preventing and tackling the bullying and harassment of school staff, and section 547 of the Education Act 1996.

30. The Trust will always support staff who experience abuse, intimidation or harassment.

31. We trust that all parents, carers and visitors will support this Code of Conduct, and we thank the great majority of our families who already do.

Monitoring and review

32. Schools will record breaches of this Code and any communication plans or site restrictions. The CEO will report on these to the Board of Trustees each year so that trends can be monitored.

Linked policies

- Complaints Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Appendix 1: Social media

1. Social media is sometimes used by a small number of people to criticise, or campaign against, schools, staff, and in some cases other parents and pupils. The Trust considers this unacceptable. It sets a poor example to children and is not in the best interests of the children or the wider school community.

2. Concerns about the school should be raised through the school office email, following the Complaints Policy, so that they can be dealt with fairly and effectively.

3. Parents and carers should not post content about staff, pupils or other families that is abusive, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or untrue, or share photographs, videos or voice recordings of other children or staff without permission. This includes posts, messages and voice notes in closed or private groups and parent messaging groups, and messages about staff sent to other people.

4. Parent messaging groups should not be used to discuss incidents involving other children, or to approach other parents about them. Please raise these with the school.

5. Where such content is posted, the school will ask the person who posted it to remove it straight away. The school may also report the content to the platform or to Report Harmful Content, and in serious cases will consider its legal options and report the matter to the police.

6. Where social media is used by any member of the school community to bully or publicly humiliate another person, the school will treat this as a serious incident and may refer the matter to the police.

Appendix 2: Who to contact

If you want to …	Contact	How
Pass on a quick message or ask a routine question	School office	School office email or telephone
Discuss your child's learning, wellbeing or a classroom matter	Class teacher	School office email, or ask the office for an appointment
Raise an issue involving another child or family	Class teacher	School office email. Please do not approach the other family directly
Check something you are unsure about	School office	School office email, rather than a parent messaging group
Raise a concern that the class teacher has not resolved	Headteacher	School office email
Make a formal complaint about the school	Headteacher	School office email, using the form in the Complaints Policy
Raise a safeguarding concern about any child	Designated Safeguarding Lead	Telephone the school immediately
Report something urgent on the day	School office	Telephone
Complain about the Headteacher, governors or the Trust	CEO	enquiries@thlt.academy
Complain about the CEO	Chair of the Trust	ChairofTrust@THLT.Academy

The school will acknowledge emails as soon as it is able to, and within three working days for non-urgent matters.