

Royal School Dungannon – Parent, Carer & Visitor Code of Conduct

1. Purpose

The Royal School Dungannon (RSD) is very fortunate to benefit from a supportive and friendly community of parents, carers and friends of the school. Education involves partnership between parents, school staff and our wider communities. For these reasons we welcome and encourage parents and carers to participate fully in the life of our school.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a reminder to all parents/carers and visitors to our school about expected conduct so that we can work together to ensure a respectful learning environment that is safe, positive and supportive for all pupils, staff and visitors of the School.

For the purposes of this policy, a 'Parent' or 'Visitor' of RSD includes anyone visiting the School who is not a current pupil, employee, contractor or volunteer.

2. Principles

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

We expect parents, carers and visitors to respect the caring ethos of our school, understanding that staff and parents need to work together for the benefit of their children. They should treat all members of the school community with respect, setting a good example in their own speech and behaviour.

The school will always endeavour to work in the most constructive and open way. Any concerns about the school must be made through the school's normal communication channels so they can be dealt with appropriately, for example by speaking to the class teacher. Complaints should be dealt with using the school's Complaints Policy.

Parents, carers and visitors should not make excessive or unreasonable demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff, whether in person, in writing, by email or by telephone; for example, by seeking unrealistic outcomes, raising large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, or demanding immediate replies from members of staff who may have full timetables or other important duties.

The school will not tolerate parents, carers and visitors who exhibit disruptive behaviour, use loud or offensive language, make any type of threat towards any member of the school community in any form, or seek to undermine the authority of the school and its staff.

The school will also not tolerate abusive or threatening communication through any means, including emails, telephone or written communication; and will not tolerate defamatory or offensive comments of any sort regarding the school on any social media sites.

3. Application

This Code applies to all RSD parents, carers and visitors to the School. The application of this Code is not limited to the School site and School hours. It extends to all activities and events that are school-related and when visiting or representing the School. The Code also requires that parent, carer or visitor actions do not bring the School into disrepute at any time regardless of whether the action occurs within or outside of School activities. Parents, carers and visitors are expected to uphold the School's core values at all times.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the RSD Complaints Policy as we expect all parent/carer complaints to be taken seriously and to be dealt with comprehensively and as far as possible in confidence. The Complaints Policy allows parent/carer complaints about school issues to be dealt with efficiently and sensitively, and at the appropriate level. The Complaints Policy can be found at <https://www.royaldungannon.com/key-documents/>

4. Conduct and Bearing of All Parents, Carers & Visitors

It is expected that every parent, carer and visitor will:

- uphold the School's core beliefs and values and observe School rules as required;
- behave in a manner that does not endanger the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves or others;
- abide by all health and safety rules and procedures operating within the School and other locations at which they may visit whilst representing the School;
- ensure that their actions do not bring the School into disrepute;
- respect the authority of members of staff, including the timing and form of interactions such as telephone calls, written communication and meetings;
- strictly adhere to the School's policies and procedures as required, including timings for telephone calls (typically 5-10 minutes) and meetings (typically 20-30 minutes);
- behave with courtesy and consideration for others;
- refrain from all forms of bullying and harassment;
- refrain from activities, conduct or communication that would reasonably be seen to undermine the reputation of the School, employees or pupils of the School (including activities on social media);
- respect School property and the property of staff, contractors, volunteers and other pupils;
- not be intoxicated by alcohol or under the influence of illicit drugs or other substances harmful to health whilst visiting the School site, attending School functions or engaging in School based activities.

5. Unacceptable Conduct

Unacceptable conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- touching, handling, pushing or otherwise physically or sexually engaging with pupils, children or others in a manner which is not appropriate and may endanger the health, safety and wellbeing of that person;
- any form of physical or verbal violence including fighting, assault or threats of violence;
- any form of cyber bullying or cyber abuse;
- any form of threatening language, gestures or conduct;
- language or conduct which is likely to offend, harass, bully or unfairly discriminate against any pupil, employee, contractor, volunteer or other;

- language or conduct which is likely to undermine the authority of the School or its staff;
- theft, fraud or misuse of School resources;
- the use of inappropriate or profane words or gestures and images;
- visiting School, attending social, sporting or other functions whilst intoxicated by alcohol or under the influence of illicit drugs or other substances harmful to health;
- smoking on the School premises or within the immediate environs of the School;

6. Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Where possible the School will seek to resolve or diffuse difficult situations through discussion with the individuals involved.

In cases where a parent, carer or visitor does not interact civilly with staff, either in person or during a meeting, telephone call, or via written communication, the staff member may take the following actions:

- Request that the parent, carer or visitor cease their inappropriate communication in order to allow the conversation or interaction to proceed.
- Inform the parent, carer or visitor that unless the inappropriate communication ceases, the staff member may put an end to the interaction, such as a telephone call or meeting.
- Request another staff member be present for the remainder of the interaction, if deemed necessary to proceed with such.
- Lodge a complaint against the offending parent, carer or visitor.

If a parent, carer or visitor makes excessive or unreasonable demands on school time, the Headmaster will write to explain that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For individuals who excessively contact the school causing a significant level of disruption, the School may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In the case of significant concern, the Headmaster will issue a warning letter to the individual stating that any repetition of inappropriate behaviour may lead to a ban from school premises.

If necessary, the school will bar an individual from entering the school grounds. Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. The school will therefore act to ensure we remain a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of its community. If a parent, carer or visitor's behaviour is a cause for concern, a school can ask him/her to leave school premises. In extreme cases and where necessary, the School reserves the right to notify and seek assistance from the police.

In serious cases, the Headmaster will notify an individual in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the parent, carer or visitor may wish to make. The school will give the parent, carer or visitor the opportunity to express formally their views on the decision to bar in writing. The decision to bar will then be reviewed, taking into account any representations made by the parent, carer or visitor and either confirmed or lifted. If the decision is confirmed the parent, carer or visitor will be notified in writing, explaining how long the bar will be in place. The person barred may use the School Complaints Policy to request that the bar is lifted.