# St. Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School

# Code of Conduct for Parents/Carers

# (Feb 2025)

St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School is part of the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust, a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales under company registration number No 7841435. Registered Office: Fenham Hall Drive, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 9YH

## Preamble

St. Cuthbert's is part of Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust and as part of The Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust (BBCET) we are proud of the supportive and positive relationships that exist between school and our families: where school staff support parents and carers and families to promote positive education outcomes and welfare for all pupils.

Our parents, carers and families recognise that 'a great education has the power to transform lives' and that educating children is a process that involves partnership between parents/carers teachers, support staff and school leaders. As a partnership, our parents/carers will understand the importance of a good working relationship to equip children and young people with the necessary skills for life beyond school.

The Catholic Church teaches that "Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children" (CCC 2223), therefore as a school and a Trust, we welcome and encourage parents/carers to participate fully in the life of our schools. We believe that it is important to:

- work in partnership with parents/carers to support their son/daughter's learning
- create a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all members of our school communities, children, staff, governors and visitors
- model appropriate behaviour for our children and young people at all times and challenge inappropriate behaviour, attitudes and approaches

At St. Cuthbert's and all BBCET schools, children, and their parents and carers, can expect our staff to be fully committed to ensuring that every child and young person receives a high-quality Catholic education. All children and young people will be fully supported and encouraged to thrive in every aspect of their academic, social and spiritual development. They will be safeguarded and cared for, at all times, throughout their schooling.

Our staff will be supported by school leaders, governors, Trust officers and the Trust Board, to provide an outstanding environment for both academic, social and spiritual excellence for all children and young people.

## 1. Definitions and scope

For the purpose of this document, the term 'parents/carers' is used to refer to:

- anyone with parental responsibility for a child or young person on roll at any one of our schools
- anyone caring for a child or young person on roll at any one of our schools, this may include grandparents, family members or child-minders
- anyone representing the parent/carer or a child or young person on roll at any one of our schools

This protocol does not apply to staff or pupils/students in our schools. Our expectations for all of our employees are set in the BBCET Staff Code of Conduct. Our expectations for pupils/students in our schools are set in the relevant school's Behaviour Policy as regulated by the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education.

## 2. Basic Expectations of all parents/carers

We expect parents/carers, family members and other visitors to:

- respect the ethos, vision and values of our Trust and individual schools
- work together with staff in the best interests of our children and young people
- maintain reasonable expectations for staff response to general communications (five school days)
- treat all members of the school community with respect – setting a good example with speech and behaviour
- seek a peaceful and reasonable solution to any concerns, complaints or issues
- seek to clarify a child/young person's version of events with the school's view in order to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue
- correct their own son/daughter's behaviour (or those in their care), particularly in public, where it could lead to conflict, aggression or unsafe conduct
- approach the appropriate member of school staff to help resolve any issues of concern, following up if an appropriate response has not been received
- adhere to the school's complaints policy and procedure if you consider it necessary and appropriate to lodge a formal complaint
- respect the needs of individual schools and not expect appointments to be made on demand
- turn up in good time for any appointments made, notifying the school if you need to cancel/rearrange an appointment.
- dress appropriately when accessing school premises
- complete all consent, contact, medical forms and other documentation in a timely manner and within set timescales.
- only takes photographs and videos within or around our schools with the appropriate consent
- switch off all electronic equipment, including mobile telephones while on the school premises
- sign-in and wear a visible visitor's badge while on the school premises.

## 3. Behaviour that will not be tolerated**

As a Trust we will not tolerate nor accept the following behaviour:

- disrupting, or threatening to disrupt, school operations (including events on the school grounds and sports team matches)
- swearing, or using offensive language to any member of the school community or any other person on a school site or in the immediate vicinity of the school
- threatening to do actual bodily harm to any member of school staff, governor, visitor, fellow parent or young person, regardless of whether or not the behaviour constitutes a criminal offence
- displaying a temper, or shouting at members of staff, young people or other parents/carers
- damaging or destroying school property.
- abusive or threatening e-mails, text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communication
- making serial and unreasonable complaints including unreasonable demands upon school staff to respond to a parental query, or expectations for staff to communicate outside of normal working hours. (please see Complaints Policy)
- The Trust does not permit electronic recordings of meetings or telephone calls by parents or staff without the explicit prior permission of all involved, and in agreement with the Headteacher
- posting defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments about the school, its staff or any member of its community, on social media platforms
- use of physical punishment against your son/daughter
- any aggressive behaviour (including verbal or in written actions) towards another child or adult
- disciplining another person's son/daughter – please bring any behaviour incidents to the attention of a member of staff
- smoking, vaping or drinking alcohol on the school premises or in the vicinity (unless alcohol has been allowed at a specific event)
- possessing or taking drugs (including legal highs)
- parking your vehicle illegally, unsafely or to cause inconvenience to others.

## 4. Social Media

The Trust recognises the value that social media brings to the school community and would encourage the distribution of positive comments and messages about the school and its pupils. We ask that parents/carers demonstrate tolerance and respect towards other people's opinions and beliefs when posting via social media.

### a) Inappropriate use of social network sites

Nationally, social network websites and online systems are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, headteachers and staff members, and in some cases, other parents/carers/pupils.

The use of social network sites being used in this way is viewed as unacceptable and not in the best interests of pupils or the whole school community and can seriously harm an individual's wellbeing.

Any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, form teacher, head of year, senior leader or the Headteacher so that they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned, and at the earliest opportunity.

In order to avoid inappropriate social network activity, the following actions will be considered a breach of this Code of Conduct:

- making complaints, negative comments or factually inaccurate statements about the school
- posting photographs of pupils taken on school premises or on a trip or visit without permission from parents/carers
- creating a social network page/forum in the name of the school/using official logos to imitate the school or posting comments in the guise of the school.
- posting photographs of staff including photographs of staff available on school websites
- making negative comments about other parents/carers, pupils and/or staff; any comments or concerns should be raised with the school directly.
- using defamatory and inappropriate language in relation to other parents/carers, pupils and staff

### b) Defamatory posts

In the event that any pupil or parent/carer of a pupil being educated by a school within the Trust is found to be posting defamatory comments on Instagram, Facebook, X (Twitter) or other social network sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the social network site. It is likely that the Police will also be informed. 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. Each of our schools will also expect that any parent/carer or pupil removes such comments immediately, when requested. In some cases, it may be necessary for the school to seek legal advice on comments posts, which may result in a warning letter being sent to the individual responsible. If the content is still not removed, legal action may be taken against those responsible for the content.

### c) Cyber bullying

The safety and wellbeing of the school community is paramount to the operation of the school. We take very seriously the issue of cyber bullying by a child or a parent to publicly humiliate another parent, carer, child or member of staff as serious inappropriate social network use. We will deal with this as a serious incident of bullying. In serious cases the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites.

## 5. Responding to unacceptable behaviour from parents/carers

### a) Unacceptable behaviour on the school site or during a telephone conversation.

In the unlikely event that any of the above behaviour(s) occur on school premises or during a telephone conversation, the school may take any of the following actions:

- end the meeting/phone call if this behaviour is displayed
- decline to reply to communications that are offensive, abusive or derogatory
- insist that the parent/carer communicates with the school through one member of staff only
- refer the matter to the appropriate authorities
- consider banning the offending parent/carer from entering Trust premises

### b) Behaviour reported to the school

If the Trust, or one of it schools, becomes aware or suspects that a parent/carer has breached the code of conduct, information will be gathered from those involved and a conversation held with the parent/carer about the incident. Depending on the nature of the incident, the school may then:

- send a warning letter to the parent/carer

- limit contact by allocating one key staff member to communicate with
- invite the parent into school to meet with a senior member of staff or the Headteacher or BBCET's independent safeguarding advisor [Clennell Solutions]
- contact the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour)
- seek advice from the Trust's legal team regarding further action (in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous)
- ban the parent from the school site and Trust premises

## 6. Barring a parent/carer from Trust/school premises

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places and the public including parents/carers have no automatic right of entry to any school in the Trust. The school will therefore, as required, act to ensure they remain a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of their community.

If a parent's/carer's behaviour is a cause for concern, a senior leader can ask him or her to leave the school premises. In serious cases, the Headteacher can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any written representations that the parent/carer may wish to make to the Headteacher. The parent/carer will have the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing.

During the barring period, all contact should go through a named member of staff either by email or telephone the Headteacher's decision to bar should be reviewed by the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors should take in to account any representations made by the individual and decide whether to either confirm or lift the bar. If the decision is confirmed, the individual should be notified in writing, explaining:

- how long the bar will be in place
- when the decision will be reviewed
- any ban should be reviewed at the end of the agreed timescale as outlined above

The DfE Guidance on Controlling access to school premises provides more guidance on access to school premises. The Headteacher of each school is responsible for decisions regarding breaches of the Code of Conduct.

** Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a person who is on school premises without lawful authority to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance.
Anyone causing or permitting a nuisance or disturbance may be guilty of an offence and you may be liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500).

Annex 1

# St. Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School

## A guide to supporting you and your child successfully through school

At St. Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School, we are committed to a respectful, communicative and mutually supportive relationship between parents and staff.

As a partnership, our parents will 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.

This guide outlines the rules that apply to all parents and carers in our school. Our aim is to provide you with a framework that sets out the expected conduct and helps prevent misunderstandings and any situations blowing out of control so we can continue to flourish, progress and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding.

### The essentials, please:

- ✓ Make sure your child arrives to school on time and is picked up promptly or let us know if you are running late or if your child is going home with someone else.
- ✓ Complete all consent, contact and medical forms and inform us immediately if anything changes.
- ✓ Make sure your child has the right clothing for any activity they are involved in.
- ✓ Maintain a good relationship with your child's class teacher and attend workshops, school events and parent updates wherever possible or rearrange, if necessary, to share information about your child's development.
- ✓ Talk to us if you have any concerns about any part of your child's education and development – we want to hear from you.
- ✓ If you have a concern and wish to make a formal complaint, please ensure that you correctly follow the school's policies and complaint procedures.

### The school expects parents and carers to:

- ✓ Respect the caring ethos of the school.
- ✓ Understand that parents and teachers need to work together for the benefit of our children.
- ✓ Demonstrate in their own behaviour that all members of the school community should be treated with respect and therefore, set a good example in their own speech and behaviour.
- ✓ Understand that even if there is conflict due to a member of staff's oversight, parents must remain calm and respectful and be mindful that we are all working together for the child's best interests.
- ✓ Approach school staff to inform them of any issue and allow them to help resolve issues.
- ✓ Work with the school to build relationships with its staff.
- ✓ Know that children cannot be moved classes, or desks, on request of the parent.
- ✓ Seek to clarify a child's version of events with the school's view in order to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue.
- ✓ Correct their own child's behaviour, especially where it could lead to conflict.
- ✓ Avoid using staff as threats to admonish children.

### In order to support a peaceful and safe school environment, the school does not tolerate:

- × Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of a classroom, office or other area of school grounds.
- × Loud or offensive language, swearing, cursing or displaying temper.
- × Threating to do actual bodily harm to a member of school staff, governor, visitor, parent/carer or pupil.
- × Damaging or destroying school property.
- × Sending abusive or threatening emails, text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communication.
- × Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the pupils/parents/staff at the school on social media sites.
- × The use of physical aggression towards another adult or child. This includes physically punishing your own child on school premises.
- × Chastising someone else's child.
- × Smoking, or consuming alcohol or drugs whilst on school property.
- × Bringing dogs on to school premises (Except Guide dogs).

## Information on specific areas:

### 1) Inappropriate use of Social Network Sites

- ➢ Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the pupils/parent/staff at the school should not be aired on any social media site.
- ➢ Any concerns you may have about the school must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.
- ➢ If any pupil or parent/carer of a child or children being educated at St. Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on social media sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. All social media 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 pupil removes such comments/ material immediately.
- ➢ In serious cases, the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, is the issue of cyber bullying and the use by one child or a parent to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social network entry. We will take and deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying. Thankfully such incidents are extremely rare.
- ➢ We would expect that parents would make all persons responsible for collecting children aware of this policy.

### 2) Dress and Appearance

- ➢ We expect all adults accessing our site to dress appropriately at all times.
- ➢ Please avoid clothing that may be viewed as offensive, revealing, sexually provocative, display contentious slogans and so on.

### 3) Photographs, Videos and Images

- ➢ Photographs and videos should only be taken under the direction and supervision of senior leaders within the school with the subject being your child.
- ➢ Images and videos taken must NEVER be shared or posted on social networking sites.

### 4) School Safeguarding/Security

- ➢ Adults on site must sign in and wear a visible visitor's badge. Those without an enhanced DBS will be supervised at all times.

| |
|---|
| We want you and your child to enjoy the best possible educational experience they can. Being aware of our school's expectations will help you to do that.<br><br>We expect all parents and families to follow the expected behaviour and requests set out in this document. If any parent behaves in a way which the school feels contradicts its expectations (full details in the school's Parent code of conduct), we will address the problem at the earliest opportunity and aim to resolve the issue. |
| **Persistent concerns or breaches may result in banning the offending adult from entering school grounds. This is something we never want to do, but the welfare and safety of children and adults on our school site is paramount.** |

Annex 2:

Meeting called to discuss a breach of this code of conduct

Date:
Parent name:
Parent of:
Present at the meeting:

Summary of concern or breach:

Outcome:

Agreed next steps:

Signature of family member or carer:

Signature of Head / Designated Safeguarding Lead: