



## Parent Code of Conduct

Date	Term 3 2018
Signed	Committee of Management
Review	2019
Distributed	Email/News Sheet/Website
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Ref: Privacy Policy, Communication, Concerns and Complaints Policy, Volunteers Policy

### 1. Overview

At Dandenong Ranges Steiner School we aim to provide an open, welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all. We believe that parents are valuable contributors and participants in the life of our School.

The outline of our School philosophy and values has been developed with the whole school community, and is located on the School Website. The most relevant of those values for the purpose of this document are:

**Respect** – we want our community to recognise and appreciate diversity, to value the contributions of others and to cooperate with and care for others.

**Sense of community** – we want our community to promote partnerships between all members of our community and to interact positively with the negotiated rights and responsibilities of the school.

The conduct of school staff is regulated by:

- The Victorian Institute of Teaching Code of Conduct for Teachers,  
and/or

- The Independent Schools Victoria Code of Conduct for Teachers.

This Parent Code of Conduct outlines the way in which our community requires all parents and family members to conduct themselves when visiting our school, participating in school activities and communicating with members of our school community (including students, school staff, other parents and visitors to our school).

## 2. Scope

This Code applies to all adults including parents, guardians, step-parents, grandparents, extended family, babysitters and any others while involved in activities or communication related to Dandenong Ranges Steiner School. For convenience, the term "parents" will be used throughout the document.

## 3. Other School Policies That May Be Relevant to Parent Conduct

This Code applies to all adults including parents, guardians, step-parents,

- Privacy Policy
- Communication, Concerns and Complaints Policy
- Volunteers Policy

## 4. Other Legislation That May Be Relevant to Parent Conduct

Working with Children Act, Privacy Act

## 5. General principles that always apply

- (a) **Communication** Parents will use courteous and acceptable written and spoken language in all communications with students, staff and other parents and members of the school community. No profane, insulting, harassing, aggressive or otherwise offensive language may be used.
- (b) **Ethical Conduct** Parents should act in the best interests of students, their families and staff members. They must not engage in

malicious or judgemental gossip, and should ensure that anything they say about others is fair and truthful.

- (c) **Respect** We value our diverse community and respect the rights, religious beliefs and practices of individuals and their families. We respect points of view that are different from our own and all members of our community must refrain from actions and behaviour that constitutes harassment, discrimination or vilification.

## 6. When visiting school

- a) The Victorian Schools Reference Guide item 4.16.2 requires all visitors to the school during school hours to sign a visitors' register located at the school office, so that their presence in the school is recorded in the event of an emergency.
- b) Parents must comply with all safety and emergency procedures in place at our School and in the event of an emergency while they are on school grounds they will follow the instructions given by any member of school staff.
- c) When attending any kind of school assembly or public meeting parents should listen respectfully, in the same manner required of students and staff, and refrain from creating any noise or disturbance during performances or speeches by students, staff or visitors.
- d) Parents must treat all other visitors to our school with courtesy and respect.
- e) Parents should avoid interrupting or distracting teachers while classroom instruction or learning activities are underway.
- f) A parent may not discipline a child who is not theirs or speak to a child who is not theirs about their, or anyone else's behaviour. This is the role of teaching staff. Being approached by an adult they do not know can be distressing for children. Parents should therefore raise any behavioural, bullying or peer group issues with a member of the teaching staff and it is the teacher's responsibility to deal with these issues. (Common sense would apply in an emergency where a child is at risk of harm or where a parent is supervising a small group of students on an excursion.)
- g) When visiting a classroom parents accept the authority of the teacher (or teachers) and that they are in attendance on the teacher's terms. Teacher's value parental involvement and assistance, but they may ask a parent to leave a classroom or class activity for any reason, but not limited to:

- i. parental assistance not being required at the time;
- ii. parental presence in the classroom or at the activity is disturbing or distracting to any student or teacher;
- iii. the parent is not in control of their emotions.

## **7. When communicating with school staff**

- a) All school staff are entitled to a safe and happy work environment. This is in the best interests of our children as well as staff themselves. Parents should therefore ensure that their interactions with staff do not create unnecessary stress and anxiety.
- b) The priority for school staff is the welfare and education of all children in the school. School staff are therefore not required to respond to emails and telephone calls instantaneously. Normal service standards suggest that an acceptable response time for emails is 2 working days. Responses are not expected outside normal working hours or during school holidays unless it is an emergency.
- c) The time available for parents to meet with staff is limited and must be scheduled at a time that does not disrupt the classroom. Parents should be mindful of the teacher's time, communicate the reason for the meeting and allow the teacher time to prepare, unless there is a genuine emergency that needs to be discussed.

## **8. When communicating with other parents**

- a) Parents should respect the privacy of other parents' email addresses and will not send unsolicited emails or "spam" to school parents or forward unsolicited emails or spam that they receive to other parents. Parents will not forward other parents' email addresses without their permission. Parents provide their email address to the school in order to receive communications from the school about school related matters and their child. The school will not give out the email address of parents to other parents without permission. Parents give their email addresses to class representatives in order to receive communications about class activities, get together for their child's class, and to establish rosters

for classroom help, fundraising activities and so on. Class representatives will not pass on parent email addresses to other parents without permission.

- b) Parents who act as class representatives, event coordinators, and so on, are valued volunteers who play a critical role in our community and commit a great deal of time for the benefit of all.
- c) Apart from the general principles that always apply, parents should be particularly sensitive about the manner in which they provide feedback and ask questions of hardworking volunteers.

## **9. When making a complaint**

Parents have the right to raise issues and concerns related to the education of their child or school matters. Parents should ensure that they raise their issues and concerns with the right person and follow the correct communication channels. When making a complaint parents should refer to:

The Communications, Concerns and Complaints Policy, which is available on the School Website and at the office

Parents must follow the procedures outlined in above. It is a breach of this Parent Code of Conduct to make a complaint in a way that is not consistent with the Communication, Concerns and Complaints Policy, especially when the complaint is about a teacher or member of school staff.

## **10. Consequences of a Breach of Parent Code of Conduct**

Any parent, member of school staff or student may notify the College Chair or Educational Administrator of a possible breach of the Parent Code of Conduct. They will investigate the complaint and if satisfied that a breach has occurred:

- a) provide a first and final warning that a breach of the Code of Conduct has occurred and that a further breach will not be tolerated;
- b) determine whether a breach may be rectified by the parent making a private or public apology, depending on the circumstances, to an individual or group of individuals;

- c) where the breach concerned unacceptable behaviour on a visit to the school, a trespass warning may be issued to the parent, which, if the behaviour continues, may accelerate to a trespass notice requiring the parent to stay away from the school unless on the school grounds with the express permission of the College of Teachers.
- d) Parents who have breached the code of conduct more than once may be asked to leave the school

Correspondence that is in breach of this Code of Conduct, because of the language and expression used or the manner in which it is sent or delivered, will not be responded to.

Correspondence which is defined as “vexatious” according to the Communication, Concerns and Complaints Policy will not be responded to.

Nothing in this Policy precludes any person from exercising their individual legal rights in respect of obtaining restraining and intervention orders, reporting assault, bringing action for defamation, exercising rights under vilification or discrimination laws or in any other way.

## **11. Review**

This Policy will be reviewed annually.