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Code of Conduct for Parents/Carers and Visitors

Statement of principles

Anthem encourages close links with parents/carers and the community and believes that students benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one.

To help us do this, we set clear expectations and guidelines on behaviour for all members of our community. This includes staff (through the staff Code of Conduct) and students (through our School Behaviour Policy).

The vast majority of parents, carers and others visiting our school are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. However, on the rare occasions when a negative attitude towards the school is expressed, this can result in aggression, verbal and/or physical abuse towards members of school staff or the wider school community.

Anthem expects and requires its members of staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to defuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues. However, all members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse, and the right, in an extreme case, of appropriate self-defence.

We expect parents, carers and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards members of our school staff. This Code of Conduct aims to help the school work together with parents, carers and visitors by setting guidelines on appropriate behaviour. It also sets out the actions the school can take should this code be ignored or where breaches occur.

This policy is published on the school's website and can also be made available in large print or another accessible format if required.

Thank you for abiding by this code in our school. Together we create a positive and uplifting environment not only for the students but also all who work and visit our school.

Expectations

We expect parents and carers (and, where appropriate, visitors) to:

- Respect the ethos, vision and values of Anthem and our school
- Work together with staff in the best interests of our students
- Treat all members of the school community with respect – setting a good example with speech and behaviour
- Seek a peaceful solution to all issues
- Correct their own child's behaviour (or those in their care), particularly in public, where it could lead to conflict, aggression or unsafe conduct

- Approach the right member of school staff to help resolve any issues of concern

We would also expect that parents/carers would make all persons responsible for collecting children aware of this policy.

Unacceptable behaviour

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated:

- disrupting, or threatening to disrupt, school operations (including events on the school grounds and sports team matches)
- shouting at members of the school staff, either in person or over the telephone
- physically intimidating a member of staff
- the use of aggressive gestures
- threatening behaviour
- racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic comments
- insults or swearing
- damage to personal property
- hitting, e.g. pushing, slapping, punching and kicking
- spitting
- breaching the school's security procedures
- aggressive and threatening phone calls, texts, emails or other written communications
- aggressive or threatening behaviour towards staff or their families via social media
- approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child towards their own child. (Such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and may have legal consequences).
- Smoking, taking illegal drugs or the consumption of alcohol on the school premises (unless alcohol has been allowed at a specific event)

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour.

Unacceptable behaviour may result in the police being informed of the incident.

Breaching the code of conduct

If the school suspects, or becomes aware, that a parent/carer or visitor has breached the code of conduct, the school may gather information from those involved and speak to the parent/carer or visitor about the incident. If necessary, the school Concerns and Complaints procedures should be followed.

Depending on the nature of the incident, the school may then take one or more of the following steps (not necessarily in the order below):

- Invite the parent/carer or visitor into school to meet with a senior member of staff or the headteacher
- Issue a verbal warning of breach of this Code of Conduct
- Issue a written warning of a breach of this Code of Conduct
- Contact the appropriate authorities, which may include the police or social services
- Seek internal legal advice regarding further action
- Put in place a communication plan
- Ban someone from the school site

We can ban someone from school premises if we feel that a person's aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language is a risk to staff or students. It's enough for a member of staff or a student to feel threatened.

In imposing a ban, the following steps will usually be taken:

The parent/carer or visitor will be informed, in writing from the Headteacher, that any further unacceptable behaviour (examples to be given) may lead to a ban from school premises for a set period.

If the negative behaviour continues, the parent/carer or visitor will be informed, in writing, that they have been banned from school premises for a set period. Letters should usually be signed by the Headteacher, though in some cases a staff member from the Anthem national team may wish to write instead. The individual can appeal the decision by emailing the Director of Education within five school days of receiving the ban letter, setting out full reasons why the ban is disagreed with. Please use the following email address: enquiries@anthemtrust.uk.

In serious cases, we may not issue a warning letter in advance of issuing the ban. The Director of Education may delegate the appeal to another member of the Executive Team. If the individual writes to appeal the ban decision, the appeal will be considered within ten school days and the Director of Education, or delegate, may recommend the Headteacher withdraw the ban or may recommend for it to continue for the remainder of the set period.

Other notes

The Headteacher's decision will be reviewed towards the end of the set period. Where an assault or other serious incident has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the police may be included. Where appropriate, arrangements for students being delivered to, and collected from the school gate will be clarified.

Removing individuals from school premises

Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a person who is on school premises without legal permission to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance. Trespassing itself does not constitute a criminal offence.

To have committed a criminal offence, an abusive individual must have been barred from the premises or have exceeded their 'implied licence', then also have caused a nuisance or disturbance.

If a school has reasonable grounds to suspect that someone has committed a criminal offence, then they can be removed from the school by a police officer or a person authorised by the appropriate authority such as the:

- Headteacher
- Anthem Community Council
- Local Authority
- Senior member of Anthem national team
- Trustee

Setting up a communication plan with the parent/carers

If a parent/carers sends any inappropriate and/or disruptive communications to the school, the Headteacher may write to the individual with a warning that a communication plan may be imposed if the inappropriate and/or disruptive communications continue.

If the situation does not improve, we may need to set up a communication plan with the parent/carers. This decision shall be made by the Headteacher in consultation with the Associate Director of Education and the Director of Governance – General Counsel and the length of any communication plan shall be proportionate to the nature and circumstances of the incident.

The individual is allowed to appeal the decision by emailing the Director of Education at enquiries@anthemtrust.uk, within five school days of receiving the letter, setting out full reasons for why the communication plan is disagreed with. The Director of Education may delegate the appeal stage to another non-conflicted member of the Executive Team.

If the individual writes to appeal the decision to set up a communication plan, the appeal will be considered within 10 school days and the Director of Education may recommend for the plan to be withdrawn or to continue for the remainder of the set period.

The communication plan will be reviewed towards the end of the set period it is in place and may be terminated or it may be continued for a further set period. If it is put in place for a further set period, the right to appeal as set out above applies.

Inappropriate use of social media

We expect all parents/carers to act appropriately online as well as in person. The use of social media to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools or to share inappropriate information or to cyberbully another person, e.g. naming students involved in incidences, sharing confidential information regarding an aspect of school life, making allegations or accusations or sharing false news, will be taken very seriously. We consider the use of social media websites or Apps in this way as unacceptable and not in the best interests of the students or the whole school community. Any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, the leadership team or the Headteacher, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned, in line with the school's Concerns and Complaints Policy.

In the event that any parent/carers of a child/ren being educated in this school is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other social network sites or apps, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. 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. The school will also expect that any parent/carers removes such comments immediately. In serious cases, the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites. In some cases, the appropriate authorities may be contacted which may include the police.

Monitoring and Review

All situations which may or do lead to a ban from the school site will be reported by the Headteacher to the relevant Associate Director of Education and Director of Governance – General Council who will together monitor the school's use of banning from the school site over the course of each year.

This policy will be reviewed by Anthem national team every two years.