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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 & Ethos 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.

We use the term 'parents/carers' to refer to:

- Anyone with parental responsibility for a student
- Anyone caring for a student (such as grandparents or child-minders)

Our expectations of parents and carers

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)
- swearing, or using offensive language
- displaying a temper, or shouting at members of the school staff, students or other parents/carers either in person or over the telephone
- threatening or physically intimidating another member of the school community
- racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic comments
- damage to personal property
- hitting, e.g. pushing, slapping, punching and kicking
- spitting
- breaching the school's security procedures
- sending abusive messages to another member of the school community, including via text, email or social media
- 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 child while on school premises
- any aggressive behaviour (including verbally or in writing) towards another child or adult
- disciplining another person's child – please bring any behaviour incidents to a member of staff's attention
- smoking, possessing or taking drugs (including legal highs) 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 will gather information from those involved and speak to the parent/carer or visitor about the incident. If necessary, the school's 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 a 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

The school will always respond to an incident in a proportional way. The final decision for how to respond to breaches of the Code of Conduct rests with the Headteacher.

Imposing a ban

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.

The following steps will usually be taken:

- The parent/carer or visitor will be issued with a written warning from the Headteacher, advising that any further unacceptable behaviour (examples to be given) may lead to a ban from school premises for a set period. In serious cases, we may not issue a warning letter in advance of issuing the ban.
- 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. The Headteacher may wish consult with the Executive Director of Professional Services and General Counsel or the Head of Compliance about this decision. 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 (North/South)/Director of Secondary Standards 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.
- The Director of Education (North/South)/Director of Secondary Standards may delegate the appeal to another member of the Anthem National Team. If the individual writes to appeal the ban decision, the appeal will be considered within ten school days and the Director of Education (North/South)/Director of Secondary Standards, or delegate, may recommend the Headteacher withdraw the ban or may recommend for it to continue for the remainder of the set period.

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, and the length of any communication plan shall be proportionate to the nature and circumstances of the incident. The Headteacher may wish consult with the Executive Director of Professional Services and General Counsel or the Head of Compliance about this decision.

The individual is allowed to appeal the decision by emailing the Director of Education (North/South)/Director of Secondary Standards 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 (North/South)/Director of Secondary Standards may delegate the appeal stage to another non-conflicted member of the Anthem National 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 (North/South)/Director of Secondary Standards 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.

Safe and responsible social media use

We expect parents/carers to abide by these guidelines so that you can help us model safe, responsible and appropriate social media use for our students.

This includes voicing opinions about the school in a way that respects the hard work, dedication and professionalism of our staff, and speaking to or about other parents/carers and students in a way that is respectful and appropriate.

When communicating with the school via official communication channels, or using private or independent channels to talk about the school, parents and carers should:

- Be respectful towards, and about, members of staff and the school at all times
- Be respectful of, and about, other parents/carers and other students and children
- Direct any complaints or concerns through the school's official channels, so they can be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure

Parents/carers should not use social media to:

- Complain about individual members of staff, other parents/carers students
- Complain about the school
- Make inappropriate comments about members of staff, other parents/carers or students
- Draw attention to, or discuss, behaviour incidents
- Post images of children other than their own

Complaints and concerns

We understand that there may be times when you have questions or concerns about decisions the school has made or how things are being handled at school. We genuinely value your feedback and welcome the opportunity to work together to address any worries you might have.

The best way to help us understand and resolve your concerns is to speak with us directly. Give us a call or book an appointment to meet with a senior leader or another member of staff face-to-face. This allows us to have a meaningful conversation and work towards a solution together.

While we recognise that social media can feel like a natural place to share frustrations, we have found that direct communication with our school is the most effective way to address issues constructively and reach a positive outcome for everyone involved.

If you remain dissatisfied, you will have the option to escalate your concerns in line with the school's Concerns and Complaint Policy, available on the school website or upon request from the school office.

Posting about other parents/carers and students

For safeguarding reasons, we ask that parents/carers never post anything on social media that contains the names or images of other parents/carers and students, unless you have the express consent of the other child's parent/carer.

The school has a responsibility to keep students safe online and posting information about children other than your own (including pictures or videos), without the consent of their parents/carers, can present a safeguarding concern.

Behaviour incidents

We also ask that, if you become aware of a behaviour incident, or have any concerns about the behaviour of groups of students or specific students, you please raise these with us directly.

Our school has a robust Behaviour & Ethos Policy, and our staff work hard to ensure it is applied consistently while students are in school. Our policy also sets out when we will intervene in behaviour incidents that occur outside of school.

Discussing behaviour incidents online does not help the school address the issue. It may also prevent the school from conducting a full and fair investigation, and it may present a safeguarding concern for any parents/carers or students named in the incident.

We appreciate your help in providing a supportive, respectful environment for all of our students, parents/carers and staff.

Misuse of social media

If a parent/carer makes inappropriate comments, complain about staff/the school, draw attention to behaviour incidents, etc. via social media or apps, the school may take further action, including:

- In the event that any student or parent/carer of a child/ren being educated in the school is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other social network sites, 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/carer or student removes such comments immediately.
- We may see advice and take legal action if we believe any comments about the school, or individual members of staff, to be defamatory, indecent, or threatening.
- We may involve the police if we believe comments or behaviour are threatening or discriminatory.
- I may also ban parents/carers from the school site.

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 Director of Education (North/South)/Director of Secondary Standards and Head of Compliance 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.