



Parent/Carer Code of Conduct

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1. Purpose and Scope

Discovery Educational Trust (DET) and its Schools are fortunate to have a supportive and friendly parent/carer body. Their parents and carers recognise that educating children is a process that involves partnership between parents/carers, School staff and the whole Trust/School community. This partnership relies on good working relationships. DET and its Schools, therefore, believe that it is important to:

- Work in partnership with parents/carers to support their child's learning;
- Create a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for pupils, staff and parents/carers;
- Model appropriate behaviour for all pupils at all times.

To help the Trust and its Schools to do this, they set clear expectations and guidelines on behaviour for all members of their communities. This includes staff (through the DET Code of Conduct) and pupils (through each School's Behaviour Policy).

This Code of Conduct aims to help DET and its Schools work together with parents/carers by setting guidelines on appropriate behaviour.

2. Expectations of Parents/Carers

Parents/carers and other visitors are expected to:

- Respect the ethos, vision and values of DET and its Schools;
- Work together with staff in the best interests of pupils;
- Treat all members of the Trust/School community with respect and dignity – setting a good example with speech and behaviour, especially in front of children;
- Respect and cooperate with the Trust's and the Schools' policies, processes and procedures;
- Approach DET and its Schools in a proportionate and measured way in order to seek a peaceful and swift solution to all issues;
- Correct their own child's behaviour (or those in their care), particularly in public, where it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive behaviour or unsafe conduct;
- Approach the right member of School staff to help resolve any issues or concerns;
- Avoid using School staff as threats to criticise children's behaviour.

3. Behaviour that is not Tolerated

The below applies to personal interaction and also to telephone, email, text, letter or social media communications (refer also to Section 4. Inappropriate Use of Social Media).

- Disrupting, or threatening to disrupt or interfere with the normal business of the School (including events on the School grounds and sporting fixtures);
- Violence or the threat of violence;
- Swearing, or using offensive language, including that which breaches DET/its Schools' commitment to Equality and Diversity, for example, racist, sexist or homophobic language;
- Spitting;

- Displaying a temper, or shouting at members of staff, pupils or other parents/carers;
- Threatening another member of the School community;
- Damaging DET/School property;
- Sending abusive messages to another member of the School community, including via text, email or social media;
- Posting, on social media platforms, defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments about DET and its Schools, their staff or any member of their communities;
- Use of physical punishment against your child while on school premises;
- Use of physical intimidation, aggression and violence against any child while on School premises;
- Any aggressive behaviour (including verbally or in writing) towards another child or adult;
- Disciplining another person's child – behaviour incidents should be brought to the attention of a member of School staff;
- Wearing revealing or offensive clothing, for example, that which displays political, discriminatory or offensive material, to drop off or collect their child from School, or to visit the School;
- Smoking (including the use of electronic cigarettes or e-cigarettes, Personal Vaporizers (PVs) and Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDSs) battery-operated devices that mimic tobacco smoking) or drinking alcohol on School premises (unless the consumption of alcohol has been approved for a specific event);
- Possessing or taking drugs (including legal highs) on School premises;
- Bringing prohibited or banned items onto School premises (refer Appendix 1);
- Bringing dogs onto School premises (other than guide/service dogs).

4. Inappropriate Use of Social Media

Social media is being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against Multi Academy Trusts and their Schools, Executive Headteacher (EHT)/Headteacher (HT), School staff, and, in some cases, other parents/carers or pupils.

The Trust Board (TB) considers social media being used in this way as unacceptable and not in the best interests of the children or the whole Trust/School community.

Any concerns must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking directly to the School or by following the DET Complaints Policy and Procedure, so that those concerns can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively.

In the event that any pupil or parent/carer of a child/ren being educated in a DET School is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on social media, they are reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the social media site.

All social media sites have clear rules about what content can be posted, and they provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity, which breaches this.

DET and its Schools also expect that any parent/carer or pupil removes such comments immediately. In serious cases, DET and its Schools also consider their legal options to deal with any such misuse of social media and other sites.

The issue of cyber bullying and the use by one child or a parent/carer to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social media posts is also taken extremely seriously by DET and its Schools.

5. Breaching the Code of Conduct

If DET and its Schools suspect, or become aware, that a parent/carer has breached this Code of Conduct, DET and its Schools collate information from those involved, and speak to the parent/carer about the incident.

Depending on the nature of the incident, DET and its Schools may:

- Send a warning letter to the parent/carer;
- Invite the parent/carer into School to meet with a senior member of staff or the EHT/HT;
- Contact the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour);
- Seek advice from the Trust's lawyers regarding further action (in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous);
- Restrict communication between the School and the parent/carer to written communication only;
- Bar the parent/carer from the School premises if it is felt that their aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language is a risk to staff and/or pupils.

If a bar from the School premises is necessary, DET and its Schools comply with the Department for Education (DfE) [Controlling access to school premises guidance](#), which states:

Barring individuals from school premises

Trespassing is a civil offence. This means that schools can ask someone to leave and take civil action in the courts if someone trespasses regularly. The school may want to write to regular trespassers to tell them that they are potentially committing an offence.

Schools can bar someone from the premises if they feel that their aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language is a risk to staff or pupils. It's enough for a member of staff or a pupil to feel threatened.

The school should tell an individual that they've been barred, or they intend to bar them, in writing. Letters should usually be signed by the headteacher, though in some cases the local authority, academy trust or proprietor may wish to write instead. The individual must be allowed to present their side. A school can either:

- *Bar them temporarily, until the individual has had the opportunity to formally present their side;*
- *Tell them they intend to bar them and invite them to present their side by a set deadline.*

After the individual's side has been heard, the school can decide whether to continue with barring them. The decision should be reviewed within a reasonable time, decided by the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) does not get involved in individual cases.

DET and its Schools always respond to an incident in a proportionate way. However, breaches of this Code of Conduct that are deemed, by DET, to be serious may result in an indefinite bar.

The final decision on how to respond to breaches of this Code of Conduct rests with the EHT/HT.

The EHT/HT consults with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Chair of the Local School Committee (LSC) before barring a parent/carers from the School premises.

Appendix 1 – Prohibited and Banned Items

The following are “prohibited items” under section 550ZA (3) of the Education Act 1996 and Regulation 3 of the Schools (Specification and Disposal of Articles) regulations 2012:

- knives or weapons;
- alcohol;
- illegal drugs;
- stolen items;
- tobacco and cigarette papers;
- fireworks;
- pornographic images;
- any article that a member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used:
 - to commit an offence;
 - to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, the School, staff, pupils, or any person (including the pupil).

The following are banned items across all DET School sites:

- chewing gum;
- drug paraphernalia;
- cigarettes, electronic cigarettes or e-cigarettes, personal vaporizers (PVs) and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDSs) battery-operated devices that mimic tobacco smoking;
- nicotine pouches;
- any item that is reasonably believed to be likely to cause harm, offence, e.g. any item of a racist nature, or disruption.