



Parent Carer and Visitor Code of Conduct

Love Learn and Shine together with Jesus

Policy owner	Headteacher Mrs Claire Sime
Approved by	Governing Board
Reviewed	September 2026
Next review	September 2027 or sooner if guidance changes
Applies to	Parents carers relatives visitors and all adults collecting children

Purpose and scope

St Matthew's Catholic Primary School is committed to providing a safe, respectful and welcoming environment in which every child can thrive. Positive relationships between home and school are central to this. This code explains the conduct expected from parents, carers, relatives, visitors and any adult who brings a child to school, collects a child, attends an event or communicates with the school community.

The code applies on the school premises, at school events and activities, on educational visits, in communications with the school, and to online activity connected with the school community. This includes email, telephone calls, text messages, WhatsApp and other messaging groups, Facebook and other social media platforms.

This code is not intended to prevent legitimate questions, criticism or complaints. Concerns should be raised through the appropriate school channel so they can be considered fairly and with the relevant facts. The school's Complaints Policy remains available to all parents and carers.

Our shared responsibility

Children notice how adults speak and behave. Parents, carers, visitors and school staff therefore share a responsibility to model calm, respectful and safe behaviour, including when they disagree. Adult disputes must never be conducted in front of children or in a way that frightens, embarrasses or involves them.

The school expects all adults to:

- respect the Catholic ethos, values, rules and safeguarding arrangements of the school;
- work constructively with staff in the best interests of children;
- use calm, respectful language and behaviour towards children, staff, other families and visitors;
- allow the school to establish the facts before reaching conclusions or sharing allegations;
- raise concerns directly with the school and use the Complaints Policy when needed;
- respect privacy and avoid identifying or discussing individual children, families or staff in group messages or online;
- follow staff instructions relating to safety, access, arrival, collection and school events; and
- ensure that any other person who brings or collects their child understands and follows this code.

Behaviour that is not acceptable

The following behaviour is not acceptable. The examples are not exhaustive; the school will consider the nature, context, impact and seriousness of each incident.

On school premises and at school events

- arguing, shouting, swearing, using offensive language or displaying an uncontrolled temper;
- confronting, intimidating, threatening, harassing or behaving aggressively towards a child, parent, carer, member of staff or visitor;
- physical aggression, fighting, aggressive gestures, blocking another person's movement or refusing to move away when directed;
- approaching, questioning, reprimanding or attempting to discipline another person's child. Concerns about a child must be reported to school staff;
- continuing a dispute at the gate, in the playground, reception area, car park or at a school event, particularly in view or hearing of children;
- discriminatory language or conduct, including racist, religious, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or disability-related abuse;
- disrupting school operations, lessons, meetings, events, arrival or collection arrangements;
- entering restricted areas, refusing a reasonable instruction, or remaining on the premises after being asked to leave;

- damaging school property, smoking or vaping, possessing or using illegal drugs, or consuming alcohol on the premises;
- bringing dogs onto the premises other than assistance dogs or where the school has given permission; and
- taking photographs, video or audio recordings on school premises or at school events without permission, particularly where other children or adults may be identifiable.

Communication with the school

- abusive, insulting, discriminatory, threatening or intimidating language in person, by telephone, voicemail, email, letter, text or message;
- repeatedly contacting several staff members about the same matter after a point of contact has been provided;
- making demands for an immediate response where there is no urgent safeguarding or safety issue;
- recording a meeting or conversation without the knowledge and agreement of those present, unless another lawful arrangement has been agreed; and
- publishing or forwarding confidential correspondence, personal information, photographs, recordings or screenshots without a proper basis.

WhatsApp messaging groups and social media

Parent messaging groups can be helpful for sharing general reminders and supporting one another. They are not an appropriate place to investigate complaints, make allegations, discuss individual children or families, or target members of staff. The school does not monitor private groups. However, parents sometimes share messages or screenshots with the school when they are concerned about the content. The school may consider material that is lawfully brought to its attention and cannot ignore content that raises a safeguarding, welfare, safety or serious conduct concern.

Parents, carers and visitors must not use WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X or any other social media or messaging service to:

- post or circulate abusive, threatening, harassing, discriminatory, humiliating or seriously offensive comments about a child, family, member of staff or the school;
- share allegations, rumours or information presented as fact without taking reasonable steps to establish accuracy;
- identify or discuss children, families or staff in a way that breaches privacy, causes harm or creates a safeguarding concern;
- encourage others to target, contact, intimidate or complain about an individual;
- share photographs, video, audio, screenshots, school correspondence or personal information inappropriately; or
- use a private or public group to pursue a complaint instead of raising it through the school's published procedures.

The school will not label criticism as misconduct simply because it is unwelcome. Action will be considered where the manner, content, repetition or impact of a communication breaches this code, creates a safeguarding or safety concern, interferes with school operations or may be unlawful.

How to raise a concern

Parents and carers should raise concerns directly with the school. This enables staff to listen, establish the facts, protect confidentiality and work towards a resolution.

1. Contact the class teacher in the first instance where the matter relates to day-to-day classroom provision.
2. Contact the school office if the appropriate member of staff is unclear or the matter requires a senior leader.
3. Use the school's Complaints Policy where an informal concern has not been resolved or a formal complaint is needed.

4. Report an immediate safeguarding concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Call 999 where someone is in immediate danger.

It may not be possible for a senior member of staff to meet immediately. An appointment will be arranged as soon as reasonably practicable. Parents must not approach another child or family to investigate or resolve a school-related incident themselves.

How the school may respond to a breach

The school will respond fairly, proportionately and with regard to safeguarding, safety, the impact on those involved, any previous incidents and any relevant equality or accessibility needs. Except where immediate action is necessary to manage a risk, the school will normally establish the available facts and give the parent, carer or visitor an opportunity to explain their account.

Depending on the circumstances, one or more of the following actions may be taken:

Possible response	What this may involve
Early resolution	A member of staff may ask the person to stop the behaviour, move away from an area, leave the premises, remove or correct content, or communicate directly with the school.
Meeting and support	The school may invite the person to a meeting, agree expectations, offer a supported meeting, or consider reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
Written action	The school may issue a written reminder, warning or behaviour agreement and keep an appropriate record of the incident and response.
Communication arrangements	The school may nominate a single point of contact, require communication in writing, set reasonable response arrangements or limit communications that are abusive or unreasonably repetitive. This will not remove the right to make a complaint under the Complaints Policy.
Online action	The school may ask for content to be removed or corrected and may report content to the relevant messaging or social media service.
Site access	The school may impose conditions on access or begin the process of barring an individual from the premises where behaviour or language presents a risk to staff or pupils. The process below will be followed.
Referral or advice	The school may seek advice or assistance from the governing board, Local Authority, Archdiocese, safeguarding services, legal advisers or other appropriate agencies.
Police involvement	The school may contact the police where there is an immediate risk, a threat, violence, harassment, criminal damage, a serious disturbance or other behaviour that may constitute a criminal offence.

Incidents on the school premises

Where adults argue, swear, threaten, fight or otherwise behave unsafely on school premises, staff may direct those involved to stop, separate, move away from children or leave the site. Children will be moved to safety.

where needed. The incident will be recorded and the Headteacher will decide what follow-up is necessary. The police may be called without warning where there is violence, a credible threat, significant disorder or an immediate risk to safety.

Parents and carers are expected to leave disagreements outside the school environment and not continue them at the gate or during arrival and collection. Even where a dispute began away from school, behaviour on the premises or at a school event remains subject to this code.

Restricting or barring access to the school site

School premises are private property. Parents and carers ordinarily have implied permission to enter at specified times and for specified purposes, such as arrival, collection, appointments and events. This permission may be limited or withdrawn where conduct or language creates a risk to pupils or staff.

Where the school is considering barring an individual, it will follow the Department for Education guidance on controlling access to school premises. Unless urgent temporary action is required to manage a risk, the school will:

- write to the individual explaining the proposed restriction and the reasons for it;
- give the individual an opportunity and a reasonable deadline to provide their account;
- consider the representations and any relevant evidence before reaching a decision;
- confirm the decision, scope, duration, alternative arrangements for school contact and how it will be reviewed; and
- review any continuing bar within a reasonable period.

A temporary bar may be imposed while representations are considered where the school reasonably believes this is necessary to protect pupils or staff. Arrangements will be made so that the child's education, arrival and collection, essential communication and the parent's access to the Complaints Policy can continue safely.

A person who has been barred, or who has exceeded the permission given to enter, may be trespassing. Under section 547 of the Education Act 1996, a person on school premises without lawful authority who causes or permits a nuisance or disturbance may commit a criminal offence and may be removed by the police or an authorised person.

Records confidentiality and safeguarding

The school may retain proportionate records of incidents, communications, screenshots supplied to it, decisions and actions in accordance with its data protection and records-management responsibilities. Information will be shared only where there is a lawful reason, including safeguarding, safety, legal advice or the prevention or investigation of crime.

Nothing in this code prevents the school from acting immediately under its safeguarding procedures or from sharing information with safeguarding partners, the Local Authority or the police where this is necessary and lawful.

Legal and guidance framework

This code should be read alongside the school's Complaints Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Data Protection Policy and procedures for managing unreasonable or persistent complaints. It has regard to:

- Department for Education guidance Controlling access to school premises;
- section 547 of the Education Act 1996;
- the Equality Act 2010;
- the Protection from Harassment Act 1997;
- relevant public order, communications, safeguarding and data protection law; and
- the school's duties to safeguard pupils and provide a safe working environment for staff.

Only a court or appropriate authority can determine whether conduct is criminal, defamatory or otherwise unlawful. The school may seek legal or police advice where there is a concern; it will not present an allegation of illegality as an established fact without an appropriate basis.

Monitoring and review

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this code. The governing board will approve and review it. The school may review the code earlier following a serious incident or a change in legislation or guidance.

Thank you for helping us maintain a safe, respectful and positive environment for every child, family, member of staff and visitor.