



PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

At Dookie Primary 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.

Our school values are outlined in the School Strategic Plan, which has been developed with the whole school community.

The conduct of school staff is regulated by:

- a) The Victorian Institute of Teaching Code of Conduct for Teachers, and/or
- b) The State Services Authority Code of Conduct for all Victorian Government Employees

Student conduct is regulated by the Student Code of Conduct

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)

Scope

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

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 will act in the best interest of students, their families and staff members. They will not engage in malicious or judgemental gossip, and should ensure that anything they say or write (digital formats) about others is fair and truthful.
- c) A parent may not interrupt or distract a teacher while classroom instruction or learning activities are underway. All non scheduled meetings need to be brief and at a reasonable time eg to not interrupt class preparation time. All matters needing more time will require an appointment booked with a teacher directly or through the office.
- d) A parent may not discipline a child who is not theirs or speak to a child who is not theirs about their behaviour. This does not include people damaging school property outside of school hours as long as the adult conducts themselves reasonably or they may choose to seek assistance from Victoria Police. During school hours all matters will be referred to a staff member. Parents should 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)
- e) When visiting a classroom parents accept the authority of the teacher (or teachers) and that they are in attendance on the teacher's terms. Teachers 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. Parents are expected to participate in accordance with the nature of the task, eg morning reading, and refrain from behaviour that takes away from the education experience of the students.
 - (iii) The parent not in control of their emotions.

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 for the 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 will therefore attend to responses in a timely manner. 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.

When communicating with school council

- a) School Council members welcome feedback from parents. But school council members are volunteers and engaged in their own work and activities during business hours. When parents communicate with school council members they should therefore establish that it is a convenient time, or ask to speak at a convenient time. Calling someone when they are at work may be assume to be an inconvenient time.
- b) Correspondence to school council may be forwarded to the school's email address. It will then be circulated to all school council members through their meeting papers. It will be discussed at the next school council meeting and a response will be sent within 2 working days of the school council meeting.
- c) Parents should allow school council members an opportunity to discuss their correspondence at a properly constituted meeting of school council and therefore refrain from demanding an urgent response to their letter, sending the same letter multiple times, writing multiple times on the same subject and otherwise harassing the school council members when they have not yet had an opportunity to discuss correspondence.
- d) Parents are welcome to attend school council meetings. The basis upon which parents may attend and speak at school council meetings is set out in the School Council Standing Orders, which are available on the school website, and parents are expected to comply with those Standing Orders and rulings of the chairperson of the meeting.

Raising Concerns

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 Department of Education Complaints policy, which is available on the department website.

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

Consequences of a Breach of Parent Code of Conduct

Any parent, member of school staff or student may notify the Principal of a possible breach of the Parent Code of Conduct. The Principal 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, issue a trespass warning 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 Principal.

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

Correspondence which is defined as "vexatious" according to the 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 orders, reporting assault, bringing action for defamation, exercising rights under vilification or discrimination laws or in any other way.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.