

Family School Relationships

Code of Conduct

Introduction:

At St. Mary's Altona we are committed to nurturing respectful relationships and active partnerships with you as parents/guardians. In addition to parents/guardians this Code of Conduct applies to all family members interacting with the school and we respectfully request parents/guardians ensure that all relevant family members are advised of the requirements of this Code of Conduct.

We believe that our students' learning journeys are enriched through positive and reciprocal home and school relationships.

As parents/guardians, you act as one of the most influential role models in your child's life. We therefore seek your support in promoting and upholding the core values of the school community and its culture of respectful relationships.

This Code of Conduct is intended to guide you in your dealings with staff, external service providers e.g. OSHC etc, other parents/guardians, students and the wider school community. It articulates the school's key expectations of both staff and parents/guardians with regard to respectful relationships and behaviours. It also specifies the school's position with regard to unacceptable behaviours that breach our culture of respect.

This Code of Conduct is to be read in conjunction with the school's:

- Complaints Handling Procedure
- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct

Our Culture of Respectful Relationships

Among students, staff and parents/guardians we strive to develop the following:

- a respect for the innate dignity and worth of every person
- an ability to understand the situation of others
- a cooperative attitude in working with others
- open, positive and honest communication
- the ability to work respectfully with other people
- trusting relationships
- responsible actions.

In promoting and upholding this culture, we expect that parents/guardians will:

- support the school's Catholic ethos, traditions and practices
- support the school in its efforts to maintain a positive teaching and learning environment
- understand the importance of healthy parent/teacher/child relationships and strive to build the relationships
- adhere to the school's policies, as outlined on the school website
- treat staff and other parents/guardians with respect and courtesy.

In promoting and upholding this culture, we expect that staff will:

- communicate with you regularly regarding your child's learning, development and wellbeing
- provide opportunities for involvement in your child's learning
- maintain confidentiality over sensitive issues

- relate with and respond to you in a respectful and professional manner
- ensure a timely response to any concerns raised by you.

Raising Concerns and Resolving Conflict: **(Refer also to our Complaints Handling Procedure)**

In raising concerns on behalf of your child, or making a complaint about the school's practices or treatment of your child, we expect that you will:

- listen to your child, but remember that a different 'reality' may exist elsewhere
- observe the school's stated procedures for raising and resolving a grievance/complaint
- follow specified protocol for communication with staff members, including making appointments at a mutually convenient time and communicating your concerns in a constructive manner
- refrain from approaching another child while in the care of the school to discuss or chastise them because of actions towards your child. Refer the matter directly to your child's teacher for follow-up and investigation by the school.

In responding to your concerns or a complaint, we expect that staff will:

- observe confidentiality and a respect for sensitive issues
- ensure your views and opinions are heard and understood
- communicate and respond in ways that are constructive, fair and respectful
- ensure a timely response to your concerns/complaint
- strive for resolutions and outcomes that are satisfactory to all parties.

Staff Safety and Wellbeing:

The school places high value and priority on maintaining a safe and respectful working environment for our staff. We regard certain behaviours as harmful and unacceptable insofar as they compromise the safety and professional wellbeing of our staff. These behaviours include, but are not limited to:

- shouting or swearing, either in person or on the telephone
- physical or verbal intimidation
- aggressive hand gestures
- writing rude, defamatory, aggressive or abusive comments to/about a staff member (emails/social media)
- racist or sexist comments
- damage or violation of possessions/property.

When a parent/guardian behaves in such unacceptable ways, the principal or a senior staff member will seek to resolve the situation and repair relationships through discussion and/or mediation.

Where a parent/guardian's behaviour is deemed likely to cause ongoing harm, distress or danger to the staff member and others, we may exercise our legal right to impose a temporary or permanent ban from the parent/guardian entering the school premises. In an extreme act of violence that causes physical harm to the staff member and his/her property, the matter may be reported to the police for investigation.

This policy was last ratified by St. Mary's Staff & Parents in May 2019 and will be reviewed as part of St. Mary's review cycle.

