Parental code of conduct

(Venn wide)

1	Owned and reviewed by	Laura Carr-Director of Safeguarding, Attendance, Risk and Welfare
2	Approved by	Board of Trustees
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6	Related documents (if applicable)	Behaviour and Relationships Policy Artificial Intelligence Policy
7	Applies to	☒ All staff ☐ Support staff ☐ Teaching staff
8	Available on	☒ Venn website ☒ School website ☒ SharePoint

Venn Academy Trust (VAT) is a charitable company limited by guarantee with registration number 09662303 and Sole Member of the subsidiary company Venn Education Group (VEG). Venn Education Group is a charitable company limited by guarantee with registration number 16743074.

Venn wide policies are centrally held policies and are the direct responsibility of VAT. Venn wide policies are created by the VAT Central Team and adopted by the VEG Board.

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1. Purpose and scope

1.1 At Venn Academy Trust we believe it's important to:

- work in partnership with parents to support their child's learning
- create a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for pupils, staff and parents
- model appropriate behaviour for our pupils at all times

1.2 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 pupils (through our behaviour policy).

1.3 This code of conduct aims to help the school work together with parents by setting guidelines on appropriate behaviour.

1.4 We use the term 'parents' to refer to:

- anyone with parental responsibility for a pupil
- anyone caring for a child (such as grandparents or child-minders)
- anyone who is giving Kinship care to a child or a foster carer

2. Introduction

2.1 In this guidance, the definition in the Education Act 1996 of the word parent is somewhat extended and includes an individual who has care of the child whether or not s/he is the natural parent or has parental responsibility for the child. This includes step-parents. Where an individual does not fall within this broad definition, the principles of this guidance should still be applied.

2.2 At Venn we encourage partnerships with our parents. We work hard to maintain mutual respect and recognition of shared responsibility for the children. However, in a very small minority of cases the behaviour of parents can cause disruption, resulting in abusive, aggressive or harassing behaviour towards staff, this includes the use of social media and other forms of faceless communications. This will not be tolerated. All members of the school community have a right to expect that their school is a safe place.

2.3 If the parent's behaviour is unreasonable, permission for them to be on the school premises may be withdrawn and they will become a trespasser.

2.4 There are also other exceptional circumstances when a parent will be automatically banned from the school premises. These include if a parent is a registered sex offender (for sexual offenses against children) or if a parent has been prosecuted for harming children. In the case of a parent who is on the sex offender register for offences involving children (whether historical or not), where a charge and conviction has taken place, an automatic ban will be put in place to protect all areas of the school community. A risk assessment will be

conducted so the parent has the opportunity to be actively involved in their child's life (if permitted by the authorities).

Aims

- To encourage partnerships with our parents
- To maintain mutual respect and recognition of shared responsibility for the children
- To ensure that all members of the school community are kept safe from abuse, threats and violence

3. Risk assessment

3.1 In the event of a parent behaving in an inappropriate way, each situation will be considered individually by the principal and / or the Chair of Governors/Board of Trustees. The following factors will be taken into account as a risk assessment, before deciding on the most appropriate course of action:

- has the parent been verbally aggressive / threatening / intimidating?
- has the parent been physically aggressive / threatening / intimidating?
- what evidence is there? What do witnesses say happened?
- does the parent have a known previous history of aggression / violence? (information can only be sought from the police when an official complaint has been made)
- do members of the school staff / community feel intimidated by the parent's behaviour?
- have pupils witnessed aggressive / threatening / intimidating behaviour from the parent?
- have pupils been approached inappropriately by the parent?
- has the parent been abusive to school staff, pupils or visitors?
- has the parent been persistently abusive to school staff, pupils or visitors?
- how frequently have the behaviours occurred?
- is there a risk (low, medium or high) that the behaviour may be repeated?

4. Behaviour

4.1 Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated:

- shouting at members of the school staff, parents or children either in person or over the telephone
- physically intimidating a member of staff, parent or child e.g. standing very close to her / him
- the use of aggressive hand gestures
- threatening behaviour physical or online
- shaking or holding a fist towards another person

- swearing
- using abusive / offensive language
- pushing
- hitting, e.g. slapping, punching and kicking
- spitting
- racist, sexist, homophobic or transgender comments
- Inappropriate emails or emails at times outside of the school day which could constitute stalking or harassment.
- breaching the school's security procedures

4.2 This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour.

4.3 Unacceptable behaviour may result in the local authority and the police being informed of the incident.

4.4 When visiting the school site parents should ensure their behaviour is appropriate throughout. This includes signing in to the school using the inventory system, not bringing meta glasses onto the school site unless prior arranged due to a health condition. Parents should not record staff in a meeting unless the staff members have consented. Parents should not have their mobile phone out on the school site and should not use it to photograph or record any other pupil. This will be reported to the Police if this is seen to happen.

5. Dealing with abusive telephone calls

5.1 Sometimes staff may have to deal with challenging, abusive, aggressive or threatening telephone calls. It is unacceptable for any member of staff to be subjected to such abuse. It is acceptable for staff to end an abusive telephone call. If this occurs, make a written note of the telephone call and transfer onto the electronic safeguarding log (CPOMs) and report the incident to your line manager.

6. Abuse / bullying using cyber technology

6.1 Staff in schools may become targets of cyber abuse / bullying and, like other forms of bullying, it can have a significant impact on their health, well-being and self-confidence. Cyber abuse / bullying may consist of threats, harassment, embarrassment, humiliation, defamation or impersonation. It may take the form of general insults, or prejudice based abuse, e.g. homophobic, sexist, racist or other forms of discrimination. It may involve email, virtual learning environments, chat rooms, websites, social networking sites, mobile and fixed-point phones, digital cameras, games and virtual world sites. Abuse using cyber technology can occur at any time and incidents can intrude into the victim's private life. The audience for such messages can be very large and can be reached rapidly. The content of electronically forwarded messages is hard to control, and the worry of content resurfacing can make it difficult for the victim to move on.

6.2 Harassment / cyber bullying and the law

While there is not a specific criminal offence called cyberbullying, activities can be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including:

- the Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- the Malicious Communications Act 1988
- section 127 of the Communications Act 2003
- public Order Act 1986
- the Defamation Acts 1952 and 1996
- section 547 Education Act 1996
- the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 Section 2 and 3
- criminal Damage Act 1971
- criminal Justice Act 1988 Section 39

It is the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees. Incidents that are related to employment, even those taking place outside the hours or place of work may fall under the responsibility of the employer.

7. After the incident

- The people who witnessed the incident must make witness reports in writing as soon as possible after the incident, (see attached incident report form). Reports must be signed and dated. Reports may be disclosed to the perpetrator, and the witness should say whether or not they are prepared for this to happen.
- Keep any records of abuse – texts, emails, voice mails, or instant messages. Take screen prints of messages or web pages and fill in an 'Incident Report Form' with the screen prints attached
- Inform your line manager at the earliest opportunity.

Actions that may be considered are:

- Inviting the parent to a meeting to discuss events
- Whether to issue a warning letter to the person
- Whether to issue a ban letter to the person. If a ban is considered, the principal will discuss this with the Chair of Governors/Director of Safeguarding/Regional Director first
- Forming strategies to manage future situations of potential conflict
- Calling for police assistance
- Prosecution under section 547 of the Education Act 1996
- Anti-social behaviour orders (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)
- Restraining orders (Protection from Harassment Act 1997)

- Prosecution for criminal damage/assault
- Contacting the host (i.e. the social networking site) to make a request to get any online content taken down
- Request the police to issue a Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) request to a service provider, enabling them to disclose the data about a message or the person sending it
- Any other relevant legal proceedings

8. Venn's Role

8.1 The principal will contact the Director of Safeguarding for support and advice if the incident is of a serious and/or violent nature. Venn may agree that correspondence should be sent directly from a Venn employee and support the school with legal proceedings.

9. Police assistance

9.1 In the event of a parent (or other person) becoming aggressive or violent, the school should not hesitate to contact the police using 999. When the situation does not require immediate Police response, but there is prior knowledge of likely trouble, the principal may contact the local police station or the school's community officer for advice.

Incident Report Form

This includes trespass, nuisance or disturbance on school premises, verbal abuse, sexual or racial abuse, threats, aggression, physical violence and intentional damage to personal property.

This form should be completed as fully as possible (please use a continuation sheet if necessary). For an incident involving or witnessed by a child, a member of staff should complete the form on their behalf. However, any discussion between one witness and another should not precede completion of the form, as this might lead to allegations of collusion.

Date, time and location of the incident	
Name(s) of person(s) assaulted/verbally abused	
Perpetrator(s) name(s) and relationship to the school	
Witnesses name(s) and relationship to the school	

Description of the incident (include relevant events leading up to the incident, details of those present, whether weapons were involved etc.)	
Outcome (e.g. were police called, what happened after the incident)	
Any possible contributory factors?	
Is the perpetrator known to have been involved in any previous incidents? (if yes, give details)	
Name and contact details of police officer involved, and incident number or crime reference number, as appropriate.	

Any other relevant information?	

Form completed by: *(name and role)*	
Signed:	
Date:	

Model letter 1 – Warning letter

(from Principal)

Dear ###

Re: Your conduct on (insert date)

I refer to the incident that took place today (or insert relevant day) when you (insert details of the incident).

If the Principal did not witness the incident they may wish to use the following text: I have considered the witness accounts of the incident, (if relevant: including your own), and it would appear (insert details of incident).

Your behaviour falls short of the standard of conduct expected of the school. I am not prepared to continue to accept such behaviour. I must therefore warn you that if you are involved in a similar incident again, you will leave me with no alternative other than to ban you from coming onto the school site without my written permission.

I do hope that this will not be necessary and that I can rely on your cooperation in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Principal

Model letter 2 – Initial temporary ban from school premises pending a review **(from Chair of Governors)**

Dear ###

Re: Your conduct on (insert date)

I refer to the incident that took place today (or insert relevant day) when you (insert details of the incident).

If the Principal did not witness the incident, the following text may be used: I have considered the witness accounts of the incident, (if relevant: including your own), and it would appear (insert details of incident).

Your behaviour falls short of the standard of conduct expected of the school. Governors, in line with our policy, will not tolerate conduct of this nature and will act to defend school staff and pupils. (Omit if this is a first incident – As you will remember, I have previously warned you about your behaviour when I wrote to you on (date)). I have considered the matter very carefully and have decided that you should be banned from the school premises from now until (insert date). This initial temporary period will give Governors the time to investigate the case further and to meet to decide whether to extend the ban or not. Before making this decision you may, if you wish, write to me to give me any further information you want me to take into consideration. You have until (insert date) to write to me.

For the duration of this decision, you may bring your child(ren) to school and collect them at the end of the school day, but you must not go beyond the school gate.

If you need to speak to me or a member of staff about any matter, please telephone and I will make the necessary arrangements and confirm them to you in writing. You will not be allowed to come onto the school site unless you have a letter from me giving you authorisation.

If you do not comply with this ban, you will be guilty of causing a nuisance or disturbance on educational premises. This is a criminal offence under section 547 of the Education Act

1996. If you were to commit this offence, you would be liable to prosecution in the magistrates' court. If you were to be convicted, you would be liable to a fine of up to £500 and a criminal conviction.

I regret that I have had to take this action and hope that I can rely on your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

Model Letter 3 – Ban from school premises for an extended period / indefinitely **(from Chair of Governors)**

Dear ###

Re: Your conduct on (insert date)

I refer to the incident that took place on (insert relevant day) when you (insert details of the incident). In my letter dated (insert date), I referred to my intention to ban you from the premises and I invited you to make representations to me about this.

I have not received a written response from you/ I have received the letter from you dated (insert date), the contents of which I have carefully considered. In the circumstances, and after further consideration, I have decided to extend the ban until (insert date) / indefinitely. (If extended: After which the ban will be reviewed (insert review date which should be within a reasonable period and no longer than six months) by the Governors. When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the withdrawal of permission to come onto the school premises, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from you; and any evidence of your co-operation with the school in other respects. When we have made our decision, I shall write to you to inform you of it together with our reasons).

Even though we have taken this decision, the school remains committed to the education of your child(ren), who must continue to attend school. You may bring your child(ren) to school and collect them at the end of the school day, but you must not go beyond the school gate.

If you need to speak to me or a member of staff about any matter, please telephone and I will make the necessary arrangements and confirm them to you in writing. You will not be allowed to come onto the school site unless you have a letter from me giving you authorisation.

If you do not comply with this ban, you will be guilty of causing a nuisance or disturbance on educational premises. This is a criminal offence under section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If you were to commit this offence, you would be liable to prosecution in the magistrates' court. If you were to be convicted, you would be liable to a fine of up to £500 and a criminal conviction.

I regret that I have had to take this action and hope that I can rely on your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

Model Letter 4 – Restored permission to come onto the school premises

(from Chair of Governors)

Dear ###

Your conduct on (insert date)

On (insert date) I wrote to you informing you that I had temporarily withdrawn permission for you to come onto the school premises. To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to let me have your written comments on this incident by (insert date).

I have not received a written response from you/I have now received a letter from you dated (insert date), the contents of which I have considered.

In the circumstances, I have decided to restore to you the permission to come onto the school premises, with immediate effect.

Nevertheless, I remain very concerned at the incident which occurred on (insert date), and I must warn you that if there is any breech against the school's expected standard of conduct, I shall not hesitate to immediately withdraw permission for you to come onto the premises on a permanent basis.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors