 <b>St Philip's Christian College</b> <small>FOR THE WHOLE OF LIFE</small>	<b>St Philip's Christian College Cessnock</b> <b>Parent Code of Conduct Policy</b>
<b>Related Documents</b>	Communications Policy Managing Complaints and Grievances Policy Spectator Code of Conduct Student Code of Conduct Enrolments Policy Enrolment Contract
<b>Policy Review</b>	This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or as needed in line with legislative changes.
<b>Implementation Date</b> <b>Last Review Date</b>	May 2023 May2023
<b>Constructed / Reviewed by</b>	St Philip's Christian College Cessnock on advice from Russell Kennedy Lawyers
<b>Approved By</b> <b>Date</b>	Matthew Connett (Principal) May 2023

## 1 Introduction

Family, in all diverse forms, types of relationships and care giving situations, plays an important role in a student's education. We recognise parents are an essential part of the St Philip's Christian College Cessnock (**the College**) community and we encourage engagement with their child's educational, cultural and sporting pursuits. Parents are expected to collaborate and work in partnership with the College to support the College's vision, mission and values. The parent and the school relationship is one of mutual respect, trust, confidence and cooperation.

For the College to balance the wellbeing and roles of parents, students, and staff, we have expectations around the standards of interaction and behaviour, of all parties, when involved in school activities. These standards allow the students to learn, teachers to teach, and other community members to participate in activities, free from harassment, bullying in all its forms and other anti-social behaviours. Adherence to this Code of Conduct is important to promote positive and productive relationships.

Parents and carers should set a positive example for their children, and the children of others. They have a shared responsibility with their children, other parents and carers and the College to ensure that their child abides by the Student Code of Conduct and participates in all aspects of life at the College as per these standards.

The College recognises that parents ultimately want the best for their child. However, parents are expected to recognise that the College must ultimately balance the interests of all of its stakeholders (including but not limited to students, parents and carers as well as staff) and their right to a safe environment.

*"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." James 1:19*

This Code of Conduct does not attempt to provide a detailed and exhaustive list of what to do in every aspect of a parent's interactions with the College and the school community. Instead, it sets out general expectations. As such, this Code of Conduct is intended to be practical, non-adversarial and non-legal.

## **2 Scope**

This Code of Conduct outlines the College's expectations for a student's parents, step-parents, guardians, grandparents, extended family members and carers (collectively, parents).

## **3 Summary**

In summary, the five key expectations of parents expanded on in the following pages are as follows:

### Support the educational ethos, mission, Christian faith and values of the College

Parents are expected to visibly support the educational ethos, mission, Christian faith and values of the College, and role model responsible and safe behaviours for their children and others in the community to learn from.

### Behave respectfully towards members of our community

Parents should behave respectfully at all times towards the College's staff (including employees, contractors and volunteers), students and other parents.

### Use technology and social media appropriately

Parents are expected to be respectful in their communication with others, be mindful of privacy and safety in publishing information online, and ensure confidential information is not shared without permission.

### Be a responsible visitor and participant

Parents must respect the College's risk-management procedures when visiting the College and attending school activities and events off-campus.

### Raise grievances appropriately and productively

Parents should raise genuine grievances they may have about such matters in an appropriate, constructive and respectful forum.

## **4 Support the Educational Ethos, Mission, Christian Faith and Values of the College**

The College's core values are foundational to all that is done at the College. These values are key to the Student and Staff Code of Conduct as well as the Parent Code of Conduct. The core values are:

- Christ First.
- Serve One Another.
- Strive For Excellence.
- Do What is Right.
- Build Community.

Parents are expected to support the educational ethos, mission, Christian faith and values of the College, model appropriate behaviours for their children to learn from and work with the College as it educates and provides pastoral support to all students. Parents must strive to conduct themselves in a manner that exemplifies the following values whether it be in person or when using digital or social media:

- Excellence – in conduct and communication.
- Respect – for staff, other parents and carers, students and members of the community.
- Courtesy – in all interactions.
- Pride – in the College community and in the wider community.
- Responsibility – be personally responsible for your actions.
- Integrity – be reliable and honest in all of your dealings.
- Tolerance – for others, regardless of their background, age, gender, sexuality, religious beliefs, or race.
- Inclusion – of all those who come to St Philip's Christian College Cessnock, and of those in the community.

Parents can support the College and be positive role models by doing, for example, the following:

- Adhere to all government guidelines and comply with the College's procedures, codes of conduct, directions policies, rules and regulations, and ensure their children do the same.
- Keep the College informed and updated about a child's needs (including but not limited to their behavioural, and physical or mental health needs). This includes providing updated medical information, family developments and other like information as it becomes available. However, parents must recognise that the College will take into account any new information and comply with its legal obligations, but the College may not be able to accommodate every need.
- Keep the College informed of a child's parenting arrangements, including updated information regarding Court Orders, IVOs that may be in place. However, parents should avoid involving the College in parenting disputes, or expect the College to act as a go-between for estranged parents. It is not appropriate for the College to make judgments on the merits of claims made by one parent against the other and it should not be asked to do so.
- Make every reasonable effort to attend a student meeting if invited by a staff member. The College conducts regular meetings between staff and parents at which the student's progress can be discussed. There may be other times when a parent or staff member requests a meeting to discuss other matters.
- Respect (and show to their children that they respect) that the College is inclusive and welcomes students from a variety of backgrounds, and with different needs.
- Respond to College communications (e.g. by completing forms and providing permissions in a timely manner) when requested to do so by the College.

- Encourage their children to actively participate in all aspects of life of the College, including in the classroom and the many sporting and extracurricular activities available (noting that some extracurricular activities will be compulsory).
- Support the College's commitment to developing a student's initiative, independence and sense of responsibility for their own lives and actions.
- Support the College's approach to student behavioural concerns, which can include a range of outcomes (including those which are educational, pastoral or disciplinary in nature).
- Be responsive to concerns raised by the College about their own child, including by being cooperative, providing information, and attending meetings when required.
- Raise grievances directly with the College, and in a timely manner.
- Recognise the damage that gossip can do within a school community, and avoid unconstructive commentary (including criticism, uninformed rumour or speculation) with other parents or students, including on social media.

Parents are expected to be a role model for responsible and safe behaviours. This includes ensuring the health and safety of all members of our school community (including staff, students, parents and alumni) and the wider community. Parents are expected to ensure that other individuals involved in their child's life, such as other relatives and carers, also comply with this Code of Conduct.

## **5 Expectations of Behaviour**

The College has a duty of care to protect visitors and members of the College community. For this reason, any aggressive or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated.

The College expects that parents will behave respectfully at all times towards other members of the school community. This applies not only to words used, but also to tone and body language, and similar expectations are embedded in the College's codes of conduct for staff and students.

"Respect" is intentionally a broad concept. The following is a non-exhaustive list of behaviours that are not respectful:

- Rude or insulting behaviour, including passive-aggressive, intimidating or derogatory language.
- Bullying, intimidation, discrimination, sexual harassment, victimisation and child abuse. Please note that in addition to being a breach of this Code of Conduct, such behaviour may also be unlawful.
- Actual or threatened aggression (verbal or non-verbal) or violence.
- Behaviour that causes a risk to a person's health and wellbeing.
- Defamatory or disrespectful comments.

- Gossip, rumour, and innuendo.
- Raising one's voice, or using offensive language or actions, while communicating.
- Age-inappropriate language when communicating with or about children.
- Vexatious complaints.

Parents are expected to:

- follow all Government guidelines and College procedures for the event;
- follow any reasonable request from staff or officials;
- encourage (without forcing) their child to participate;
- never ridicule, berate, discourage, or otherwise interfere with their child or another child;
- uphold the principles of good sportsmanship and fair play;
- never yell, abuse, threaten, intimidate or otherwise interfere with an official, coach or other person;
- never incite, encourage, or commit acts of violence;
- never use foul or abusive language; and
- never interfere in an activity.

## **6 Standards of Communication**

Communication (whether verbal, non-verbal, written or other) with any member of the College community should:

- demonstrate respect, courtesy and consideration for others;
- be non-confrontational and avoid intemperate language;
- be free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying or abuse;
- be free from defamatory or disrespectful comments; and
- not denigrate, criticise or threaten.

Parents should only deal with staff in accordance with our *Communications Policy* so that they are able to discharge their duties without interference.

Parents should not approach or interact with the children of other parents without their permission.

## **7 Use of Technology and Social Media**

The College has an expectation that parents use of technology and social media to communicate with or around the College or its community members is respectful and courteous at all times. Platforms and devices should not be used to criticise, denigrate or threaten staff, students or parents and carers. Activities of this nature will be seen as a reputational matter and will be a direct breach of this Code of Conduct.

Parents are expected to:

- Respect a staff member's professional and personal boundaries by not using their personal online presence to raise school matters (or otherwise engage in disrespectful behaviour).
- Not take photos, videos or other recordings of a staff member or parent without their consent, or of a student without their parent's consent, and not publish information (including personal details, contact information, images or recordings) concerning a staff member, parent, student or other member of the school community without express consent.
- Avoid publishing or sharing information which may bring the College (or any of its staff, students, parents and other members of College community) into disrepute. This may include an image or recording which shows a student in the College's uniform, or a member of the school community at the College or a school activity or event behaving inappropriately.
- Not communicate with students from another family outside of the College (including by email or on social media) without prior consent from the student's parent.
- Not discuss confidential or sensitive matters, including in relation to grievances about a particular staff member or student, online.
- Obtain express permission to use the College's name or insignia in the title of any online website platform, forum or group, or printed or online publication. In addition, no suggestion should be made that any such platform or material is operated or sanctioned by the College.

## **8 Be a Responsible Visitor and Participant**

Parents must respect the College's risk-management procedures when visiting the College. Parents should immediately proceed to Reception upon arrival to sign in, and should only enter a classroom or other student environment when invited to do so by a staff member. This requirement does not apply when visiting the College only to:

- Attend an activity or event to which all members of the school community have been invited.
- Visit the College uniform shop.
- Drop-off or collect a child from the College.

When visiting the College, or attending College activities and events, parents should model appropriate and respectful behaviours, and uphold the College's values. This includes:

- Demonstrating good sporting conduct and fair play when attending the College's art, drama and sporting events.
- Demonstrating respect for the Christian faith when attending a Church service or other religious event.
- Complying with applicable occupation, student and workplace health and safety and risk-management procedures.
- Complying with any reasonable directions given by the College's staff.
- Showing appropriate care and regard for the property of the College and others. Any damage should be promptly reported to the College.
- Dressing appropriately for the occasion.
- Not being under the influence of drugs or alcohol (and otherwise not engaging in the possession, sale or supply of the same at the College).
- Behaving lawfully on College grounds whether at events hosted by or connected to the College, whether conducted on site or otherwise.
- Ensuring that physical contact with students is appropriate given the age of, and relationship with, the student.
- Respecting the College's property and the property of other members of the school community (including staff, students and parents).

When dropping off and picking up students from the College, parents are expected to ensure the health and safety of all members of our school community, as well as the wider community, at all times.

Parents must comply with all traffic rules and any College traffic management system in place. This includes adhering to applicable speed limits, observing all traffic signs, limiting the use of car horns (unless indicating imminent danger), and parking appropriately and safely.

Parents must also comply with any government issued health orders or directions in response to COVID-19 or any other pandemic. This includes adhering to vaccination, social distancing and face mask requirements (as applicable from time to time).

## **9 Upholding College Policies**

This Code of Conduct sets out general expectations for parent involvement, instead of a detailed or exhaustive list. It is expected that parents and carers act in accordance with this Code of Conduct (and all other Codes of Conduct, policies, procedures, rules and regulations) and agree to the terms contained within when enrolling their child at the College. Parents and carers are also expected to comply with reasonable directions, including those relating to health and safety and communications with the College and staff.

Parents and carers should support their child so that they can comply with St Philip's Christian Education Foundation and the College's policies.

## 10 Breaches of this Code of Conduct

The Principal will have absolute discretion for deciding how to best respond to concerns about a parent's compliance with this Code of Conduct.

Where the Principal considers that a parent has failed to observe this Code of Conduct, the Principal may implement one or more of the following consequences (and not necessarily in any particular order):

- Ask the parent to leave the premises (the College may contact the Police if the parent does not comply).
- Request that the relevant conduct immediately cease.
- Provide a written warning to the parent.
- Require that the parent (or another relevant person) only communicate with a nominated College representative.
- Limit access on the College premises, either for a particularly period of time or permanently.
- Limit access to College activities and/or events, either for a particularly period of time or permanently.
- Conduct a review their child's enrolment, which may result in termination of enrolment.

Staff and volunteers are empowered to take steps to protect their own health and wellbeing. If they feel that a parent is being inappropriate, they are encouraged to indicate this and ask that it stop. If it does not, or if a staff member feels that a parent's actions are posing a risk to their or someone else's health and wellbeing, they are empowered to remove themselves from the situation. This may include immediately concluding a meeting or phone call, or demanding that a parent immediately leave the College grounds (or a College related event).

## 11 Communicating Concerns Appropriately and Productively

The College is committed to working in partnership with students and their parents. The College is also committed to the education, safety and wellbeing of staff, students and other families.

The College has developed a complaints policy to ensure that all grievances and complaints are dealt with by the College in the appropriate manner. The *Managing Complaints and Grievances Policy* is published on the College's website. This policy sets out how concerns and grievances may be raised with the College; who they should be raised with; and how the College will deal with these in a respectful and timely manner.

Parents with grievances should consult the *Managing Complaints and Grievances Policy*. However, in general:

- In the first instance, parents should present their concern to the teacher responsible for the particular area or activity (eg Class/Pastoral Care Teacher or Event Organiser). More serious concerns or grievances, including where a parent is dissatisfied with a teacher's response to a grievance, may be raised with the appropriate member of the College (as set out in the policy).

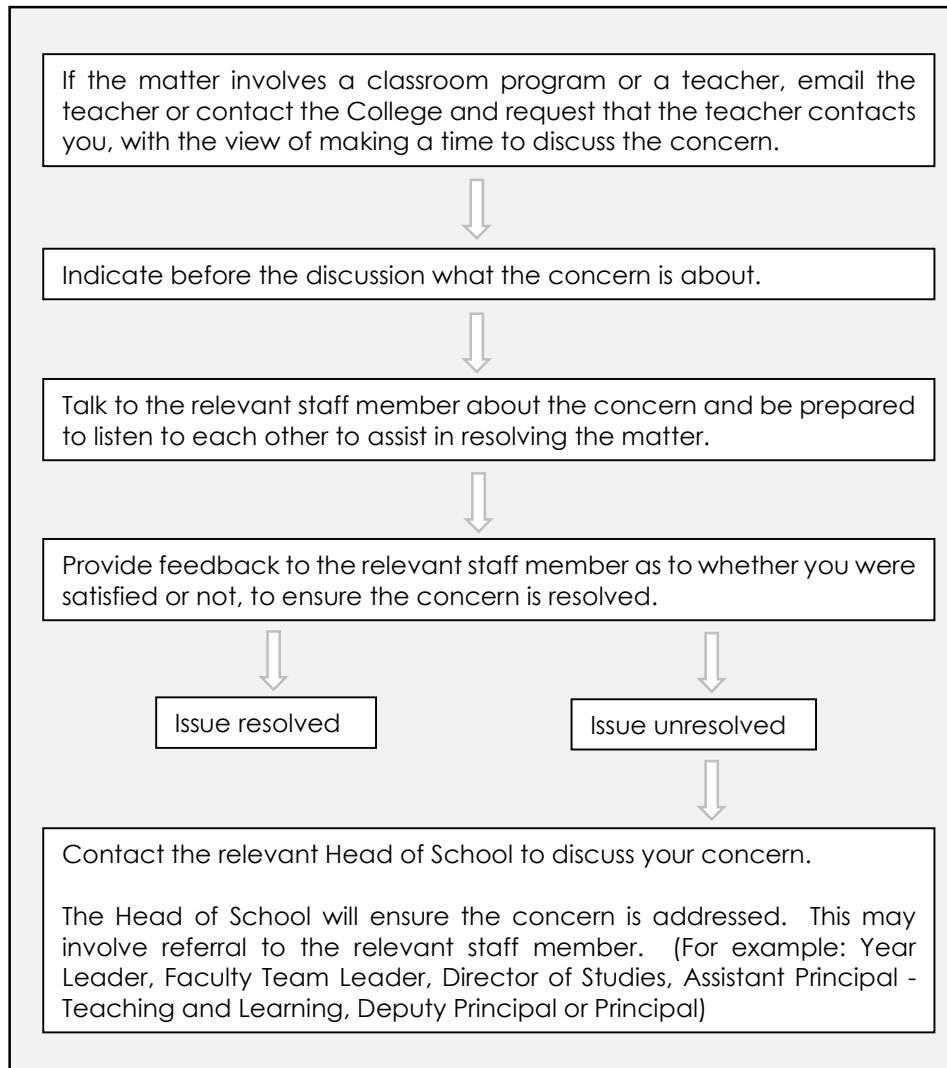


- Parents should not discuss the concern in front of their child – either at home or at school.
- Parents should not communicate with another student (or their parent or carer) about an issue concerning their own child. In particular, parents should refrain from any attempt to discipline a student who is not their own child unless they are attempting to restrain a student from causing a risk to themselves or others. Instead, the parent or carer should inform the College so the matter to be investigated and resolved.
- Parents should consider arranging a face-to-face meeting to discuss their concerns and grievances rather than using email or other written communications.
- Parents should take care with volume, tone and vocabulary when communicating with another family's child.
- Parents should clearly identify their grievances, and what they would practically like to see happen. If there is more than one issue or problem, parents should write a list so that they are adequately prepared and then decide which issue or problem matters most.
- Parents should appreciate that while the College is committed to dealing with their grievances in a timely manner, it will not always be practicable for staff to provide an immediate acknowledgement or response (particularly where a concern or grievance is sent by email).
- Parents should respect that the College employs experienced educators and other professionals who are well-trained in making academic, disciplinary, extracurricular, pastoral and wellbeing decisions every day. Please understand that while the College will always take into account the interests of the parent's child, the College must ultimately make decisions that take into account the interests of all students (and others who may be affected by the College's decisions).
- Parents should recognise that just as the College will seek to respect each student's privacy, the College will also respect the privacy of other members of the College community. This means there are limits to what information the College will share with a parent when issues arise. This does not mean that the College is not taking an issue or situation seriously, or hiding information from a parent.
- If a parent is not satisfied with the College's response to a grievance, a College policy may provide a parent with a right to request an internal review of the College's decision. Alternatively, an external body, court or tribunal may be able to deal with the issue. The College respects a parent's right to invoke any formal grievance-resolution procedures which may exist. However, parents who refuse to engage in constructive processes that may resolve their grievances, or who choose to publicly air their grievances about the College (and in particular about staff or students) on social media, are not welcome.

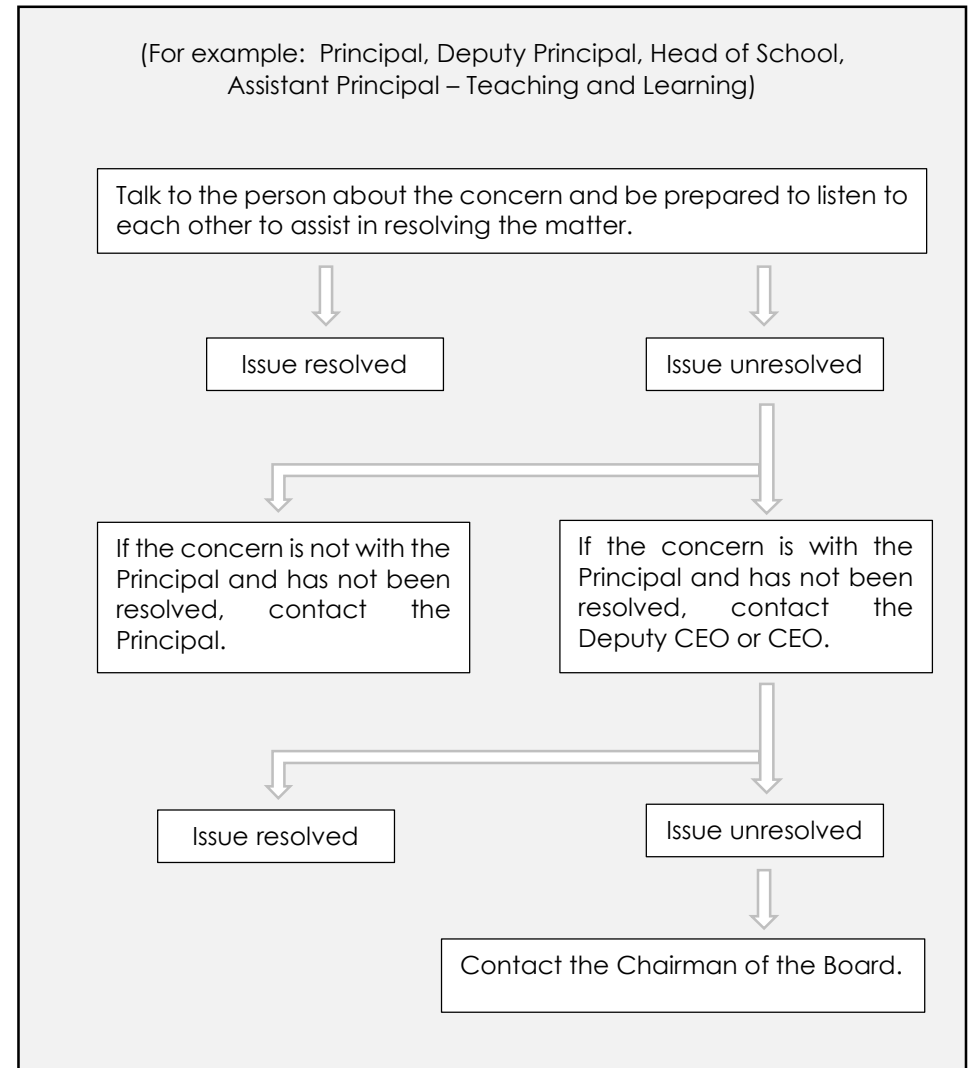
## **12 Questions**

Any queries regarding this Code of Conduct may be addressed to the Principal.

## What do I do if I have a concern?



## Concerns with College senior management



Note: In general, where there is a concern with any staff member, you should in the first instance discuss the issue with that person. However, if you are not comfortable doing this, then it would be appropriate to take your concern to the appropriate Head of School.

It is school policy for all staff to respond within two school days to parental concerns and provide feedback on action planned.