



*For the Whole of Their Life*

**St Philip's Christian College Gosford**

# **Parental Code of Conduct**

*Protecting the Community that is St Philip's Christian College Gosford*

**Source material:** Association of Independent Schools sample Parental Code of Conduct

**Additional content:** added by Michelle Cairelli, Principal

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**Approval:** SPCC Gosford Executive Leadership Team

**Related documents:**

- Grievance Handling Policy
- Communication Procedures
- Discipline Policy

## Parental Code of Conduct

The primary reason parents enroll their children into our College is because of the caring community that is our College. This community is built on our Core Values (*Christ first, serve one another, strive for excellence, do what is right and build community*). These Core Values extend to all members of our College community, and it is the College's expectation that parents and carers support these Core Values.

Our fifth Core Value of *Build Community* is particularly relevant to parent interactions. As a community we want everyone to know they belong because they know that they are respected and how to serve others.

This Code has been developed with this Core Value in mind so that parents and those with parental responsibilities are aware of and meet the College's expectations with regard to their interaction with the College, its teachers, other parents and students. Adherence to this Code is important to promote positive and productive relationships within the College community.

### Interaction with Staff

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 particular issues that may arise during the course of a student's schooling.

If a parent wishes to meet with a staff member, they should make an appointment so that a mutually convenient time can be arranged. This can be done through the College office.

Parents should not attempt to contact a staff member at their home, on their personal mobile phone or a personal social media account on matters relating to school.

Parents should raise any concerns or complaints first with the relevant staff member directly responsible, then with relevant Head of School before escalating a matter to either the Deputy or Principal (in accordance with the College's Grievance Handling Policy, unless there are exceptional circumstances).

It is important that parents show respect for staff and not publically criticise them or seek to undermine their authority. If a parent has a particular concern about a member of staff, they can raise it with the staff member concerned or with the Principal, however when doing so, they should observe the general rules of conduct set out in this Code. Rude or abusive language should not be used. It is not productive and can make it harder to resolve concerns. Additionally, parents are to allow staff a reasonable amount of time to investigate, gather evidence, and consider the perspectives of other parties before making a decision.

The School (College) has a duty of care towards all staff and for this reason any aggressive or abusive behavior will not be tolerated.

### Interactions Generally

Communications whether verbal, in writing or online with other members of the College community whether teachers, administration staff, other parents or students should:

- show respect, courtesy and consideration;
- not harass or bully another person;
- not use intemperate language; and
- not be confrontational.

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Social media should not be used to criticise or denigrate others in the College community. The College reserves the right to request any material publicly posted about students, staff, parents or the College that is inaccurate, confrontational, critical, offensive or disrespectful to be taken down.

Additionally, communication with staff should be respectful of their time restraints and competing responsibilities. This allows staff to focus on providing your children with the best education possible. Parents should not;

- make constant phone calls to the same staff member
- send repeated and lengthy emails to the same staff member
- pressure staff to immediately respond to communication
- turn up without an appointment insisting to meet with a member of staff

### Interactions with Students

Parents are not to interact unsupervised with other students that they do not have a direct relationship with, whether in person or online. Under no circumstances are parents to:

- directly accuse a child that they do not have responsibility for of an offense;
- initiate online communication with students who are not their child;
- make recordings of individual children, other than their own without prior permission of the parent;
- post comments or speak about students publicly;
- encourage their children to exclude, criticize or become physical with other students.

Parents are often unaware of the family, mental health and emotional background of other children and can provoke significant negative consequences through inappropriate intervention. Concerns about other students should always be raised with relevant staff.

### Conduct on the grounds

Parents are to follow the reasonable directions of staff whilst on the grounds and to respect the learning activities in place. Under no circumstances are parents to:

- enter classrooms without teacher invitation, late arrivals and early departures should take place at Student Reception;
- congregate around windows or doors during lesson times (becoming a visual and noise distraction);
- disrupt lessons;
- cause distress to students such as using public acts of aggression, manipulation, foul language and arguing;
- have young children and toddlers in their care left unsupervised or playing in a dangerous manner.

### Private vehicle use on the grounds

For the safety of students, parents are to abide by all road rules, traffic control measures and staff directions when using a vehicle on the grounds. It is essential that parents

- Drop children off at the Parent Drop Off / Pick Up Bay
- Do not drop off or pick up children on the hill, or near the pedestrian crossing on the ring road
- Do not drop off or pick up children in the bus bay
- Do not park in the disabled parking designated for students with disabilities

### Discipline

The College expects students to comply with its rules and expectations and not engage in behaviour which is harmful to others or is contrary to the ethos and philosophy of the College. Parents are

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expected to support the College in relation to its discipline policy and not do anything which undermines its authority. It must be understood that in the case of disciplinary matters, the College will be the arbiter of what is a fair punishment and will not engage in debate about the appropriateness of the punishment.

Parents should reserve judgement of matters reported by their children until they have heard the full context, from an adult perspective, from a member of staff who has investigated and weighed the evidence. It becomes problematic to unpack situations and educate children about appropriate social strategies if they have contacted a parent first (on their mobile, email or social media) and their parent has become emotionally involved before a staff member has had opportunity to investigate.

In relation to escalated disciplinary matters which may result in suspension or expulsion, the College will inform parents of the matter which will be dealt with in accordance with the College's disciplinary policy. While parents will be consulted, the final decision will be the College's.

### **Separated Parents**

The College is aware that some students have parents that are separated or divorced. In these cases, parents should not attempt to involve the College in any parental dispute that may arise. The College is not able to make judgments on the merits of claims made by one parent against another and should not be asked to do so. Nor should it be asked to take any action which is designed to disadvantage one party. The College will of course, observe any orders made by a Court in relation to a student or communications with parents.

### **Conflicts of interest and collusion**

Parents are not to take advantage of their membership in the College community to seek business for themselves or advantage for their children. Seeking referrals of students for professional service is a conflict of interest. Parents, either in a private or professional capacity are not to encourage other families to withdraw their children from the College nor collude with other parents to pressure staff to make particular decisions or include their children in the same class allocation.

### **Sport**

Parents are welcome to attend sporting events, but should exercise restraint when supporting College teams. In particular, they should not abuse, threaten or otherwise seek to intimidate an umpire or referee or direct abuse against a player or any College representatives.

The sports coaches at the College, pick teams based on their view of the most appropriate selection at the relevant time. It is not appropriate for parents to complain about the failure of their son or daughter to be picked for a particular team.

### **Failure to Observe this Code**

If a parent fails to observe this Code after being warned about a breach, the College may:

- limit access to a teacher or teachers;
- limit access to the College premises or sporting or other College events;
- exclude access to the site (under the Enclosed Lands Act), or
- terminate the enrolment of the student.

This Code of Conduct is acknowledged upon signing an Enrolment Acceptance of Offer.