Nexus Education Schools Trust

Parents, Carers and Visitors Code of Conduct

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Nexus Education Schools Trust Parent and Guardians Code of Conduct

This code applies to all families with parental responsibility for pupils on role at a Nexus Education Schools Trust nursery and visitors to any Trust school or nursery. The Trust reserves the right to amend this policy at any time.

Nexus Education Schools Trust (NEST) is a multi-academy trust committed ***to providing excellence and opportunity for all, to enable lives to be transformed.*** We value and nurture every individual, provide excellent education outcomes enabling our pupils to succeed and ultimately transform the life opportunities and aspirations of our pupils, allowing them to be fulfilled individuals within an ever-changing world.

The Trust and its schools and nursery value the strong relationships it builds with families and members of our communities. Together this helps us achieve the very best for children in a mutually supportive partnership between parents, guardians, teachers and the wider nursery community.

The Trust requires high standards of conduct from all its nursery's community members, including visitors. This Code of Conduct provides a reminder to all parents, carers and visitors to our schools, nursery and academies about the conduct that is expected of them. It sets out both what they should aim to do, and how any inappropriate conduct will be addressed. We are all working in a spirit of partnership allowing relationships to flourish, progress and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding.

The code complements the Trust's 'Complaints Policy' which is designed to handle parental concerns or complaints in a sensitive and mutually supportive manner. It also sits alongside the Trust's E-Safety policy.

1. Purpose and scope

At Nexus Education Schools Trust and all of its partner schools, 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, parents and visitors
- Model appropriate behaviour for our pupils at all times

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). In order to:

- Establish safe and responsive learning environments which safeguard children
- Help staff to work safely to protect pupils and themselves
- Ensure that all are aware of what is regarded as appropriate or inappropriate conduct and practice
- Support the nursery leaders in setting clear expectations for all community members

This code of conduct aims to help the nursery work together with parents, carers and visitors by setting guidelines on appropriate behaviour.

2. Terminology

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)

- Any visitor to a NEST nursery, including family members, parents, carers or people on general education or support business

3. Expectations

We expect parents, carers and other visitors to:

- Respect the ethos, vision and values of our nursery
- Be tolerant of each other's views, beliefs and opinions and to accept that everyone is different. We ask that you please follow this whilst in and around our nursery and Trust.
- Work together with staff in the best interests of our pupils and where appropriate, clarify a child's version of events with the academy's view, in order to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue, before taking any further action.
- Treat all members of the nursery community with respect – setting a good example with speech and behaviour.
- Seek a peaceful solution to all issues
- Correct their own child's behaviour (or those in their care), particularly in public, where it could lead to conflict, aggression or unsafe conduct.
- Approach the right member of nursery staff to help resolve any issues of concern. Please refrain from interfering or threatening to interfere with any of the nursery's operation or activities any- where on the nursery premises.
- Emails, written communications and phone messages can often be interpreted in different ways. We ask that before sending an email, written communication and/or using telephoning you reflect on whether or not the communication or call may be seen as abusive or threatening.
- Work together with us to promote the nursery positively and avoid defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the Trust, nursery or any of the pupil/parents/carers/staff/com- munity member at the nursery on Facebook or other social media platforms (section 7).
- Our nursery buildings and resources are vital for our staff and pupils support and progress, and we ask that parents, carers or visitors treat them with care and respect.
- Keep our children and young people safe we ask that you drive safely in the vicinity of our nursery.
- Ensure that we keep all our children safe by not taking photographs with phones or other devices on nursery premises without permission from the Nursery Lead.
- At NEST we aim to be open and honest in our day to day lives. We encourage parents to follow this approach when visiting our nursery. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it.

4. Behaviour that will not be tolerated

- Disrupting, or threatening to disrupt, nursery operations (including events on the nursery grounds and sports team matches)
- Swearing, or using offensive language
- Displaying a temper, or shouting at members of staff, pupils or other parents
- Threatening another member of the nursery community
- Sending abusive messages to another member of the nursery community, including via text, email or social media
- Posting defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments about the nursery, its staff or any mem- ber of its community, on social media platforms

- Use of physical punishment against your child while on nursery premises
- Any aggressive behaviour (including verbally or in writing) towards another child or adult
- Disciplining another person's child – please bring any behaviour incidents to a member of staff's attention
- Smoking /vaping or drinking alcohol on the nursery premises (unless alcohol has been allowed at a specific event)
- Possessing or taking drugs (including legal highs)
- Bringing dogs onto the nursery premises (other than guide or therapy dogs)

5. Breaching the code of conduct

Thank you for abiding by this policy in our nursery. Together we create a positive and uplifting environment not only for the children but also all who work and visit our nursery.

Where the above expectations are not upheld, the initial response will involve a conversation with the parent/carer or visitor. Generally, we expect a conversation to be sufficient to reinforce our expectations. However, where this is not sufficient to resolve the issue, the nursery may have to unfortunately consider further action. We are keen to avoid this.

Further action could include banning from site for a fixed time (see 'barring from nursery/trust premises' below); contacting the police or seeking legal redress through the courts; restricting channels of communication (e.g., no longer allowed to email staff directly). In the case of defamatory comments posted online, we would also report the post to the site's admin. In some cases, particularly around threats of violence towards staff, we may also need to refer to Social Care if the behaviour of a parent/carer or visitor indicates that they may also be unsafe around children. We kindly ask that parents, carers and visitors will assist the nursery with the implementation of this policy and we thank you for your continuing support of our nursery.

We ask that parents and carers ensure they make all persons responsible for collecting their children aware of this policy.

If the nursery suspects, or becomes aware, that a parent has breached the code of conduct, the nursery will gather information from those involved the incident and where appropriate, from the police and social services.

Depending on the nature and severity of the incident, the nursery may then:

- Send a warning letter to the parent
- Invite the parent into nursery to meet with a senior member of staff or the Nursery Lead
- Contact the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour)
- Seek advice from the Trust (and its legal team) regarding further action (in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous)
- Ban the parent from the nursery site

The nursery will always respond to an incident in a proportional way. The final decision for how to respond to breaches of the code of conduct rests with the Nursery Lead. The Nursery Lead will consult the Chair of the Local Committee before banning a parent from the nursery site.

6. Statement on Social Media expectations

The Trust and its nursery understands the benefits of using social media; however, if misused, the nursery community can be negatively affected, such as by damaging the organisation's reputation. This code of conduct sets out clear procedures for how we expect parents to conduct themselves on social media, Facebook, Twitter etc. and when using messenger apps, such as WhatsApp.

We expect parents to behave in a civilised nature online and will not tolerate any of the following behaviour online:

- Posting defamatory 'statuses' about fellow parents, pupils, the nursery or its employees
- Complaining about the nursery's values and methods on social media

Parents are instructed to not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this code of conduct.

We expect parents to use messaging apps, such as WhatsApp, for purposes beneficial to themselves and the nursery, and will not accept any of the following behaviour:

- Sending abusive messages to fellow parents
- Sending abusive messages about members of staff, parents or the nursery
- Sending abusive messages to members of staff

The nursery retains the right to request any damaging material to be removed from social media websites.

The nursery can request a meeting with parents if any misconduct, such as sending abusive messages or posting defamatory statuses, occurs online.

It is not within the nursery's role to mediate between parental conflicts over social media.

The Nursery Lead can, with the permission of the parent, view messages sent between members of the parental body in order to deal with problems quickly and effectively.

The Nursery Lead can request that 'group chats' are closed down should any problems continue between parents or parental bodies.

Breaches of this Code of Conduct will be taken seriously by the nursery and, in the event of illegal, defamatory, or discriminatory content, breaches could lead to prosecution.

By accepting a place at a Nexus Education School's Trust nursery, parents confirm that they understand their obligations under this Code of Conduct and agree to comply fully with them for the duration of their child's attendance.

Inappropriate use of Social Network Sites

Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against the nursery, nursery leads, nursery staff, and in some cases other parents or pupils.

The Department for Education/Government and Local Committee members of NEST Schools and nursery considers the use of social media websites being used in this way as unacceptable. Any concerns you may have about the nursery, or your child/children must be made through the

appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, the Nursery Lead or the Chair of Local Committee, where they will be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

Libelous or Defamatory posts

In the event, that, any pupil or parent/carer of a child/children at a NEST school or nursery is found to be posting libelous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other social network sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. All social network sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted on the site, and they provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity which breaches this. The nursery will also expect that any parent/carer or pupil removes such comments immediately.

Cyber Bullying

We take very seriously the use of cyber bullying by one child or a parent to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social network entry. We will take and deal with this as a serious incident of bullying at the nursery.

The nursery will also consider its **legal options** to deal with any such misuse on social networking and other sites.

The nursery will not tolerate any of the following:

- Sending abusive messages to parents or staff
- Sending abusive messages about parents and staff
- Posting defamatory ‘statuses’ about other parents, pupils, staff or the nursery
- Using social media to complain or post any grievances about the nursery’s values and methods
- Disruptive or threatening behaviour that interferes with the operation of the nursery will not be tolerated
- Threatening, in any way, a member of the nursery staff, visitor or pupil will not be tolerated

Action will be taken in accordance with the breach of code descriptors.

7. Barring from the nursery premises

The public has no automatic right of entry to our nursery. The nursery will therefore act to ensure they remain a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of the community.

If a parent’s, carers or visitors’ behaviour is a cause for concern, a nursery can ask him/her to leave the premises. In serious cases, the Nursery Lead, Senior leader or Trust can notify them in writing that the implied agreement to be on nursery premises, has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the parent may wish to make to the Nursery Lead.

The nursery should always give the parent the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing.

During the barring period all contact should go through the office admin and/or a named member of staff either by email or telephone.

The Nursery Lead’s decision to bar will be reviewed by the Education team. They should take into account any representations made by the individual and decide whether to either confirm or lift the bar. If the decision is confirmed, the individual should be notified in writing, explaining:

- How long the bar will be in place *
- When the decision will be reviewed

Any ban should be reviewed at the end of the agreed timescale.

* In a small minority of cases the banning action occurs with immediate effect due to the severity of the action/ activities and external agencies becoming involved e.g., Police or Social Services. In these cases, an agreed time scale may not be possible at the banning stage. A review of the ban will be completed by the Chair of the Local Committee and an outcome letter issued.

8. The requirements that apply to this policy

This policy complies with the DfE policy on controlling access to nursery premises: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/controlling-access-to-school-premises

9. Monitoring arrangements

The Trust will monitor the effectiveness of the Parent, Carers and Visitors Code of Conduct regularly.