

# Parent Code of Conduct Policy



## REVISION REQUIREMENTS

- Biennial Revision - next due May 2021
- Responsibility - School Board
- Amendments to this version are annotated by the inclusion of a solid black line in the left margin. As this is a new Quintilian School Policy in 2019, no such markings are included in the document at this time.

## INTERPRETATION

Within this document:

- words denoting a gender or genders include each other gender;
- words in the singular number include the plural and words in the plural number include the singular; and
- the word parent is taken to include parents, guardians, step-parents, grandparents, extended family, babysitters and any others while involved in activities or communication related to Quintilian School.

## RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING THIS POLICY

The School Board is responsible for endorsing this Policy, maintaining its currency and relevance.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring all parents, staff, volunteers, and visitors, as are applicable, are aware of this policy.

## PREFACE

At Quintilian School, we aim to provide an open, welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all. Parents play a formative role in the creation of that environment and the development of their child's sense of justice, equity, and the dignity and worth of all members of our school community. It is a clear expectation of the community that all parents model acceptable behaviour at all times within the school setting.

## INTRODUCTION

This Parent Code of Conduct outlines the way in which our community requires all parents and visitors to conduct themselves when visiting our School, participating in school activities and communicating with members of our school community (including students, school staff, other parents and visitors to our School).

The purpose of this policy is to clearly outline to all our parents and visitors to our school the expected conduct so that we can work together to ensure a safe and positive school environment for our children.

## WHO HAS TO COMPLY WITH THIS CODE OF CONDUCT

This code applies to all adults including parents, guardians, step-parents, grandparents, extended family, babysitters and any others while involved in activities or communication related to Quintilian School. For convenience, the term '*parents*' will be used throughout the document.

## OTHER POLICES THAT APPLY TO PARENT CONDUCT

- Complaints Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Student Behavioural Policy
- School Camp Policy
- Mobile Phone and Digital Technology Policy

## **OTHER LEGISLATION THAT MAY APPLY TO PARENT CONDUCT**

- Education Act
- Education Legislation
- Working with Children Act
- Privacy Act

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES THAT WILL ALWAYS APPLY**

**Ethical Conduct:** Parents will act in the best interests of the School, its students, their families and staff members.

**Respect:** We value our diverse community and respect the rights, religious beliefs and practices of individuals and their families. We respect points of view that are different from our own and all members of our community must refrain from actions and behaviour that constitutes harassment, discrimination or vilification in any form.

**Communication:** Parents will use courteous and acceptable written and spoken language in all communications (including all forms of social media) with students, staff, other parents and members of the school community. No profane, insulting, harassing, aggressive or otherwise offensive language may be used. No community member shall engage in malicious or judgemental gossip.

In order to support a peaceful and safe school environment, the school does not tolerate:

- Disruptive behaviour which interferes with the operation of a classroom, an office area or any other part of the school grounds;
- Using loud and/or offensive language or displaying temper;
- Threatening harm or the use of physical aggression towards another adult or child;
- Damaging or destroying school property;
- Abusive, threatening, malicious or inflammatory emails, phone or social network messages;
- Smoking and/or use of illegal substances on school premises or whilst on excursions, camps or other school based activities; or
- Attending the school site or any school related activity whilst intoxicated from drugs or alcohol.

## **PARENT RIGHTS**

Parents of Quintilian School have a right to:

- be treated with respect and courtesy by staff, students and other parents.
- be listened to, and clearly communicated with by the school, in regard to their child's education and development.
- have confidentiality over sensitive issues respected by staff and other parents involved.
- be treated in a caring and polite manner.
- have a timely response to concerns raised.
- be treated with professionalism by all staff members.

## **WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH SCHOOL STAFF**

All school staff are entitled to a safe and happy work environment. This is in the best interests of our students as well as the staff themselves. Parents should therefore ensure that their interactions with staff do not create unnecessary stress.

The priority for school staff is the welfare and education of all students in the school. School staff are therefore not required to respond to emails and telephone calls instantaneously. Staff will respond to parent correspondence in a timely manner, unless the matter is deemed urgent.

Correspondence that is in breach of this Code of Conduct, will not be responded to.

### **Email Communication:**

#### **School staff respond to emails in working hours:**

- **Monday – Friday (in term time), between 8am – 5pm**

Please do not expect instant responses. An acceptable response time for emails is 2 working days. Responses are not to be expected outside normal working hours or during school holidays.

### **Conversations and Meetings:**

**Staff are available for quick queries and messages between 8.30am and 8:45am and 3:20pm and 3.35pm.**

The time available for parents to meet with staff on longer queries or issues is limited and therefore **please pre-arrange a mutually agreeable time for longer conversations** at a time that does not disrupt the classroom and preparation. Parents should be mindful of the teacher's time, **communicate the reason for the meeting and allow the teacher time to prepare**, unless there is a genuine emergency that needs to be discussed.

*Unless specifically requested and arranged by the staff member, communication via SMS or a call to their personal mobile telephone is not appropriate.*

### **Pathways to Resolution:**

- **Classroom Teacher:** The child's teacher is the first port of call for a parent query or concern. The teacher will work together with parents (and child, where appropriate) towards a resolution.
- **Learning Area Coordinator:** If the parent is not satisfied with the teacher's response, and strategies have been unsuccessful, they may contact the Learning Area Coordinator, who will meet with them and the teacher to offer further ideas and advice.
- **Deputy Principal:** If the matter continues, without satisfactory improvement, the Deputy Principal is the next person to refer the matter to.
- **Principal:** If the matter continues, without satisfactory improvement, the Principal is the next person to refer the matter to.
- **The Board:** in rare cases the School Board may be called upon, as a last resort, to offer guidance and support in an ongoing issue once all suggested strategies have failed to produce a satisfactory outcome. Contact should be made to the Board Chair.

### **USE OF GROUP MESSENGER/WHATS APP/SOCIAL MEDIA WITHIN THE COMMUNITY**

Social media websites and group chat applications are being used increasingly in our daily lives. Their use can facilitate increased positive communication within our community. They can also unfortunately be used to project a personal opinion, fuel campaigns and/or complaints regarding the school, staff, parents and/or students. Quintilian School considers the use of any social media websites being used in this way as **unacceptable** and not in the best interests of the children or the whole school community. Any concerns you may have shall be brought immediately to the attention of the school so that they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

*In serious cases the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites. This includes the issue of cyber bullying and the use of any social media website by any member of the school community to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social network communication.*

When messaging in all formats think of the following:

- **Is it legal or defamatory?**
- **Family** - Would I say this to my mother, partner, another parent, child or friend?
- **Conscience** - Does it fit with my moral compass?
- **Feel** - What's my gut feel? If it feels bad it probably is bad.
- **Media** - If the story appeared in the media, would I be comfortable?
- **Wait** – Should I wait another 24 hours and see how I feel?

*It is often best to sleep on any response for the night!*

## **WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH OTHER PARENTS**

Parents will respect the privacy of other parents' email addresses and shall not send unsolicited emails or 'spam' or use of any form of social media to contact school parents or forward unsolicited emails or spam they receive to other parents.

Parents shall not forward other parents' email addresses without permission. Parents provide their email address to the school in order to receive communications from the school about school related matters and their child. The School will not give out the email address of parents to other parents without permission.

## **CLASS REPRESENTATIVES AND VOLUNTEERS**

Parents give their email addresses to class representatives in order to receive communications about class activities, get together for their child's class, and to establish rosters for classroom help, school events etc. Class representatives will not pass on parent email addresses to other parents without permission.

Class representatives are not to be contacted regarding student or school operations matters. Please refer to the class teacher as detailed in this Policy.

Parents who act as class representatives, event organisers, etc, are valued volunteers who play a critical role in our community and commit a great deal of time for the benefit of all. Apart from the general principles that always apply, parents should be particularly sensitive about the manner in which they provide feedback and ask questions of our volunteers.

## **WHEN VISITING THE SCHOOL**

- Parents will comply with all safety and emergency procedures in place at the School and in the event of an emergency to follow the instructions given by a member of staff.
- When visiting a classroom parents accept the authority of the teacher (or teachers) and that they attend on the teacher's terms. Teachers value parental involvement and assistance, but they may ask a parent to leave the classroom or class activity for any reason, but not limited to:
  - Parental assistance not being required at the time;
  - Parental presence in the classroom or at the activity is disturbing or distracting to any student or teacher;
  - The parent is not conducting themselves in a manner that abides by this Code of Conduct;
  - The parent is not in control of their emotions.

- When attending any kind of School assembly or public meeting parents will listen respectfully, in the same manner required of students and staff, and will refrain from creating noise or disturbances during performances or speeches by students, staff or visitors.
- Parents will treat all visitors to our school with courtesy and respect.

## **PARENT VOLUNTEERING IN THE CLASSROOM OR ON EXCURSIONS**

Note: The Quintilian School Camp Policy should be referred to specifically for information pertaining to attendance by parents on School Camps.

Parent and teacher partnerships are strongly encouraged at Quintilian School. Teachers welcome parents to be involved in class programs for many reasons including:

- enhances social and educational outcomes for children, and communication between classrooms and homes
- allows our school to benefit from the socio-cultural and linguistic diversity of our school
- enhances the understanding of parents of our school activities
- provides Quintilian School with a broader resource base from which to draw on providing learning opportunities and services to our students and families
- enhances community spirit and cohesion.

Parent responsibilities when attending the school for class activities and/or excursions:

- All attendance in the classroom and on school excursions is at the discretion of the teacher. Parents must notify the teacher in advance of any request to attend the classroom or an excursions and parents must accept that at times their presence may not be required and to respect that decision when made by the teacher. There are many reasons a teacher may not require assistance including but not limited to:
  - number of students involved
  - number of parents who have volunteered to assist
  - the nature of the activity
  - the dynamics of the classroom at that specific time

It may also not be possible for a teacher to explain their reasons at the time, but parents are required to respect the decision of the teacher.
- ***All interactions with children, staff and other parents at the school are deemed confidential. It is up to the teacher to pass on information to parents regarding their child at school. If a parent helper feels something needs to be shared, they must go through the teacher. If a parent stays on in the playground during a recreation break, the same rule applies.***
- When working in a classroom, parents are asked to respect the working climate of the classroom and maintain a 'professional' manner at all times.
- Teachers are responsible for the programs operating within the classroom and/or school.
- Teachers are in charge and have ultimate responsibility for the safety, welfare, discipline and care of the students.

## **COCURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Quintilian School encourages our students and parents to participate in external clubs and sporting activities and recognises that without the support of our school staff and parents as facilitators, coaches, managers and umpires this would not be possible. To that end parents are expected to comply with the following principles when attending cocurricular activities:

- Involvement in cocurricular activities is principally for enjoyment and on a volunteer basis.
- Everyone involved must abide by the rules.
- Team commitment is important and to always encourage each participant to give their best effort.

- Honest effort is as important as victory, so results are accepted without undue disappointment.
- Work towards performance improvement and good sportsmanship. Never ridicule or yell at a person for making a mistake or for losing.
- We all learn best by example. Applaud good performance by all participants in any activity.
- Do not publicly question the referee's or official's judgement and never their honesty.
- Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from cocurricular activities.
- Recognise the value and importance of volunteer coaches, managers and officials. They give of their time and resources to provide recreational activities for all students.
- Do not approach a referee or official at any stage during or immediately after an event, except in appreciation.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOING OF STUDENTS AND SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

The school understands that certain circumstances may put a student's security at greater risk and, thus, may mean extra precautions are required to protect their identity. The School also acknowledges that there are those students that parents have especially requested are not included in photographs or information that is to be made public.

All parents when taking photos of and/or filming school activities must be mindful of this and under **no circumstances** distribute, by any means, photographs or information that contain images or information relating to any student, staff member or other parent without their express permission.

Quintilian School reserves the right to ask parents not to take photographs of children and/or use videoing equipment if it disrupts an event or the school feels the images may be used inappropriately. Parents are asked to respect the views of others.

## **PARKING WITH CONSIDERATION AND RESPECT FOR OTHERS**

Parents are expected to display respectful, polite behaviour to other drivers, residents, parents, students and staff around the school.

Parents are expected to follow safe driving and parking rules and follow all pertinent road rules.

Parents are to follow all directions from signage or of staff pertaining to the parking, or drop off and pick up zones at the school.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Sustainability and Environmental Awareness is a key focus of our daily lives at Quintilian School. As parents you can demonstrate and encourage environmental awareness by:

- Recycling (at home and at school).
- Keeping the school tidy by picking up rubbish and not littering including the immediate removal of any dog waste.
- Whenever possible, packing a 'waste free' lunch and recess snack noting the school does observe specific waste free days for lunchbox contents.

## **DOGS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY**

Parents are required to ensure that all dogs brought onto school property are on a lead at all times and under the control of an adult at all times.

## CONSEQUENCES OF A BREACH OF THE PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Quintilian School has a **ZERO TOLERANCE** of abusive, aggressive, derogatory and/or inflammatory comments or actions made by parents to and about members of our community (staff, parents and students).

Any parent, member of staff or student may notify the Principal of a possible breach of the Parent Code of Conduct. The Principal or delegate will investigate the complaint and if satisfied that a breach has occurred will apply the following sanctions:

1. A first and final WARNING letter will be issued by the Principal to inform the parent of the outcome of the investigation asking them to rectify their behaviour in all future communications and that another breach of the Code of Conduct will not be tolerated. This may include:
  - Determine whether a breach may be rectified by the parent making a private or public apology, depending on the circumstance, to an individual or group of individuals.
  - A direction, in the case of a parent/guardian, that they may only communicate with members of staff through a specified School representative.

\* The School Board Chair will be notified by the Principal of this letter and a note made on the family file. The Principal will annotate in his Report to the School Board the issuing of this letter.
2. If a subsequent breach occurs the parent will be issued with a CEASE and DISIST letter to inform the parent to immediately rectify their behaviour in all future communications and that another breach of the Code of Conduct will result in the parent being issued with notice that that are no longer able to access the school grounds requiring the parent to stay away from the school and/or any co curricular activity unless with the express permission of the Principal.
 

\* The School Board Chair will be notified by the Principal of this action and will co-sign the letter to the parent and a note is to be made on the family file. The Principal will annotate in his Report to the School Board the issuing of this letter.
3. Should further reports of a breach of this Code of Conduct be received the parent will be issued a notice by the Principal removing their access to the school grounds requiring the parent to stay away from the school and/or any co curricular activity unless with the express permission of the Principal.
 

\* The School Board Chair will be notified by the Principal of this action and will co-sign the letter to the parent and a note is to be made on the family file. The Principal will annotate in his Report to the School Board the issuing of this letter.
4. A restraining order being sought against the relevant person through the legal system.

The School may take such other steps as it may in its reasonable discretion determine appropriate according to the nature of the breach.

Nothing in this Policy precludes any person from exercising their individual legal rights in respect of obtaining restraining and intervention orders, reporting assault, bringing action for defamation, exercising rights under vilification or discrimination or in any other way.

## RIGHT OF APPEAL

The School's Complaints Policy 'right of appeal' will apply to any decision made by the Principal under this Code of Conduct.

## ACCEPTANCE OF THIS CODE OF CONDUCT

Upon enrolment of a student(s) at Quintilian School all parents are required to read this Policy in full and at such other times as recommended by the school.

All current parents are reminded of their responsibilities to remain up to date on all relevant School Policies and are reminded of this at the time of Fee Payment (invoice generation) and regularly in the School Newsletter.