

Parent Code of Conduct Policy



REVISION REQUIREMENTS

- Biennial Revision - next due Aug 2024
- Responsibility - School Board
- Amendments to this version are annotated by the inclusion of a solid black line in the left margin.

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 or in connection with any activities related to the school.

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 standard of 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 be courteous in their written and spoken language in all communications (including all forms of social media) with students, staff, other parents and members of the school community. Without limitation, no profane, insulting, demeaning, harassing, aggressive or otherwise offensive language should be used. No community member will engage in malicious or judgmental 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 displays of temper or verbal aggression;
- Threatening harm or the use of physical aggression towards another adult or child;
- Damaging or destroying school property;
- Abusive, threatening, demeaning, 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 students 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 the confidentiality of any information communicated in confidence be respected by staff and other parents involved.
- be treated in a caring and polite manner;
- have a timely response to concerns raised with staff members; and
- 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 are polite and respectful and 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 urgent. Further guidance as to what is considered timely is outlined below.

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

Email Communication:

School staff respond to emails in working hours being **Monday – Friday (in term time), between 8am – 5pm. Staff aim to respond to emails within 2 working days.**

Staff are not required to and cannot reasonably be expected to respond to emails outside of 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 on school days.

The time available for parents to meet with staff on longer queries or issues on school days is limited. If you consider that a longer discussion is likely to be required, then please arrange a mutually agreeable time with the teacher for such discussion to occur.

We would encourage setting an agenda for the meeting, develop an action plan or strategy in conjunction with the teacher and organise a follow-up meeting to discuss progress.

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 of Issues or Concerns:

If you have an issue or concern regarding your child or a teacher, then the following pathway to resolution is to be adopted:

- **Teacher concerned:** First, you should have a conversation with the teacher concerned. The teacher will work together with parents (and child, where appropriate) towards a resolution.
- **Lower Primary (ELC to Yr 2) or Upper Primary (Yr 3 to Yr 6) Coordinators:** Second, if the matter has not been resolved to your satisfaction following your meeting or meetings with the teacher, then you may refer the matter to the relevant Coordinator, who will meet with you and the teacher to offer further ideas and advice.
- **Deputy Principal:** Third, if the matter has still not been resolved to your satisfaction following your meeting or meetings with the relevant Coordinator, then you may refer the matter to the Deputy Principal.
- **Principal:** Fourth, if the matter has still not been resolved to your satisfaction following your meeting or meetings with the Deputy Principal, then you may refer the matter to the Principal.
- **The Board:** Fifth, if the matter has still not been resolved to your satisfaction following your meeting or meetings with the Principal, then the matter will be referred to the Board Chair.

In no circumstances, should parents endeavour to resolve issues or concerns regarding their child, any other child or a teacher via group or direct messaging or social media.

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 have regarding the use of social media or group chat in breach of this policy should be brought to the attention of the school Principal so that they can be dealt with in accordance with this policy.

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 any format or medium, parents should consider 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 must respect the privacy of other parents’ email addresses and must 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 must 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 COORDINATORS AND VOLUNTEERS

Parents give their email addresses to class coordinators 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 coordinators must not pass on parent email addresses to other parents without permission.

Class coordinators 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 coordinators and other organisers, 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 class social coordinators.

WHEN VISITING THE SCHOOL

- Parents must 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 must accept the authority of the teacher (or teachers) and that their attendance is to be 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 in a particular activity is disturbing or distracting to any student or teacher;
 - A parent is not conducting themselves in a manner that abides by this Code of Conduct or which is otherwise not facilitating the childrens’ learning;
 - The parent is not in control of their emotions.
- When attending any kind of School assembly or public meeting, parents must listen respectfully, in the same manner required of students and staff, and refrain from creating noise or disturbances during performances or speeches by students, staff or visitors.
- Parents must treat all visitors to our school with courtesy and respect.

PARENT VOLUNTEERING IN THE CLASSROOM OR ON EXCURSIONS

Note: The Quintilian School Camp Guidelines should be referred to for information relating to attendance by parents at 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 that it:

- 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; and
- enhances community spirit and cohesion.

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

- 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 the:
 - number of students involved;
 - number of parents who have volunteered to assist;
 - nature of the activity; and
 - 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 information acquired and observations made by a parent whilst participating in school activities, including excursions, are to be treated as confidential. It is up to the teacher to pass on relevant information to parents regarding the progress and behaviour of their child at school. If a parent feels that particular information or observations need to be shared, then they should communicate that information or those observations to the relevant teacher.
- When assisting in a classroom, must act in a professional manner at all times.
- Parents must recognise and respect the fact that teachers:
 1. are responsible for the programs operating within the classroom and/or school.
 2. 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; and
- 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 that they not be 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 all pertinent road rules.

Parents are to follow all directions from staff and signage in relation to parking, 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.

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 **ZERO TOLERANCE** for abusive, aggressive, derogatory and/or inflammatory comments or actions 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.

Where a suspected breach of this Parent Code of Conduct policy has occurred, the Principal or a delegate of the principal will make further inquiries necessary and appropriate action will be taken.

Refer to complaints procedure.

Depending upon the seriousness of the breach, then in the sole discretion of the principal in consultation with the Board Chair, the family may be asked to withdraw their child or children with immediate effect or comply with such other notice as the principal considers appropriate.

Where a family is required to withdraw their child or children from Quintilian as a result of a breach of the Parent Code of Conduct, then no refund of school fees will be given.

* 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.

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 accept this Policy in full. All current parents are reminded of their responsibilities to remain up to date on all relevant School Policies.