



Code of Conduct and Social Media Use Statement for Pupils, Students, Parents, Carers and Visitors

Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust believes staff, governors, parents, carers, visitors and all pupils/students should have a safe and protective place in which to learn and work. This policy explains our expectations for all pupils, students, parents, carers and visitors connected to our schools.

We recognise the importance of good working relationships and the value of these relationships to equip our children with the necessary skills for their education and life. We expect all members of the school community to treat each other with respect. For these reasons we will continue to welcome and encourage parents and carers to participate fully in the life of our schools.

No members of staff, governors, parents, carers, visitors or students should be the victims of any behaviour that causes harassment, alarm or distress or is abusive or threatening from anyone, either in our schools, in our communities or on social network sites.

We are committed to resolving difficulties in a constructive manner, through an open and positive dialogue. We understand that sometimes, misunderstandings can cause frustrations. We encourage all concerns to be raised with an appropriate member of staff such as a Head of Year, members of the Senior Leadership Team, or the Principal so that issues can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

Where issues remain unresolved, please follow the Trust's Complaints procedure. This is available on the Trust website or a copy can be requested from the school office.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Behaviour that is considered unacceptable and will not be tolerated includes:

- Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with any of the school's normal operation or activities anywhere on the school premises.
- Any inappropriate behaviour on the school premises.
- Using loud or offensive language, swearing or displaying temper.
- Making racist, homophobic, transphobic or sexist comments including sexual innuendo.
- Threatening in any way, a member of staff, visitor, fellow parent/carer or child.
- Damaging or destroying school property.
- Sending abusive or threatening emails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communications (including social media) to anyone within the school community.
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the pupils/parents/staff/governors at the school on Facebook or other social network sites
- The use of physical, verbal or written aggression towards another adult or child including spitting, pushing, hitting, slapping, punching or kicking or shouting. This includes physical punishment of your own child on school premises.
- Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child towards their own child. (Such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and may have legal consequences)
- Smoking, taking illegal drugs or the consumption of alcohol on school premises. (Alcohol may only be consumed during authorised events)
- Dogs being brought on to the school premises (other than guide dogs)

This is not a complete list but gives examples of behaviour that will not be tolerated.



Inappropriate use of Social Networking Sites

We ask that social media, whether public or private, should not be used to fuel campaigns and voice complaints against the school, school staff, parents or children.

We take very seriously inappropriate use of social media to publicly humiliate, criticise, or bring into disrepute another parent, member of staff or child.

We will report libellous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other social network sites to the 'report abuse' section of the network site. Social network sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted on the site and provide robust mechanisms to report content or activity which breaches this. We also expect that any parent, carer or student removes such comments immediately.

Online activity which we consider inappropriate

- Making defamatory, libellous, abusive or personal comments about staff, governors, children or other parents on social network sites, in the media, or in emails circulated or sent directly
- Bringing the school in disrepute
- Identifying or posting images/videos of other people's children
- Using social media to publicly challenge school policies or discuss issues about individual children or members of staff

Actions we may take

We will take action against anyone who behaves in any way that is abusive or threatening to staff, governors, students or other parents, carers and visitors, whether in person or online. In serious cases or repeat offences, we will consider legal options and may inform the Police.

We will record all incidents of abusive or threatening behaviour. We will write to anyone who has behaved in this way to warn them that the behaviour is not acceptable. We may choose to ban individuals from the school site after an incident or incidents. This may be a temporary measure, or a permanent one depending on the nature of the incident.

Our school premises are private property. Parents, carers and visitors have been granted permission from the school to be on school premises. It is an offence under section 547 of the Education Act 1996 for any person (including a parent/carer/adult) to cause a nuisance or disturbance on the academy premises. The police may be called to assist in removing the person concerned.

Victims and perpetrators of any kind of abuse will be expected to cooperate with any investigation into action that has caused harassment, alarm or distress to other users.

As a Trust, we take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will deal with any reported incidents appropriately in line with the actions outlined above.

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TEMPLATE Letter to Parents re: misuse of social media

Dear [name],

It has recently come to our attention that you have used [social media and/or private Facebook or chat groups] to:

Amend this list as appropriate, or describe the incident in question:

- Complain about individual members of staff
- Complain about the school
- Make inappropriate comments about members of staff, or other parents or pupils
- Draw attention to behaviour incidents
- Post pictures of children that aren't your own

Include a link to the social media post if possible.

Depending on the nature of the incident, adapt one of the sections below.

A) If the incident relates to complaints about individual members of staff:

Our staff are committed, dedicated professionals who deserve to be treated with respect. If you have a concern or complaint about a member of staff, please raise it directly with the school, in line with our complaints policy.

Comments, concerns or complaints posted on social media cannot be addressed by the school/college in a constructive manner.

A copy of our complaints procedure is available on the Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust website. You can also request a paper copy from the school office.

B) If the incident relates to complaints about the school:

We take complaints and concerns from parents seriously, and try to resolve them as best we can. To do this, parents need to follow our complaints procedure, and raise any concerns by contacting the school directly.

Complaints raised on social media cannot be addressed constructively.

A copy of our complaints procedure is available on the Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust website. You can also request a paper copy from the school office.

C) If the incident relates to inappropriate comments about members of staff, or other parents or pupils:

At [school name], we believe it is important for our pupils to learn how to treat others with respect, including when they are online. Parents have an important role to play in modelling this for their children.

We ask parents to refrain from using inappropriate language, or from speaking about staff, parents and pupils in a way that is rude, intimidating or threatening. We expect all members of our community to treat each other with respect.



D) If the incident relates to a behaviour incident:

The school/ college has a robust behaviour policy, and our staff work hard to ensure it is applied consistently while pupils are in school. Our policy also sets out when we will intervene in behaviour incidents that occur outside of school.

Discussing behaviour incidents online does not help the school address the issue. It may also prevent the school from conducting a full and fair investigation, or present a safeguarding concern for any parents or pupils named in the incident. If you are aware of a behaviour incident, please make an appointment to speak to the appropriate member of staff directly.

A copy of our complaints procedure is available on the Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust website. You can also request a paper copy from the school office.

If you would like to make an appointment to speak to the Headteacher or another member of staff, please contact the school office on **[insert phone number]**.

E) If the incident relates to posts including pictures of other children:

Our school/ college has a responsibility to keep pupils safe online and offline.

You must not take or share photos or videos on social media of other people's children unless you have the express consent of the other child's parents. Children, and parents are entitled to control what information about them, if any, is shared online. In some cases, posting photos of a child online can present a safeguarding concern.

Please delete or remove any photos of other children you have taken or shared without their parents' consent.

F) If appropriate, add this at the end of any of the sections above:

If you continue to **[make inappropriate comments, complain about staff/the school, draw attention to behaviour incidents, etc.]** in this way, the school/ college may take further action.

We will seek legal advice if we believe any comments about the school, or individual members of staff, to be defamatory, indecent or threatening. We will involve the police if we believe comments or behaviour are threatening or discriminatory.

We may also consult with the governing board about banning you from the school site.

Continue with:

If you would like to discuss the **[incident(s)]** further, please call the school/college office and make an appointment.

Yours sincerely,