



**HUNTER  
CHRISTIAN  
SCHOOL**

## **Parental Code of Conduct**

**Promoting positive and productive relationships within the School community.**

Drafted by Malcolm East (Principal) on 13 October 2018, Approved by HCS Board for 2019

Content largely drawn from the AIS NSW document: *Parental Code of Conduct – Independent Schools NSW*

## Parental Code of Conduct

As a school community, we want to promote a healthy culture that is inclusive and welcoming of students, parents and staff. The school culture we desire is based on the following core values;

- Honour Christ
- Learn without limits
- Unite in community
- Serve selflessly
- Live courageously

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

### Role of the School Generally

The School is responsible for establishing and administering the policies, procedures and rules which govern the day to day operations of the school. It is important that parents recognise and respect this, adhere and have their children adhere to the School's requirements, and support these decisions.

### Discipline

The School expects students to comply with its rules and not engage in behaviour which is harmful to others or is contrary to the ethos, values and philosophy of the School. Parents are expected to support the School in relation to its discipline policy and not do anything which undermines its authority. It must be understood that in the case of minor disciplinary matters, the School will be the arbiter of what took place and what is a fair punishment. It will not engage in debate about the details of the conduct for the appropriateness of the punishment.

Parents should reserve judgement of matters reported by their child 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 more serious disciplinary matters which may result in suspension or expulsion, the School will inform parents of the matter and will deal with it in accordance with the School's disciplinary policy. While parents will be consulted, the final decision will be the School's.

### Interaction with Staff

The School 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. A phone or email message may be sent for less serious matters.

Parents should never attempt to contact a staff member at their home, on their personal phone, private email or via social media rather than through official school channels (unless the staff member is known socially to you outside of school and it is not in regard to a school matter).

It is important that parents show respect for staff and not publicly criticise them or seek to undermine their authority. If a parent has a 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.

The School has a duty of care to protect all staff and for this reason any aggressive or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated. Such behaviour may include;

- constant phone calls to the same staff member
- repeated and lengthy emails to the same staff member
- pressuring staff to immediately respond to communication or to make a decision
- insisting on meeting with a member of staff without having a prior appointment

## **Raising Concerns and Complaints**

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

In addressing concerns, it is important that parents allow staff a reasonable amount of time to investigate, gather evidence and consider the perspectives of other parties before deciding.

If a parent wishes to make a complaint, they should not use rude or abusive language. This is not productive and can make it harder to resolve concerns.

## **Interactions Generally**

Communications whether verbal, in writing or online with other members of the school 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.

## **Discussing School Matters on Social Media (or other public forums)**

Social media (or other public forums) should not be used to criticise or denigrate others in the school community or the School. Concerns should be raised through the appropriate channels in accordance with both the School's Grievance Policy and Privacy Policy. This ensures the school leadership is aware of the issue and that parents are not acting on misinformation about who decided or the reasons behind it. The School reserves the right to request any material publicly posted about students, staff, parents or the School that is inaccurate, confrontational, critical, offensive or disrespectful to be taken down.

## **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;
- 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 taking place. Parents are not to:

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

## **Sport**

Parents are welcome to attend sporting events but should exercise restraint when supporting school teams. Parents should not abuse, threaten or otherwise seek to intimidate an umpire or referee or be directed against a player, or any School representatives.

The Sports coaches at the School, 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 child to be picked for a particular team.

## **Separated Parents**

Where some students have parents that are separated or divorced, parents should not attempt to involve the School in any parental dispute that may arise. The School 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 would or is designed to disadvantage one party. The School will of course, observe any orders made by a Court in relation to a student or communications with parents.

## **Failure to Observe this Code**

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

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