

Parent Code of Conduct

Background

Hume Anglican Grammar's fundamental belief is that young people who are genuinely well will engage, aspire and thrive within our learning community. By establishing high standards in all that we do, every student is encouraged and supported to discover and fulfil their unique potential.

The School needs the cooperation of and support from all families and community members in order to provide the best education for students, equipping them with the skills required for a fulfilling adult life. Parents are expected to be role models for responsible and safe behaviours. This includes ensuring the health and safety of all members of our school community (including staff, students, parents and alumni) and the wider community.

Purpose

This Parent Code of Conduct outlines the School's expectations for a student's parents, step-parents, guardians, grandparents, extended family members and carers (collectively, parents). It outlines the way that the School expects parents to behave when visiting the School and when interacting with school staff and other members of the School community. It also ensures that Hume Anglican Grammar discharges its duty to protect the staff and students under its care from reasonably foreseeable risks to their wellbeing.

In developing this Code, the School recognises that parents ultimately want the best for their children. However, the School also expects parents to recognise and respect that Hume Anglican Grammar must balance the interests of all of the School's stakeholders. These stakeholders include students and parents, as well as school staff and their right to a safe working environment.

This Code does not attempt to provide a detailed and exhaustive list of what to do in every aspect of a parent's interactions with the School and its community. Instead, it sets out general expectations and is intended to be practical, non-adversarial and non-legal. Parents are expected to ensure that other individuals involved in their child's life, such as other relatives and carers, also comply with this Code.

Summary of Expectations

The five key expectations of Parents, expanded further below, are:

- 1. Support the educational ethos and values of the School**
Parents are expected to visibly support the educational ethos and values of the School, and role model responsible and safe behaviours for their children and others in the community to learn from.
- 2. Behave respectfully towards all members of our community**
Parents must behave respectfully at all times towards all members of the community, including staff, contractors, volunteers, visitors, students and other parents and family members.
- 3. Use technology and social media appropriately**
Parents are expected to be respectful in their communication with others, be mindful of privacy and safety in publishing information online, and ensure slanderous comments or confidential information are not shared without permission.
- 4. Be a responsible visitor and participant**
Parents must respect the School's risk management procedures when visiting the School and attending school activities and events off-campus.
- 5. Raise grievances appropriately and productively**
Parents should raise genuine grievances they may have about such matters in an appropriate, constructive and respectful forum.

Expectations

1. Support the educational ethos and values of the school

Parents are expected to support the educational ethos and values of the School, model appropriate behaviours for their children, and work with the School as it educates and provides pastoral care to all students. Parents should support the School and be positive role models by exhibiting the following behaviours:

1. Comply with the School's codes of conduct, policies, procedures, rules and regulations, and ensure their children do the same.
2. Respect (and show their children that they respect) that the School is inclusive and welcomes students from a variety of backgrounds, and with different needs.
3. Respond to School communications (e.g. by completing forms and providing permissions in a timely manner) when requested to do so by the School.
4. Encourage their children to actively participate in the life of the School, including in the classroom and the many sporting and co-curricular activities available (noting that some co-curricular activities are compulsory).
5. Support the School's commitment to developing a student's initiative, independence and sense of responsibility for their own lives and actions.
6. Support the School's approach to student behavioural and academic concerns, which can include a range of outcomes (including educational, pastoral or disciplinary).
7. Be responsive to concerns raised by the School about their own child, by being cooperative, providing information, replying to emails or phone messages in a timely manner, and attending meetings when required.
8. Raise grievances directly with the School, in a timely manner, and through appropriate established channels.
9. Keep the School informed about a child's needs (including but not limited to their behavioural, educational, personal, physical or mental health needs). This includes providing updated medical information, family developments and other like information as it becomes available. However, parents need to also appreciate that while the School will take into account any new information, and comply with its legal obligations, the School cannot necessarily accommodate every need.
10. Keep the School informed about a child's parenting arrangements, including any court orders that may be in place. However, parents should not involve the School in parenting disputes, or expect the School to act as the go-between for estranged parents.
11. Recognise the damage that gossip can do within a school community and avoid unconstructive commentary (including criticism, uninformed rumour or speculation) with or about other parents, staff or students, including on social media.

2. Behave respectfully towards members of our community

Parents are expected to behave respectfully at all times towards other members of the School's community, whether communicating in person or via telephone, email or other means. This applies not only to words used, but also to tone and body language. The concept of 'respect' is intentionally broad. Parents can support the School and behave respectfully to all members of its community by avoiding the following behaviours:

1. Rude or insulting behaviour, including passive-aggressive, intimidating or derogatory language.
2. Bullying, intimidation, discrimination, sexual harassment, victimisation and child abuse. Please note that in addition to being a breach of this Code, such behaviour may also be unlawful.
3. Actual or threatened aggression (verbal or non-verbal) or violence.
4. Behaviour that causes a risk to a person's health and wellbeing.

5. Defamatory or disrespectful comments.
6. Gossip, rumour, and innuendo.
7. Raising one's voice, or using offensive language or actions, while communicating.
8. Age-inappropriate language when communicating with or about children.
9. Vexatious complaints.

3. Use technology and social media appropriately

Parents are expected to behave appropriately when using technology and social media. Parents can support the School by exhibiting the following behaviours:

1. Respect a staff member's professional and personal boundaries, by not using their personal online presence to raise school matters (or otherwise engage in disrespectful behaviour).
2. Not take photos, videos or other recordings of a staff member or parent without their consent, or of a student without their parent's consent, and not publish information (including personal details, contact information, images and recordings) concerning a staff member, parent, student or other member of the School community online without express consent.
3. Not publish information that may bring the School (including any of its staff, students, parents or other members of its community) into disrepute. This includes images or recordings that show a student in school uniform, or a member of the School community at a school function, activity or event, behaving inappropriately.
4. Not communicate with students from another family outside of the School, including by email, phone, text, posted or on social media, without prior consent from that student's parent/s.
5. Not discuss confidential or sensitive school matters, including in relation to grievances about a particular staff member or student, online.
6. Obtain express permission to use the School's name or insignia in the title of any online website, forum or group, or printed or online publication. In addition, no suggestion should be made that any such platform or material is operated or sanctioned by the School.

4. Be a responsible visitor and participant

Parents are expected to follow the School's risk management procedures when visiting the School. Parents should immediately proceed to Reception upon arrival to sign in, and should only enter a classroom or other student environment when invited to do so by a staff member.

When visiting the School, or attending school activities and events, parents should model appropriate and respectful behaviours, and uphold the School's values. These behaviours include:

1. Demonstrating good sporting conduct and fair play when attending sporting and other events or competitions.
2. Complying with applicable occupational health and safety procedures, and risk management procedures.
3. Complying with any reasonable directions given by school staff.
4. Showing appropriate care and regard for the property of the School and its community members (including staff, students and parents). Any damage should be promptly reported to the School.
5. Dressing appropriately for the occasion.
6. Not being under the influence of drugs or alcohol (and otherwise not engaging in the possession, sale or supply of the same at the School).
7. Behaving lawfully on school grounds at events hosted by or connected to the School, whether conducted onsite or otherwise.

8. Ensuring that physical contact with students is appropriate given the age of, and relationship with, the student.
9. Comply with Victoria's Child Safe Standards as described in Ministerial Order 1359.

When dropping off and picking up students from the School, parents are expected to ensure the health and safety of all members of its community, as well as the wider community, at all times.

Parents must comply with all Traffic Safety Rules (available on the School's website). This includes adhering to applicable speed limits, observing all traffic signs, limiting the use of car horns (unless indicating imminent danger), and parking appropriately and safely.

Parents must also comply with any government directives.

Please note that the requirement for signing into Reception does not apply when visiting the School only to:

1. Attend an activity or event to which some or all members of the School community have been invited.
2. Drop off or pick up a child from School.

5. Raise grievances appropriately and productively

The School is committed to the education and wellbeing of each student. It is therefore critical that parents are able to raise genuine grievances they may have about such matters in an appropriate, constructive and respectful forum.

The School's grievance management procedures are set out in the [Complaints and Grievances Policy](#). This policy sets out how complaints and grievances may be raised with the School, with whom they should be raised with, and how the School will deal with these in a respectful and timely manner.

Parents with grievances should consult the Complaints and Grievances Policy for further information. However, in general, parents are expected to support the School by raising grievances appropriately and exhibiting the following behaviours:

1. Parents should take care with volume, tone and vocabulary when communicating with another family's child.
2. Parents should not communicate with another student about an issue concerning their own child. In particular, parents should refrain from any attempt to discipline a student who is not their child, unless they are attempting to restrain a student from causing a risk to themselves or others.
3. Parents should raise their grievances with their child's teacher in the first instance. More serious concerns or grievances, including where a parent is dissatisfied with a teacher's response to a grievance, may be raised with the appropriate member of the School (as set out in the Complaints and Grievances Policy).
4. Parents should arrange a face-to-face meeting with the School to discuss their grievances, rather than relying on email or other written communications.
5. Parents should clearly identify their grievances, and what they would practically like to see happen. If there is more than one issue or problem, parents should write a list so that they are adequately prepared and then decide which issue or problem matters most.
6. Parents should appreciate that, while the School is committed to dealing with their grievances in a timely manner, it will not always be practicable for staff to provide an immediate acknowledgement or response (particularly where a concern or grievance is sent by email).
7. Parents should respect that the School employs experienced educators and other professionals who are well-trained in making academic, disciplinary, co-curricular, pastoral and wellbeing decisions every day. Please understand that, while the School will always

take into account the interests of the student, the School must ultimately make decisions that take into account the interests of all students (and others who may be affected by the School's decisions).

8. Parents should recognise that, just as the School will seek to respect each student's privacy, the School will also respect the privacy of other members of its community. This means there are limits to what information the School will share with a parent when issues arise. This does not mean that the School is not taking an issue or situation seriously, or hiding information from a parent.
9. If a parent is not satisfied with the School's response to a grievance, the School respects a parent's right to invoke any formal grievance-resolution procedures which may exist. However, parents who refuse to engage in constructive processes that may resolve their grievances, or who choose to publicly air their grievances about the School (and in particular about staff or students) on social media, are not welcome.
10. The School will not facilitate meetings between families who may have a grievance with one another as a means of conciliation.

Breaches

The Principal has absolute discretion for deciding how to best respond to concerns about a parent's compliance with the Code. Where the Principal considers that a parent has breached this Code, the Principal may implement one or more of the following consequences (and not necessarily in any particular order):

1. A verbal request for the relevant conduct to immediately cease.
2. A written request for the relevant conduct to immediately cease.
3. A parent (or another relevant person) being banned from the School grounds, either for a particular period of time or permanently.
4. A parent (or another relevant adult) being excluded from school activities or events.
5. A requirement that a parent (or another relevant person) only communicate with a nominated school representative.
6. Issue a School Community Safety Order:
 - a. Ongoing School Community Safety Order
 - b. Immediate School Community Safety Order
7. Termination of the enrolment of a parent's child(ren).

School Community Safety Orders

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* was amended in 2021 to set up the School Community Safety Order Scheme. This allows Principals and other authorised persons in a school to make School Community Safety Orders to stop or limit parents and other adults who behave in harmful, threatening or abusive ways towards school staff, students and others in the School community.

When issued, the School Community Safety Order sets limits on how that person can behave around certain people, at certain times, at the School or other places where school activities happen. The Order may also include special exceptions like times when, or areas where, the Order does not apply.

The Orders are intended to be a last resort option.

If an order has been breached, the Principal may:

1. Apply to the Magistrates Court requesting the parent comply with the Order.
2. Terminate the enrolment of a parent's child(ren).

Staff wellbeing

Staff and volunteers are empowered to take steps to protect their own health and wellbeing. If they feel that a parent is being inappropriate, they are encouraged to indicate this and ask that it stop. If it does not, or if a staff member feels that a parent's actions are posing a risk to their or someone else's health and wellbeing, they are empowered to remove themselves from the situation. This may include immediately concluding a meeting or phone call, or demanding that a parent immediately leave the school grounds (or a school activity or event). Staff are also encouraged to report inappropriate behaviours or language to their line manager or member of the SLT.

Approved by: The Principal

Review date: November 2024