Parent Code of Conduct

About this Code of Conduct

They say it takes a village to raise a child. Similarly, Aitken College cannot provide the best education for a child, or help equip that child with the skills required for a fulfilling adult life, without cooperation and support from that child's family.

To ensure such cooperation and support, this Code of Conduct outlines the School's expectations for a student's parents, step-parents, guardians, grandparents, extended family members and carers (collectively, **parents**).

In developing this Code, the School recognises that Parents ultimately want the best for their children. However, the School also expects Parents to recognise that it must ultimately balance the interests of all of the School's stakeholders (including not only students and Parents, but also the School's 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 the school community. Instead, it sets out general expectations. As such, this Code is intended to be practical, non-adversarial and non-legal.

Summary

In summary, the five key expectations of parents expanded on in the following pages are as follows:

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 members of our community

Parents should behave respectfully at all times towards the School's staff (including employees, contractors and volunteers), students and other parents.

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 confidential information is 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.

Support the educational ethos and values of the school

Parents are expected to support the educational ethos and values of the College, model appropriate behaviours for their children to learn from, and work with the College as it educates and provides pastoral support to all students.

Parents can support the College and be positive role models by doing, for example, the following:

1 Comply with the College's codes of conduct, policies, procedures, rules and regulations, and ensure their children do the same.

2 Respect (and show to their children that they respect) that the College is inclusive and welcomes students from a variety of backgrounds, and with different needs.

3 Respond to College communications (e.g. by completing forms and providing permissions in a timely manner) when requested to do so by the College.

4 Encourage their children to actively participate in the life of the College, including in the classroom and the many sporting and extracurricular activities available (noting that some extracurricular activities will be compulsory).

5 Support the College's commitment to developing a student's initiative, independence and sense of responsibility for their own lives and actions.

6 Support the College's approach to student behavioral concerns, which can include a range of outcomes (including those which are educational, pastoral or disciplinary in nature).

7 Be responsive to concerns raised by the College about their own child, including by being cooperative, providing information, and attending meetings when required.

8 Keep the College informed about a child's needs (including but not limited to their behavioural, educational, personal, and 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 College will take into account any new information, and comply with its legal obligations, the College cannot necessarily accommodate every need.

9 Keep the College informed about a child's parenting arrangements, including any court orders that may be in place. However, parents should not involve the College in parenting disputes, or expect the College to act as the go-between for estranged parents.

10 Recognise the damage that gossip can do within a school community, and avoid unconstructive commentary (including criticism, uninformed rumour or speculation) with other parents or students, including on social media.

11 Raise grievances directly with the College, and in a timely manner.

Parents are expected to be a role model 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. 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.

Behave respectfully towards members of our community

The College expects that parents will behave respectfully at all times towards other members of the College community. This applies not only to words used, but also to tone and body language, and similar expectations are embedded in the College's codes of conduct for staff and students.

"Respect" is intentionally a broad concept. The following is a non-exhaustive list of behaviours that are not respectful:

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 Using a raised voice, or using offensive language or actions, while communicating.

8 Age-inappropriate language when communicating with or about children.

9 Vexatious complaints.

Use technology and social media appropriately

The expectations set out in this Code can also apply to the way a parent uses technology and behaves online.

For example, parents should:

1 Respect a staff member's professional and personal boundaries, by not using their personal online presence to raise College 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 Avoid publishing information which may bring the College (or any of its staff, students, parents and other members of the school community) into disrepute. This may include an image or recording which shows a student in their College uniform, or a member of the school community at the College or at a College activity or event, behaving inappropriately.

4 Not communicate with students from another family outside of the College, including by email or on social media, without prior consent from that student's parent(s).

5 Not discuss confidential or sensitive College matters, including in relation to grievances about a particular staff member or student, online.

6 Not use the College's name or logo 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 College.

Be a responsible visitor and participant

Parents must respect the College's risk-management procedures when visiting the College. 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. This requirement does not apply when visiting the College only to:

1 Attend an activity or event to which all members of the school community have been invited.

2 Visit the College pre-loved uniform sale.

3 Drop-off or collect a child from School.

When visiting the College, or attending College activities and events, parents should model appropriate and respectful behaviours, and uphold the College's values. This includes:

4 Demonstrating good conduct and fair play when attending the College's events.

5 Complying with applicable occupation, student and workplace health and safety and risk-management procedures.

6 Complying with any reasonable directions given by the College staff.

7 Showing appropriate care and regard for the property of the College and others. Any damage should be promptly reported to the College.

8 Dressing appropriately for the occasion.

9 Not being under the influence of drugs or alcohol (and otherwise not engaging in the possession, sale or supply of the same at the College).

10 Behaving lawfully on College grounds whether at events hosted by or connected to the College and whether conducted on site or otherwise.

11 Ensuring that physical contact with students is appropriate given the age of, and relationship with, the student.

12 Respecting the College property and the property of other members of the College community (including staff, students and parents).

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

Parents must comply with all traffic rules and any traffic management system in place. 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.

Raise grievances appropriately and productively

Aitken College 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 College grievance-management procedures are set out in the Complaint Handling Policy available on the College website. This policy sets out how concerns and grievances may be raised with the school; who they should be raised with; and how the College will deal with these in a respectful and timely manner.

Parents with grievances should consult the Complaint Handling Policy. However, in general:

1 Parents should take care with volume, tone and vocabulary when communicating with members of our College community.

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 College.

4 Parents should arrange a phone or face-to-face meeting to discuss any grievances, rather than relying on email or other written communications, unless the matter can be easily resolved by email.

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 College 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 College employs experienced educators and other professionals who are well-trained in making academic, disciplinary, extracurricular, pastoral and wellbeing decisions every day. Please understand that while the College will always take into account the interests of the parent's child, the College must ultimately make decisions that take into account the interests of all students (and others who may be affected by the College's decisions).

8 Parents should recognise that just as the College will seek to respect each student's privacy, the College will also respect the privacy of other members of the College community. This means there are limits to what information the College will share with a parent when issues arise. This does not mean that the College is not taking an issue or situation seriously, or hiding information from a parent.

9 If a parent is not satisfied with the College's response to a grievance, the Aitken College Complaint Handling policy provides a parent with a right to request an internal review of the initial decision. Alternatively, an external body, court or tribunal may be able to deal with the issue. The College respects a parent's right to use a formal grievance procedure if they are not satisfied with an informal solution. However, parents should not refuse to engage in constructive processes that may resolve their grievances and must not publicly air their grievances about the College (and in particular about staff or students) on social media.

When approaching the College via phone or in person, please voice your grievance respectfully. The receiving staff member, such as the College Receptionist, will do their utmost to take note of your grievance and refer it to the most relevant staff member to be addressed.

Consequences for breach of this code

The Principal will have 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 request that the relevant conduct immediately cease.

2 A written warning.

3 A parent (or another relevant person) being banned from the College grounds, either for a particular period of time or permanently, in accordance with the School Community Safety Scheme.

4 A parent (or another relevant person) being excluded from College activities or events.

5 A requirement that a parent (or another relevant person) only communicate with a nominated College representative.

6 Termination of the enrolment of a parent's child(ren).

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 College grounds (or a College activity or event).

Relevant legislation

- Victorian School Community Safety Order Scheme
- Education and Training Reform Act

Review History

Version	Date	Reviewed by	Position/Title	Approved/Noted by
1	21/10/2022	Josie Crisara Kim Forward Parents and Friends Association	Principal Deputy Principal	Principal
1.1	11/10/2023	Kim Forward College Board	Deputy Principal	College Board
2	25/10/2024	Kim Forward	Deputy Principal	College Board
3	10/10/2025	Kim Forward	Deputy Principal	College Board