

# PARENTAL CODE OF CONDUCT

3.6

**St Lucy's School is an independent Catholic Special School which is part of Dominican Education Australia (DEA). St Lucy's provides for children with a wide range of disabilities.**

**Purpose:** This Code has been developed 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 the School's decisions.

## **Discipline**

In a special school where challenging behaviour is linked to a child's disability graded disciplinary sanctions are inappropriate due to the challenges of expressive communication abilities and receptive understanding. Challenging behaviours (including behaviours that cause harm to others) will be considered on an individual student basis in the context of the setting.

The School supports students to follow the 3 school rules, Be Kind, Be Safe and Be your Best, and act in accordance with the ethos 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 is a fair consequence and will not engage in debates about the appropriateness of the consequence. Any consequences will be considered on an individual basis in relation to the child's level of understanding and risk posed to others.

In relation to more serious behaviour where there is a significant risk of harm to others, the School will inform parents of the matter which will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Discipline Policy. While parents will be consulted, the final decision will be the School's.

In the event that a child is hurt by another student, parents will be informed of the incident but will not be told the name of the other student involved.

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### **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. This can be done through the school office or via email directly with the staff member concerned.

Parents should never attempt to contact a staff member at their home.

Parents can make an appointment to see the Principal about any particular concerns they may have relating to their son or daughter.

It is important that parents show respect for staff and not publically criticise them or seek to undermine their authority. If a parent has a particular 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 towards all staff and for this reason any aggressive or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated.

Parents should understand that it is not appropriate for staff to visit the family at home without the express written permission of the Principal.

Neither is it appropriate for parents to contact staff using a personal email account or their home or mobile number. Staff are provided with School email accounts and the School phone number. These should be the only means of contact apart from normal face to face interactions during normal business hours.

### **Email, Phone & Face to Face Communication**

Parents need to recognise that staff are busy teaching and completing other duties during the normal school day and are not immediately available to respond to parent emails. Acknowledgement of the email by staff would normally be expected within 24 hours and a more detailed response between 3-5 working days after the acknowledgement.

Wherever possible parents should seek to contact staff by phone call and/or message or face to face as these have proven to be the most effective means of clear two-way communication. Emails can be problematic in facilitating useful and productive two way communication as they can be misinterpreted and end up causing an email "frenzy" back and forth rather than mutual understanding and partnership between home and school.

### **Parents or Volunteers**

Parents are welcome to volunteer their time to assist the School in various ways eg. P&F Committee; events; assisting with reading and numeracy programs; sporting activities. In doing so parents need to recognise they may become privy to certain observations and information about individual students and staff. These observations and information need to be kept confidential. If in the course of their duties as a parent volunteer they have concerns about a student or staff member they should raise their concern in writing to the Principal.



## **Student Health and Medication**

St Lucy's has a policy for Medication and Medical Treatment for Students, and a procedure for administering Student Medication. Please refer to these documents for a more detailed account.

Parents are expected to keep the School updated about all relevant medical information about their child. No medication can be administered at School by Administration staff without written instruction and permission from parents and the student's medical professional.

Please provide the contact details of two emergency contacts who have permission to communicate with the School and to collect the student should parents be unavailable.

The School has a duty to take reasonable steps to care for the health and wellbeing of all the students under its care. You can play your part by not sending sick children to School.

It is expected that if contacted by Administration staff Parents will make every endeavour to collect the child within the hour. If the parents are not available to collect the student the emergency contact will be asked to do so.

Please help keep the School population healthy following NSW Health guidelines and by keeping sick children at home :

- For 48 hours after the end of any gastro symptoms and 2 weeks exclusion from swimming;
- For 24 hours after the child's temperature has returned to normal (without the assistance of Panadol or other similar medication);
- If requested to do so by the First Aid Officer or Office Manager, for any other health reason where infection might affect the rest of the school.

## **Complaints**

If a parent has a complaint about an issue, this should be directed to the teacher responsible for the particular area of activity and if necessary subsequently to the Deputy Principal and Principal.

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 or in writing 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.



Social media should not be used to criticise or denigrate others in the school community.

### **School and Social Events**

Parents are welcome to attend school and social events, eg. school concerts, carnivals, Grandparent/Siblings Day and other special occasions, but should exercise restraint when supporting school teams and their child at such events. In particular, they should not abuse, threaten or otherwise seek to intimidate or direct abuse against a participant or any School representatives.

Some of these School events for parents/carers may include the service of alcohol. Where this is the case all present should drink responsibly and socialise in an appropriate, respectful and courteous manner.

The staff at the School, select students to be involved in School events 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 son or daughter to be selected for a particular event.

### **Photography**

We recognise that parents enjoy photographing and recording the progress of their child at school. We recognise that many families like to share these personal memories online and on social media.

Some families have very real legal, safety and security issues which could put a child at risk if an image is made public online.

The following best practice guidelines have been adopted by St Lucy's. Parents and relatives of families should:

- Seek the permission of staff to photograph or record any activities at school.
- Crop out other students before posting online.
- Not name the person without permission.
- Respect the wishes of other parents regarding photos of their own child.

Under no circumstances may you photograph or record in private areas such as change-rooms, school offices, staffroom, or at meetings without express permission.

### **Separated Parents**

The School is aware that some students have parents that are separated or divorced. In these cases, parents should not attempt to involve the School in any parental dispute that may arise.

The School is not able to make judgements 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 be 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 staff member or members;
- Limit access to the School premises or sporting or other School events; or
- Terminate the enrolment of the student.

Date Approved/Reviewed	August 2020
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Date for Next Review	August 2026