

## Parent Code of Conduct

### About this Code of Conduct

It takes a village to raise a child. The Knox School aims to provide the best education for our children and help equip them with the skills required for a fulfilling adult life. This requires active cooperation and support from our parents.

To ensure a strong positive relationship between the School, its staff and parents, this Code of Conduct outlines the School's expectations for all parents, guardians, step-parents, grandparents, extended family members and caregivers (collectively, **Parents**) with students enrolled at the School.

The School understands that all Parents ultimately want the best for their children and appreciates the trust Parents place in us in assisting their child's growth and development. For us to fulfil this, the School needs Parents to recognize that it must balance the interests of all 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.

This Code of Conduct operates in addition to any other School policies and procedures which apply to Parents and may be varied from time to time by the School in its absolute discretion.

The six key expectations of parents are shown below and expanded on in the following pages.

#### 1. Support the educational ethos and values of The Knox School

Parents are expected to visibly support the educational ethos and values of the School and, as such, act as a role model, demonstrating appropriate behaviours for their children and others in the community.

#### 2. Behave respectfully towards members of our community

One of our School values is respect and therefore Parents should always behave respectfully 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 courteous in their online communication with others, be mindful of privacy laws and child safety when in publishing information online, and ensure confidential information is not shared without permission.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. Be a responsible visitor and participant

Parents must respect and adhere to the School's risk-management procedures when visiting the School and attending school activities and events off- campus.

#### 5. Role model safe and responsible behaviours

Parents are expected to support the health and safety of all members of our School community and the wider community. Parents are therefore expected to ensure that other individuals involved in their child's life, such as other relatives and carers, also comply with this Code of Conduct.

<sup>1</sup> Refer The Knox School's Privacy Policy available on the school's website.

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## 6. Raise concerns appropriately and productively

Parents should feel supported to raise genuine concerns and grievances they may have about such matters in an appropriate, constructive and respectful forum.

### Support the educational ethos and values of The Knox School

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

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

1. Build a positive relationship with their children's teachers, Mentor and Head of Students (as the case may be in each sub-school), based on transparency and positive outcomes-focused communication.
2. Comply with the School's policies, procedures and directions, and ensure their children are supported to do the same.
3. Respect (and demonstrate to their children they respect) that the School is inclusive and welcomes students from diverse backgrounds, and with a variety of different needs.
4. Respond to School communications (e.g., by completing forms and providing permissions) in a timely manner when requested to do so by the School.
5. Encourage their children to actively participate in the life of the School, including in the many sporting and extracurricular activities available (noting that some will be compulsory).
6. Be open to and responsive to concerns raised by the School about their own child, including being cooperative, providing information and attending meetings when required.
7. Raise grievances directly with the School, and in a timely manner.
8. Keep the School informed about a child's behavioural or educational needs, including providing updated medical information as it becomes available. However, Parents should also be cognizant that while the School will take into account any new information, the School cannot accommodate every specific requirement. Needs will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and in consultation with Parents, students and the appropriate professional bodies.
9. Keep the School informed about a child's parenting/living 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.
10. Recognise the reputational damage that gossip can do within a school community, and avoid unconstructive commentary (including criticism, uninformed rumour or speculation) with other Parents, including on social media.

### Behave respectfully towards members of our community

The School expects that Parents will always behave respectfully towards the School's staff (including employees, contractors and volunteers), students and other Parents. Similar expectations are embedded in the School's policies and codes of conduct for its staff. This applies not only to words used, but also to implied tone and body language.

"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.
3. Actual or threatened aggression or violence.
4. Behaviour that causes a risk to a person's health and overall wellbeing.

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

### **Use technology and social media appropriately**

The expectations set out in this Code of Conduct 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 School matters (or otherwise engage in disrespectful behaviour).
2. Bear in mind that publishing photos, videos or other recordings of another student without their Parent's consent can be legally problematic and can only be done with their explicit permission. Publishing information (including personal details, contact information, images and recordings) concerning a student or staff member can also be problematic. It is best practice to only do so with explicit consent.
3. Avoid publishing information which may bring the School (or any of its staff, students, Parents and other members of the School community) into disrepute. This includes where an image or recording shows a student in School uniform behaving inappropriately.
4. Not communicate with students from another family outside of the School, including by email 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 publication. In addition, no suggestion should be made that it is operated or sanctioned by the School.

### **Be a responsible visitor and participant**

Parents must respect 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.

This requirement does not apply when visiting the School to:

- (a) attend an activity or event to which members of the School community have been invited;
- (b) visit the School uniform shop; or
- (c) drop off or collect a child from School.

When visiting the School, or attending School activities and events, Parents should model appropriate and respectful behaviours, upholding the School's values. This includes:

1. Demonstrating good sporting conduct and fair play when attending the School's art, drama and sporting events.
2. Complying with applicable occupational health and safety and risk-management procedures.
3. Complying with any reasonable directions given by the School's staff.
4. Showing appropriate care and regard for the property of the School and others. Any damage should be promptly reported to the School.
5. Dressing appropriately for the occasion.

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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 whether at events hosted by or connected to the School, whether conducted on site or otherwise.
8. Ensure that physical contact with students is appropriate given the age of, and relationship with, the student.
9. Respect school property and the property of staff, contractors, volunteers and other students.

### **Be a role model for safe and responsible behaviours**

When dropping off and picking up students from the School, 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 School traffic management system in place. This includes following the directions of TKS staff, 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 are expected to ensure that other individuals involved in their child’s life, such as other relatives and carers, also comply with this Code of Conduct.

Parents must also comply with any government issued health orders or directions in response to a crisis, such as the COVID -19 pandemic. This includes adhering to vaccination, social distancing and face mask requirements.

### **Raise concerns appropriately and productively**

The School is committed to the education and wellbeing of each student. It is therefore critical that Parents feel supported to raise genuine concerns and 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 Grievance Policy. This policy sets out how concerns and grievances may be raised with the School; who they should be raised with; and how the School will deal with these in a respectful and timely manner.

Parents should take care with volume, tone and vocabulary when communicating with another family’s child.

Parents with concerns and grievances should consult the policy. However, in general:

1. Communication with another student about an issue concerning a Parent’s own child can prove legally problematic, and Parents should therefore take care with volume, tone and vocabulary when communicating (verbally or non-verbally) with another family’s child. 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).
2. Parents should raise their concerns 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 concern, may be raised with the appropriate member of the School leadership (as set out in the policy).
3. Parents should arrange a face-to-face meeting (where possible) to discuss their concerns and grievances, rather than relying on email or other written communications.
4. Parents should clearly set out their concerns and grievances, and practical outcomes, in face-to-face meetings.
5. Parents should appreciate that while the School is committed to dealing with their concerns and 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, rather than discussed in a face-to-face meeting).

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6. Parents should respect that the School employs experienced educators and other professionals who are well-trained in making academic, disciplinary, extracurricular, pastoral and wellbeing decisions every day. Understand that while the School will always take into account the interests of the Parent's child, 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).
7. 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 the School community. This means there are limits to what information the School will share with a Parent when issues arise. The School will seek to uphold transparency within all communication, in so far as is legal, reasonable and practical.
8. If a Parent is not satisfied with the School's response to a concern or grievance, a School policy may provide a Parent with a right to request an internal review of the School's decision. Alternatively, an external body, court or tribunal may be able to deal with the issue. The School respects a Parent's rights to invoke formal grievance-resolution procedures. 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.

### Consequences for breaching this Code of Conduct

The Principal will have absolute discretion for deciding how to best respond to concerns about a Parent's compliance with this Code of Conduct.

Where the Principal considers that a Parent has breached this Code of Conduct, 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 School grounds, either for a particular period of time or permanently.
4. A Parent (or another relevant person) 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. Termination of the enrolment of a Parent's student(s).

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 by immediately concluding a meeting or phone call, or by demanding that a Parent immediately leave the school grounds (or a School activity or event).

POLICY DEVELOPMENT, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION PROCESS				
Draft	Consultation:	Community Consultation	Date:	Tue 04 May 2021
Version 1	Approval:	The Knox School Executive The Knox School Board	Date:	Fri 04 Jun 2021
	Review and update (V2):	Principal	Date:	4 June 2022
Version 2	Review and consultation:	Falcon Philanthropy Group (FPG)	Date:	June/July 2022
	Approval:	Executive Team	Date:	1 May 2024
	Review and consultation:	Parent Ambassadors	Date:	June 2024
	Final endorsement:	Executive Team	Date:	31 July 2024
	Communication:	Staff via Chambers	Date:	29 August 2024
	Communication:	Parents via Knoxmail	Dat:	30 August 2024

**Related policies:** Grievance Policy

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