



# DIVINE MERCY COLLEGE

## PARENT and VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

### Background

Divine Mercy College aims to bring education and faith together, in partnership with family, church and the school community. We aim to provide a quality Catholic education that is focused on the core values of faith, academics, service and personal development from preschool and throughout high school to influence a rapidly changing world in a collaborative approach with parents, caregivers and volunteers to enable our students to be well educated and lead happy successful lives who make contributions to local and global communities.

### Aim of this Code

Divine Mercy College staff work to a Code of Conduct and the students have a student handbook in which they abide too. This document aims to provide similar guidelines for parents. Specifically, this Parent and Volunteer Code of Conduct is intended to: 1. provide a set of general principles to guide parents, caregivers and volunteers in their interaction with staff, students and other parents/visitors; 2. communicate the School's expectation as to how parents, caregivers and volunteers conduct themselves when on the School grounds or at School events; and 3. explain how parents, caregivers and volunteers can direct their concerns.

### Applicability of the Code

This policy applies to all adults including parents, guardians, step-parents, grandparents, extended family, caregivers and any other volunteers while involved in activities or communication related to Divine Mercy College. For this policy, the term "parent" refers to all those as listed above.

### Ethical Conduct

Parents play a key role in the education of their children and should act in the best interests of students, their families, staff and the School community. The School values its diverse community and respects the rights, beliefs and practices of individuals and their families. Parents are students' most significant role models. Accordingly, the School expects a high standard of personal behaviour from parents when they are on School grounds, attending events or communicating with staff or other students. For example:

- Refraining from engaging in malicious or judgmental gossip (either directly or online) and ensuring that anything they say about others is fair and truthful.
- Refraining from actions and behavior that constitutes bullying, harassment, discrimination or vilification.
- Refraining from offensive, insulting or derogatory language or conduct. This includes wearing clothing with offensive language or insignia.

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- Dressing appropriately according to the occasion.
- Refrain from disrupting classes or students
- Not smoking on School grounds or within 5 metres of the School boundary.
- Not possessing alcohol on School grounds, unless the event has been sanctioned by the School.
- Not attending School events if affected by alcohol or any other intoxicant.
- Showing proper care and regard for School property, the property of others and Occupational Health and Safety considerations.
- No unauthorised use of any type of camera (including smart phones)
- Adhere to all DMC policies and procedures
- Report any breaches of Student, Staff or Parent Codes of Conduct
- **Report any concerns you may have about grooming or child abuse to a teacher, Principal or Board Chair.**

## Guidelines of the Code of Conduct

### 1. Communication and interaction with staff, other parents and students

Parents are expected to interact civilly with staff, students and other parents always. Written and spoken communication should be courteous and respectful. Abusive language, raising your voice, insulting or violent behaviour to anyone on School grounds or at any School-related event, is not appropriate. If a parent wishes to contact a staff member they may do so by only calling the school administration or using the teacher DMC email address. Staff are not expected to contact parents outside of 8.00am to 5.00pm weekdays. Parents also need to ensure that contact is not of a disrupting or harassing nature.

Parents are expected to ensure that relationships with students are strictly in accordance with appropriate roles and that favouritism and special treatment are avoided.

Parents are expected to ensure that physical contact with students is appropriate given the age of, and relationship with the student such that questions of impropriety do not arise. Whilst interaction between students can be unruly it is not appropriate to discipline another parents' child whilst on school grounds, unless there is a reasonable health and safety concern. Physical contact should be avoided unless there is a reasonable health and safety concern. In some circumstances parents are required by law to advise the School of areas of potential conflict, such as parenting and family court orders.

The School expects parents to behave lawfully on School grounds and observe the terms of any order, obligation or undertaking they may be subject to. What parents can expect from a staff member if communication becomes inappropriate (including over the top communication when it can be deemed harassment) in cases where a parent does not interact civilly with staff, either in person in or outside of the school grounds, during a phone call, or via email, the staff member may take one of the following actions:

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- Request that the parent cease their inappropriate communication to allow the communication to proceed.
- Inform the parent that unless the inappropriate communication ceases, the staff member may put an end to the phone call, meeting or discussion.
- Request another staff member be present for the remainder of the meeting, if deemed necessary to proceed with such.
- Lodge a complaint against the offending parent.

## 2. Social Media

Social media can be defined as how we use technology to communicate and connect with others. Despite the range of positive uses for social media, there are also several ethical and legal issues associated with its use. Many people may hold the mistaken belief that anything published online will be without legal consequence. However, parents should be aware that there are several potential legal liabilities that may arise, particularly in relation to issues pertaining to reputational damage, and defamation. Parents can ensure they abide by the laws and the School's expectations of its parents, by complying with the following:

- The School, its staff and members of its community should not be mentioned or discussed in a negative or defamatory way.
- Photographs of students in school uniform represent the School and its students and should not be posted if they have the potential to bring negative connotations towards the Schools or its staff and students.
- Photographs containing other students should not be posted without the express consent of the other child/children's parents.
- Email addresses of parents, staff and students should not be given to other people without their express consent.
- Parents are not permitted to contact other students via any form of social media without the express consent of the student's parents.

### Making a Report

Parents are obligated to notify the school of the any breaches of Student, Staff or Parent Codes of Conduct, to make a report please follow the College Complaints Procedure, which can be found on the school website <https://www.dmc.wa.edu.au/policies-1>

Please note that to ensure the safety of all of our students parents are also expected to report any concerns you may have **about grooming or child abuse** as soon as practicably possible to a teacher, Principal or Chair of the Board.

### What Parents can Expect from the School

The School takes seriously any issues that are brought to its attention. If parents express their concerns to the School, they can expect to be treated with courtesy and respect to try and

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resolve the matter. As a general guide, minor issues may be raised with your child's teacher. Cases of more serious inappropriate conduct or misconduct ought to be directed to the School Principal. Each situation will be considered as it arises and based on the issues. The School will act in accordance with its Complaints Resolution Policy when dealing with complaints.

## **Breaches of this Code of Conduct**

With these guidelines in place it is hoped that parents can appropriately direct their concerns and contribute to a harmonious school community that reflects and builds on the School's values. The consequences for breaches of this Code of Conduct will be determined by the Principal and may include one of the following:

- The School may ban a parent from entry to School grounds or from attending co-curricular activities or other events.
- The School may direct that a parent may only communicate with members of staff through a nominated School representative.
- In cases of extreme or prolonged breach of this Code of Conduct by a parent, the School may terminate the enrolment of the child of that parent.
- The School may, where appropriate, involve other authorities.
- The School may take other such steps as it deems appropriate according to the nature of the breach.