

Policy title:

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

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1. INTENT OF THE CODE

The purpose of the Girton Grammar School *Parent Code of Conduct* is to ensure that a sense of safety, collaboration and belonging prevails within the Girton Grammar School community. The publication of a *Parent Code of Conduct* is also a requirement for the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority.

Just as students are expected to understand and behave according to the *Behavioural Expectations Policy*, and Girton staff are expected to behave according to the *Victorian Institute of Teaching Code of Conduct*, so too are parents, as integral members of the School community, expected to share and demonstrate the values that support good conduct.

2. RATIONALE

The *Parent Code of Conduct* is based on the premise that parents are the first and most important role models for children. Along with other adults in their lives, young people are influenced by the choices that adults make and the behaviours that they exhibit.

While parents sometimes need to advocate for their child, the manner in which this occurs sets an example for the young person in question.

It is intended that the implementation of the Girton Grammar School *Parent Code of Conduct*, through conscious role modelling of good citizenship and ethical conduct, supports coherence in the School community, paving the way for goodwill to prevail.

3. SCOPE

The *Parent Code of Conduct* applies to all parents and carers of Girton Grammar School students while engaging in School-related activities or representing the School, both at the School and at other venues, such as sporting grounds. Visitors to the School are also subject to the *Parent Code of Conduct*. Policy implementation extends to the use of social media, online forums or other digital platforms.

Whilst this code is specifically for parents, it is expected that all custodial adults will adhere to the code. This includes parents, guardians, step-parents, grandparents, non-Girton student siblings, extended family members and caregivers, of current Girton Grammar School students.

4. POLICY GOVERNANCE

- 4.1 Agreement is required in writing by parents and carers upon enrolment of their child to adhere to the *Parent Code of Conduct*. Parents and carers of students already enrolled at the School will be notified of the introduction of the *Parent Code of Conduct* and will be expected to adhere to the Code.
- 4.2 Any adult or student within the School community is entitled to report an alleged breach of the Parent Code of Conduct to the Head for consideration.

5. BREACH OF POLICY

- 5.1 Parents and visitors who breach the *Parent Code of Conduct* will be contacted by the Head, who may make a discretionary decision related to appropriate action for the breach. This may include being banned from coming onto School grounds, attending School functions or School-based activities.
- 5.2 For repeated breach of the *Parent Code of Conduct*, families should be aware that the Head is entitled to terminate the contract that exists for each student at the School.
- 5.3 In accordance with applicable legislation and the School's Child Protection Policy, the Police and/or Department of Human and Health Services will be informed of any unlawful parent behaviour.

6. SCHOOL VALUES

All parents, guardians, step-parents, family members, and friends of students enrolled at the School must support and encourage the values, activities and ethos of the School, and are encouraged to read and understand the policies of the School, including the Girton Grammar School *Mission and Values* document.

The School's *Imagine Charter* articulates the way that students and staff wish to feel when they are at School and the behaviours that they agree to adopt to support those feelings.

The main values articulated in the School Charter are:

- Excellence
- Trust
- Respect
- Confidence
- Inclusion

These are the values that are expected to be understood and demonstrated by parents and carers, along with students and staff at Girton Grammar School.

7. EXPECTED PARENT CONDUCT

It is expected that parents will:

- 7.1 Behave in a manner that upholds the School's values, outlined above
- 7.2 Behave in a manner that does not endanger the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves or others
- 7.3 Accept cultural and religious diversity
- 7.4 Interact respectfully with staff, students and other parents and assume positive intent from all
- 7.5 Ensure that their actions or behaviour do not bring the School into disrepute
- 7.6 Respect the authority of members of staff and observe School rules
- 7.7 Strictly adhere to the School's policies and procedures
- 7.8 Refrain from all forms of bullying and harassment as described in the School's *Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy*, which is available on the School portal.

8. EXPECTED PARENT CONDUCT AT CO-CURRICULAR AND REPRESENTATIVE EVENTS

It is expected that parents will:

- 8.1 Encourage students to give their best effort and applaud good play and performance regardless of which team, group or child produces it.
- 8.2 Behave respectfully and courteously towards players, coaches, match officials, Girton co-curricular officials and other spectators or audience members.
- 8.3 Never discourage or disparage any co-curricular activity or participant.
- 8.4 Never publicly or directly criticise a match official, coach, manager or another co-curricular official. Complaints should be dealt with in the manner detailed below.

9. PARENT CO-CURRICULUM COMPLAINTS

Complaints concerning the conduct of games or other activities should not be made during or after the game/activity, and especially not in front of students, but should be referred to the Girton Grammar School Head of Co-curriculum and any action will be left to his/her discretion.

For serious complaints, the parent or participant should follow the School's *Complaints and Grievance Policy*, which is available on the School Astra portal.

Under no circumstances, should parents approach or make contact with the opposition's coaches, parents, students or School directly with a complaint.

If a parent or participant wishes to bring a complaint or express a concern about any aspect of a sporting or co-curricular event, they may do so by contacting the Head of Co-curriculum.

10. PARENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

The School takes seriously any issues that are raised by parents and parents are encouraged to contact the School to raise concerns related to the education of their child or other matters related to the School as soon as the issue arises.

Likewise, the School encourages students to self-advocate, and whenever appropriate, parents should support their child in raising concerns themselves, with the appropriate staff member.

It is incumbent upon parents to be familiar with the appropriate person within the School to raise matters of concern. In the Junior School, the classroom teacher is the first point of contact for raising matters of academic or social concern. Concerns may be elevated to the Deputy Head or Head of Junior School as deemed necessary by the parent.

In the Senior School, matters of academic concern should be raised firstly with the relevant subject teacher and elevated to the Head of Department if deemed necessary by the parent. Matters of student wellbeing should be raised firstly with the relevant House Tutor and elevated to the relevant Head of House as necessary. A member of Senior staff such as the Deputy Head or Head of Teaching and Learning, as well as the Head, may be contacted for matters unresolved through one of the aforementioned channels.

Concerns of a School-wide nature should be raised directly with the Head.

When a parent wishes to raise a complaint, the following steps should be taken:

- 10.1 Schedule an appointment with the appropriate staff member.
- 10.2 Parents are asked not to approach students (or the parents of other students) in relation to perceived actions toward their child. An appointment should be made with the relevant staff member before contact is made with other parents or students.

11. PARENT COMMUNICATION

Written and spoken communication, including online communication, to anyone in the School community, should be courteous and respectful, and the following behaviour is expected:

- 11.1 When communicating, parents must refrain from engaging in malicious or judgemental gossip (either directly or online) and ensure that anything they say about others is fair and truthful.
- 11.2 Parents must refrain from swearing or using offensive, abusive, insulting or derogatory language, or raised voices.
- 11.3 Parents must avoid engaging in conversations which constitute harassment, domination, discrimination or denigration or which involve innuendo.
- 11.4 All communication with staff members must occur at an appropriate time so as not to disrupt the staff member's work or interrupt their conversation with others.
- 11.5 Staff members reserve the right to suggest an appointment be made regarding an issue if the time is inconvenient for them to address the matter when an "on the spot" approach is made.
- 11.6 Staff are not expected or encouraged to respond to concerns of parents/carers or students on holidays, weekends or in the evening. Urgent concerns should be communicated to the School by phone.

12. ONLINE CONDUCT

The expected behaviour of parents as outlined in the *Parent Code of Conduct* is applicable online, and in particular:

- 12.1 It is expected that social media will be used to build community and contribute to a positive dynamic amongst parents.
- 12.2 Parents should not take or post photographs of other students without the express consent of the other child and the child's parents.
- 12.3 Parents should not post photographs of students in School uniform if it has the potential to bring negative comments towards the student(s), staff or School
- 12.4 Parents should not set up any group with the word "Girton" in its title without prior approval from the Girton Communications Manager. It may mislead any reader to believe the School moderates the page.

- 12.5 Email addresses and social media contact details of parents should not be given to other people without their express consent.
- 12.6 Girton Staff members are not expected or encouraged to connect with parents or carers on Social Media. (Note also, Girton staff members are not permitted to connect with students via Social Media except with express permission from the Head, in certain circumstances).

13. RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- *Behavioural Expectations Policy*
- *Victorian Institute of Teaching Code of Conduct*
- *Child Protection Policy*
- *School Charter*
- *Girton Grammar School Mission and Values*
- *Suspension and Expulsion Policy*
- *Complaints and Grievance Procedure*
- *Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy*
- *Staff and Student Professional Boundaries*