



BIRKENHEAD SCHOOL

PARENTAL CHARTER

1. Introduction

At Birkenhead School we are committed to fostering a safe and respectful environment for everyone. As part of this, we set expectations about the conduct and behaviour of our staff and all members of our community, including the families of students at the School.

We are extremely fortunate to have a committed and supportive School community where staff, governors and parents recognise that the education of our children and young people is a partnership between all of us. Accordingly, we welcome the participation of our parents in the life of the School. We endeavour to maintain positive relationships with parents and visitors and are committed to resolving difficulties in a constructive manner through open, positive communication.

When you apply for and (if a place is offered) when you accept a place for your child at Birkenhead School, it is the start of a partnership in which good working relationships between staff and parents are essential. To fulfil our obligations to you and your child, and to maintain a constructive relationship with you, we ask for your cooperation and that you engage with the School in a manner that is reasonable and respectful.

Section 9 of the School's Terms and Conditions (Conditions of Admission) sets out your obligations as parents of a child at the School.

This Charter provides further detail about how we expect parents to interact with the School and behave towards, and communicate with, other members of the School community, including School staff, representatives of the School, visitors, and other students – in person or online.

For this Protocol, parent has the same meaning as parent in the Parental Charter and means any person who has signed the Acceptance Form as a holder of parental responsibility for the child at the School. It will – in addition - also include prospective parents who are engaging with the School's admissions process.

2. Supporting your child

It is important that parents model good behaviour and learning habits. The School expects that you will support your child in their education and participation in School life including by:

- encouraging your child in their studies and giving appropriate support at home, including by providing suitable time and space for any homework to be completed independently;
- ensuring your child attends School and arrives on time and ready to learn;

- responding to any requests for information or consent regarding your child's participation in School activities in a timely manner;
- engaging quickly, openly, and cooperatively with School staff should they raise any concerns with you regarding your child's academic progress, behaviour, or wellbeing; and
- attending routine parent meetings or any individual meetings arranged to discuss or support your child.

3. Sharing information with the School

For the School to provide the best possible education and care for your child it is essential that details of any matters that may affect your child are shared with the School in a timely and transparent manner, and that such information is accurate, truthful, and not misleading. This will include information (or any updates to information) relating to:

- your child's emotional, psychological, or physical wellbeing;
- any health/medical condition, disability, or allergies;
- any special educational needs;
- any court orders applicable to your child;
- your child's ability to continue as a student at the School (e.g. inability to pay the School fees/any change in immigration status); or
- any other matter that may impact on your child's engagement in day-to-day School life.

4. Communicating with the School

The School values positive, timely, two-way communication with parents and expects that all parents will:

- check the most appropriate member of staff to contact about a particular issue. Your child's Form Teacher will be able to assist with this if required.
- refrain from unreasonably duplicating correspondence and requesting replies from multiple staff on the same issue;
- respect the working hours of staff (usually between the hours of 8am – 5pm Monday to Friday) when making contact and while awaiting a response. Staff will aim to respond to emails within 48 working hours;
- recognise that School staff have many competing duties during a typical day which may mean that they are not immediately available. For example, staff may not be able to respond to queries within an unrealistic timeframe e.g. staff may not be able to respond on the same day;
- if requesting a meeting or telephone call, provide as much information as possible in advance so that staff can prepare appropriately and ensure a productive meeting;
- raise any concerns or complaints directly with the School via the appropriate channels; and
- ensure all communications (whether in person, via email, by telephone or otherwise) are reasonable, polite, and appropriate, including in respect of the content, tone, volume, and/or nature of the communication.

We encourage you to raise any day-to-day queries or issues regarding your child's experience at School at the earliest opportunity, and we hope we can work together in a constructive manner to resolve them. The School has a Complaints policy which governs how any complaints will be

handled, and we ask parents to use this policy appropriately to raise concerns and complaints, seeking to resolve them informally, where possible and appropriate.

5. Respecting professional decisions

Although always willing to discuss the context for any decision regarding your child, the School expects parents to understand and respect that, as education professionals, School staff:

- have an overriding duty to the students in its care, including your child. This duty of care to each student must always be balanced alongside the needs of the School community, as well as the rights and interests of parents;
- may issue a disciplinary sanction against a student, following due process and in accordance with the School's policies relating to behaviour and discipline, with the expectation that parents will support and uphold any such measure;
- will allocate students to teaching sets (where applicable) based on their professional judgment and knowledge of each individual student within the context of the student's peer group; and
- are obliged to act with integrity and honesty when predicting or assessing grades, writing references for students, or engaging with exam requirements and regulations (including in respect of suspected malpractice).

6. Unacceptable conduct or behaviour

The School appreciates that the vast majority of parents are reasonable, respectful in all their interactions with School staff and supportive of the wider School community. However, instances where the School determines that parental conduct or behaviour has fallen short of the expectations as set out in this Charter will be taken seriously. The School will always respond to an incident in a proportionate way, prioritising always the interests of our students and wider School community.

Where warranted, and depending on the nature of the conduct or behaviour in question, the School will take appropriate steps in response which could include, for example, and is not exhaustive:

- not progressing an admissions application (where the conduct is by a prospective parent);
- writing to the parent/s to remind them of their obligations and the expected standards of behaviour/conduct;
- requiring specific action, for example, to attend a meeting or provide certain information;
- inviting the parent/s to meet with a senior member of staff or the Principal;
- implementing a communication plan which places some parameters or conditions on the manner in which the parent/s may communicate with the School;
- not allowing the parent/s to attend the School site or certain School events;
- seeking advice from our legal team regarding further action (in cases that may be libellous or slanderous); or
- requiring the removal of their child from the School in accordance with the School's Terms and Conditions (Conditions of Admission).

The following are examples, not exhaustive, of parental conduct that is particularly serious and may result in the child being asked to leave the School:

- repeated and or persistent breaches of the Parental Charter or Parent Contract;
- treating the School, a member of staff or another member of the School community unreasonably, which may include:
 - acts of physical aggression, violence, intimidation, or threat;
 - use of offensive, abusive or otherwise inappropriate or disrespectful language; or
 - any discriminatory, bullying, or harassing conduct or behaviour including sexual harassment.
- making a malicious allegation about a member of staff or the School;
- posting derogatory, defamatory, or offensive comments about the School or any member of the School community online;
- communicating with the School in person or in writing (directly or indirectly) in a manner which is deemed voluminous, relentless, confrontational, unreasonable, and/or overly aggressive; or
- behaving in a manner which is likely to, or does, adversely affect the safety or welfare of any member of the School community.

The above applies to all interactions, including personal, telephone, email, text, letter, or social media/online communications.

We thank parents for reading and following this Parental Charter.