



ST EDMUND'S
COLLEGE
CANBERRA · EST 1954

**Code of
Conduct
for Parents
and Carers**



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Code of Conduct for Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are valued members of the St Edmund's College community. We ask parents and carers to adhere to this Code of Conduct to help us promote positive, productive and respectful relationships within our community. This Code of Conduct applies to ***all parents and carers***.

1. RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

As a Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition, St Edmund's College has a distinctive spirituality.

As an Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) school, we seek to give active witness to the four Touchstones of the EREA Charter: Liberating Education, Inclusive Community, Gospel Spirituality and Justice & Solidarity. Together, they form our core character and identity.

St Edmund's College comprises a wide variety of individuals who work together to help our students become confident, well-educated community members who can contribute as good citizens, co-operate with others and act reflectively and ethically. Our shared values and an understanding of acceptable behaviours enable members of the St Edmund's College community to work together with respect and appreciation for each other.

We recognise our legal obligation to ensure the ongoing health and safety of students, staff and families within our community. We encourage parents and carers to support our educational environment that exemplifies our Edmund Rice tradition, encouraging our students to grow into the fullness of their humanity where they feel welcomed, accepted and valued.

St Edmund's College fulfils its mission in partnership with parents and carers who are the first educators of their children. We recognise that parents and carers are valuable participants in our community, and we want to work in partnership with parents and carers to provide and support the safe and positive education and care of students.

It is a requirement that all St Edmund's College families adhere to principles and practices as outlined in the College's Enrolment Policy and Conditions of Enrolment, as signed by parents.

This *Code of Conduct for Parents and Carers* sets out the way the College expects parents and carers to conduct themselves in their interaction with all members of the College community including but not limited to all staff, students, other parents and carers and volunteers.

2. STUDENT BEHAVIOUR AND WELLBEING

The College expects students to comply with its policies and procedures and not engage in behaviour which is harmful to others or is contrary to the ethos and philosophy of the College. Parents and carers are expected to support the College in relation to its behaviour management policy and not act in a manner which undermines its authority. It must be understood that in the case of minor disciplinary matters, the College will be the arbiter of what took place and determine a fair consequence. The College will not engage in debate about the details of the conduct or the appropriateness of the consequences.

In relation to more significant disciplinary matters which may result in suspension or withdrawal of enrolment, the College will inform parents and carers of the matter and will deal with it in accord with the principles of procedural fairness as outlined in the College behaviour management policy. While parents will be consulted, the College will determine the final decision.

The College behaviour management policy is found in the Student Wellbeing Handbook and can be found here: <https://sec.act.edu.au/pastoral-care-handbook/> (or look in the “College Life” tab on the College website).

3. INTERACTIONS WITH STAFF

The College conducts regular meetings between staff and parents/carers at which the student’s progress can be discussed, including parent/teacher interviews each semester. There may be other times when a parent/carer or staff member requests a meeting to discuss issues that may arise during the course of a student’s schooling.

If a parent/carer 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 by emailing the staff member directly and negotiating a mutually convenient time.

Parents/carers should never attempt to contact a staff member at their home or discuss school issues should they meet a member of staff in the community.

It is important that parents/carers demonstrate respect for staff and not publicly criticise them or seek to undermine their authority. If a parent/carer has a particular concern about a member of staff, they should raise it with the staff member concerned through an agreed meeting. However when doing so they should observe the general rules of conduct set out in this Code.

The College has a duty of care to protect all staff and for this reason any aggressive, abusive or inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated.

It is College policy that members of staff respond to emails within 24 hours. A response prior to this is not always reasonable or practical due to the work schedule of members of staff.

4. RAISING CONCERNS

If a parent/carer has a complaint about an issue, this should be directed to the staff member responsible for the particular area or activity. Following this, the parent/carer may send an email to complaints@stedmunds.act.edu.au, or write a letter to the College addressed to “The Complaints Manager”, or telephone the College and ask to speak to the Complaints Manager. All formal complaints will be logged into our online complaints management system and managed in accordance with our Complaints Handling Process. (At St Edmund’s College the Complaints Manager is the Deputy Principal).

More information about the process of making a complaint can be found at <https://sec.act.edu.au/feedback-complaints/> (or look in the “About” tab on the College website).

If a parent/carer wishes to make a complaint, they should not use rude or abusive language. This is not productive and can make it more difficult to resolve concerns.

Parents/carers must not take it upon themselves to enter the College to raise an issue with a student other than their own child. If there are issues involving other students, parents/carers must raise this with the appropriate teacher and not attempt to raise it with the student or the student’s parents via phone, email or social media.

5. GENERAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal or written communications with other members of the College community – including teachers, support staff, volunteers, other parents / carers or students should:

- demonstrate respect, courtesy and consideration, ensuring that what is said or written about others is fair, respectful and truthful.
- use language which is impartial, respectful, honest and not offensive, insulting, derogatory or confrontational.
- refrain from engaging in malicious or judgemental gossip.
- value the dignity of each person.
- refrain from any conduct that may be characterised as bullying, harassment, discrimination or vilification (or any other illegal behaviour).
- ensure any complaint complies with the complaint process in this Code of Conduct.
- ensure that relationships with students are strictly appropriate by avoiding any favouritism, special treatment or exclusion.

Interactions whilst on College grounds

Whilst on College grounds, parents/carers should:

- dress respectfully and appropriately for the occasion.
- not possess alcohol on the College site unless the event has been endorsed by the College Principal.
- not attend College events if affected by alcohol or other intoxicants.
- not carry firearms, knives or weapons of any kind.
- show respect for College property and the property of other members of the College community.
- ensure all conduct is appropriate to ensure the health and safety of all College employees.

Parents/carers who wish to enter the College must sign in at Reception.

6. SOCIAL MEDIA

There are ethical and legal issues with the use of social media that can be directly and indirectly damaging to the College and members of its community. When using social media, parents/carers are to:

- be positive and respectful about the College, its staff and students
- avoid expressing grievances about the College
- make reasonable efforts to ensure that their children comply with the College's ICT Policy.

- refrain from posting a photo or video recording of another student without the prior consent of the student's parent/carer.
- refrain from posting a photo or video recording of a staff member or parent in any forum without their prior consent.
- respect confidentiality and not disclose any confidential information about a member of the College community.
- respect other parents/carers and not use social media as a means of contacting other students.
- refrain from posting any material that may damage the reputation of the College or a member of the College community.
- not speak on behalf of the College.

7. SPORT

Our students engage in organised sports for fun, fitness, teamwork, development of skills, demonstration of good sportsmanship and positive representation of the College.

The sports coaches select teams based on their view of the most appropriate selection at the relevant time. It is not appropriate for parents to complain about the selection of a team, or their son's role within that team.

Parents/carers, as spectators at organised sports events, should set a positive example by following these guidelines (noting that a number of sports have their own codes by which parents/carers need to abide):

- Applaud good performances and efforts from each team; congratulate all participants on their performance regardless of the game's outcome.
- Respect the decision of officials.
- Encourage players to follow the rules and the decisions of officials.
- Never ridicule or scold a student for making a mistake during a competition.
- Motivate and encourage continued effort among players.
- Focus on the efforts and performance of the students/players rather than the result.
- Condemn the use of violence in any form, be it by spectators, coaches, officials or players.
- Respect the team's opponents.
- Demonstrate appropriate social behaviour by not using foul language, harassing players, coaches or officials.
- Refrain from interfering with the running of the game with inappropriate comments or actions.
- Refrain from making complaints concerning the conduct of games during or after the game. All complaints should be referred to the Co-Curricular Manager in the first instance. The Co-Curricular Manager will then determine the most appropriate pathway to handle the complaint.
- Under no circumstances should parents/carers approach or contact the referee / umpire, opposition's coaches, parents, students or school in a negative manner. Positive interactions with members of the opposing team are encouraged in terms of congratulatory actions, checking on the wellbeing of a player, etc.
- All grounds must be kept clean, and students encouraged to help in picking up any litter. Litter must be placed in the bins provided.

8. FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES

Where some students have parents that are separated or divorced, parents should not attempt to involve the College in any parental dispute that may arise. The College 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 the College be asked to take any action which would or is designed to disadvantage one party.

Parents are asked to advise the College of any areas of potential conflict such as parenting and family court orders in accordance with the relevant laws. The College will observe any orders made by a Court in relation to a student or communications with parents / carers.

9. FAILURE TO OBSERVE THIS CODE

The College requires all parents/carers to comply with this Code of Conduct so their behaviour contributes to a harmonious College community and provides a positive example for their child.

If a parent/carer does not act in accordance with this Code of Conduct, the staff member may:

- request that the parent refrain from the inappropriate conduct before communication can resume.
- advise the parent that if the inappropriate conduct continues, there will be no further communication.
- request that another staff member be present to continue the communication or for any future communication; and/or
- lodge a complaint against the parent with the Complaints Manager.

Where a parent/carer breaches the Code of Conduct, the Principal will determine the consequences which may include any of the following:

- The parent/carer may be restricted from entry to the College grounds or from attending College-related events for a specified period.
- The parent/carer may be asked to only communicate with the College through a nominated representative.
- The parent/carer may be reported to other relevant authorities.
- Where the breach is extreme or prolonged, the Principal may terminate the enrolment of the parent's child or children.

10. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- College Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Enrolment Agreement Form
- EREA Safeguarding Standards
- St Edmund's College Commitment to Child Safety