



St. Joseph the Worker School

PARENTAL CODE OF CONDUCT

MISSION STATEMENT:

As a Christ-centred community of learners, we celebrate the unique gifts of each child and support the family in its responsibility for the academic, social and spiritual development of the child. We offer quality education, foster a love of learning and promote personal fulfillment based on the mutual respect for all members of the school community. Our goal is to enable each student to become a life-long learner, to become a community builder and to lead a life rooted in Christian values and faith.

BACKGROUND:

This policy has been produced to assist the Principal when dealing with disrespectful, violent, and/or threatening behaviour, or abuse by parents of students in St. Joseph the Worker School. The policy would also be applicable when dealing with other visitors or intruders on school premises.

Violence, threatening behaviour, and/or abuse against school staff or other members of the school community will not be tolerated. All members of the school community have a right to expect that their school is a safe and respectful place in which to work and learn as there is no place for violence or threatening behaviour in schools.

The term 'parents' in this policy includes guardians and caregivers.

POLICY STATEMENT:

All people are created in the image and likeness of God and, as such, all people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

We believe that everyone - students, parents/guardians, teachers, staff, and volunteers - has the right to be safe and feel safe in our school. With this right comes a very large responsibility: to be law-abiding citizens and to be accountable for actions that put at risk the safety of others or oneself. Violent or disrespectful behaviour is contrary to our Gospel and Catholic values.

Our *Code of Conduct* outlines the responsibilities students, parents and staff must accept to maintain a safe, secure, positive, productive, and faith-based learning environment.

RATIONALE:

Schools should be safe places where relationships between staff, parents, and visitors demonstrate a mutual respect and recognition of shared responsibility for students' welfare and educational progress. However, in a very small minority of cases, the behaviour of parents can cause disruption, resulting in abusive or aggressive behaviour towards staff, students, Board members, other parents, and/or other community members.

The school reserves the right to take any necessary actions to ensure that members of the school community are not subjected to abuse.



School premises are private property and parents have been granted permission from the school to be on school premises. However, in case of abuse or threats to staff, pupils or other parents, school may ban parents from entering school.

It is against the law for any person (including a parent) to cause a nuisance or disturbance on school premises. The police may be called to assist in removing the person concerned.

The school is not responsible for organizing arrangements for children in the above circumstances. Parents will need to provide alternative arrangements for bringing children into school.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

It is the responsibility of the Principal and the St. Joseph the Worker School Board to monitor and review this policy.

EXPECTATIONS:

- That adults set a good example to children at all times, showing them how to get along with all members of the school and the wider community.
- That no staff member, parents, or children are the victims of abusive behaviour or open to threats from other adults on the school premises.
- Physical attacks and threatening behaviour, abusive or insulting language verbal or written, to staff, Board members, parents, and caregivers, children and other users of the school premises will not be tolerated and will result in the revoking of permission to be on school premises.
- Incidents where a parent is under the influence (of illegal or prescription drugs, alcohol, etc.) on school premises will not be tolerated and will result in withdrawal of permission to be on school premises.
- Any parent who is asked to leave the school premises will have the right to appeal the decision by writing to the St. Joseph the Worker School Board within 10 days of the incident.

GUIDELINES:

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated towards any member of the school community (*This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour*):

1. Bullying, harassing, or abusing another member of our school community physically, sexually, psychologically, verbally, in writing or otherwise, is unacceptable. Bullying is behaviour that is intended to cause, or should be known to cause fear, intimidation, humiliation, distress, or other forms of harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, reputation, or property. It is also behaviour intended to create, or should be known to create, a negative school environment for another person. Bullying takes place in a context of a real or perceived power imbalance between the people involved and is typically (but need not be) repeated behaviour. It may be direct (face to face) or indirect



(through others); it may take place through any form of expression, including written, verbal, physical, or any form of electronic communication.

Types of Harassment or Bullying may include but, are not limited to:

- Physical - such as gestures, slapping, hitting, choking, poking, punching, pinching, kicking, scratching, spitting, defacing property, physical acts that are embarrassing, locking in and out of space, physical violence against family or friends, threatening with a weapon, or inflicting bodily harm.
 - Verbal - such as name calling, gossiping or embarrassing another, spreading rumors, ethnic slurs, setting up to take blame, taunting, teasing, threatening, phone calls, text messaging, threats of violence against family or friends.
 - Social/Relational – actions or behaviours such as rejection, exclusion, manipulating, social order, setting up to humiliate in person or through the use of technology.
 - Cyberbullying - such as the use of information and communication technologies including e-mail, cell phone text messages, instant messaging, social media, digital cameras, defamatory personal web sites, and defamatory online personal polling websites, to support deliberate, repeated, or hostile behaviour by an individual or group that results in harm to others.
2. Possessing a weapon, as defined in section 2 of the *Criminal Code*, will not be tolerated at school.
 3. Using, possessing or being under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs on school property or, on school related activities - inside or outside the school – is unacceptable.
 4. Other behaviours such as, but not limited to:
 - Shouting, either in person or over the telephone
 - Speaking in an aggressive/threatening tone
 - Physically intimidating, e.g. standing very close
 - The use of aggressive hand gestures/exaggerated movements
 - Physical threats
 - Shaking or holding a fist towards another person
 - Swearing
 - Pushing
 - Hitting e.g. slapping, punching or kicking
 - Spitting
 - Racist or sexist comments.

LEGAL POSITION:

The Principal and other staff members should be aware that parents who have been banned from school premises have a general right to seek an appointment to speak to school staff in relation to their child's welfare or educational progress.

Banning a parent from school premises should not put their child/children at risk. The Principal must ensure that safe and effective arrangements are in place for delivery and collection of children to and from school.



St. Joseph the Worker School may wish to contact a lawyer to discuss these issues, and receive further guidance on writing to parents in such circumstances.

RISK ASSESSMENT:

Schools should consider the need for personal safety guidelines so that staff members know how they are expected to deal with situations where their personal safety or the safety of students may be at risk.

A risk assessment should be prepared to protect staff by ensuring the following control measures are in place:

- means of summoning assistance is available in key areas.
- individual consultations to take place in an area where staff may summon help if necessary.
- two staff members should see a parent together when it is considered that the meeting could be difficult.
- guidelines in place so that staff know how they are expected to deal with situations where their personal safety may be at risk.
- emergency procedures are in place and are known and understood by all school based employees.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH AGGRESSIVE VISITORS:

If an incident arises, a staff member should:

- Ask the person to leave or invite them to a room away from a crowded area or classroom.
- Seek assistance from the Principal (or in their absence, a senior staff member).
- In the event of serious violence or aggressive behaviour, contact the police using 911.
- Report the incident using the *Incident Report Form*.

POLICE ASSISTANCE:

In the event of a parent (or other person) becoming aggressive or violent, schools **should not hesitate to contact the police using 911**. When the situation does not require immediate Police response, but there is prior knowledge of likely trouble, the Principal may contact the local Police Station for advice.

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES:

In extreme circumstances, the Principal may need to take action to prevent the type of behaviour listed above. They must decide whether a situation has been reached for a warning letter saying that “repeats of such behaviour may well lead to a ban” or proposing an actual “ban”. This is a matter for individual judgement; things may occur in stages or, be so serious, that consideration of a ban becomes immediately apparent.

This policy contains example letters (*see Appendix*) warning/banning parents from school premises. The Principal (or School Board) considering issuing a warning/banning letter to parents, can amend these letters to reflect individual circumstances.

Parents have the right to appeal by writing to the St. Joseph the Worker School Board within ten days of permission to enter the school premises being revoked.



After the Incident: The Principal should:

- Ask the people who witnessed the incident to make witness reports in writing as soon as possible after the incident, (using the *Incident Report Form*). Reports must be signed and dated.
- Make it clear that the reports may be disclosed to the perpetrator, and the witness should indicate whether or not they are prepared for this to happen.
- The Principal should discuss the incident and actions to be taken with the School Board, who should be kept informed of the incident.
- Consider whether the person should be banned or given a warning letter. If a letter is thought necessary, then the appropriate warning banning letter should be sent to the parent. (*see Appendix*).

If a ban is renewed after the initial period, the Principal should:

- impose any further ban for a fixed period of time and explain that s/he will review the ban at the end of that given period.
- As soon as this happens the Principal should write to the parent informing him/her of the decision to extend the ban or not to renew it after the initial period has lapsed. (*See model letters 3 and 4*).

The Principal may also choose to follow the following guidelines:

- **First Occurrence:** A meeting with the Principal will be arranged to discuss appropriate communication and action. A verbal warning may be given. If a meeting is not possible, a letter will be issued to the adult, explaining the school's ground rules and/or policies, and what is acceptable behaviour. The adult will be asked to discontinue the disruptive behaviour.
- **Second Occurrence:** The adult will be asked to leave the premises. Any staff member who witnesses or is the subject of inappropriate behaviour has the authority to ask the adult to leave. This applies to the school grounds, as well as at any school sponsored activities or events. If the adult refuses to leave, the police will be called to have the person removed. In the case of gossip, slander, or defamation, legal action may be initiated.
- **Third Occurrence:** The adult will be banned from further contact with St. Joseph the Worker School. If it is a parent with enrolled children, the adult will be issued a letter of termination of their child's enrollment in St. Joseph the Worker School. Further legal action may be taken to prohibit any contact with the school and its employees. The family will be responsible for any fees or tuition due for 30 days after the termination date.
- **Extremely Harmful Behaviour:** In the case of extremely harmful behaviour or disruptive behaviour such as but are not limited to: physical violence, entering the school grounds under the influence of alcohol or drugs, jeopardizing a child's safety, etc; St. Joseph the Worker School reserves the right to terminate contact with the family and bypassing all the steps listed above.

Before a ban is considered, a parent should be given the chance to make representations as to why they should not be banned from the premises; this may not always be possible as the parents' behaviour may mean that the ban must take effect immediately. In those cases, the immediate ban should be for a relatively short period (three weeks or less), during which period the parent can make representations before the ban is confirmed and extended.



Appendix 1

Model Letter 1 – Warning letter from the Principal/School Board

Dear _____

Re: Your conduct on school premises on (*insert date*)

In reference to the incident that took place on school premises today (*or insert relevant day*) when you (*insert details of the incident*). ***If the Principal did not witness the incident they may wish to use the following text:*** I have considered the witness accounts of the incident, (*if relevant: including your own*), and it would appear (*insert details of incident*).

Your behaviour falls short of the standard of conduct expected of those visiting the school. I must therefore warn that if you are involved in a similar incident again, as per St. Joseph the Worker School policy # _____, I will be left with no alternative other than to ban you from coming onto the school premises without my written permission.

I do hope that this will not be necessary and that I can rely on your cooperation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Principal



Appendix 2

Model Letter 2 – Ban from school premises for one week (or so) whilst obtaining the parent’s account and views from the Principal/School Board

Dear _____

Re: Your conduct on school premises on (*insert date*)

I refer to the incident that took place on school premises today (*or insert relevant day*) when you (*insert details of the incident*). *If the Principal did not witness the incident, the following text may be used:* I have considered the witness accounts of the incident, (*if relevant: including your own*), and it would appear (*insert details of incident*).

Your behaviour falls short of the standard of conduct expected of those visiting the school, as per St. Joseph the Worker policy # _____. (*Omit if this is a first incident – As you will remember, I have previously warned you about your behaviour when I wrote to you on (date)*). I have considered the matter very carefully and have decided that you should not be allowed onto the school premises from now until (*insert date*).

During that time I will review the situation. Before I make a final decision you may, if you wish, write to give me any further information take into consideration. You have until (*insert date*) to submit said letter.

If you need to speak to me or a staff member about any matter, please contact the school via telephone call. I will make the necessary arrangements and confirm them to you in writing. You will not be allowed to come onto the school premises unless you have a letter from me giving you authorization. If you do not comply with this ban, you will be guilty of causing a nuisance or disturbance on educational premises. This is a criminal offence. If you were to commit this offence, you would be liable to prosecution. If you were to be convicted, you would be liable to a fine and a criminal conviction.

I regret that I have had to take this action and hope that I can rely on your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,
Principal



Appendix 3

Model Letter 3 – Ban from school premises specified period from the Principal/School Board

Dear _____

Re: Your conduct on school premises on (*insert date*)

I refer to the incident that took place on school premises on (*insert relevant day*) when you (*insert details of the incident*).

In my letter dated (*insert date*), I referred to my intention to ban you from the premises and I invited you to make representations to me about this. ***Delete this if no contact has been received from the parent (I have considered the points you have made to me and) I have decided to proceed with the ban for a period of (insert number of weeks or an indefinite period), until (insert date), after which time, the ban will be reviewed by myself and the Chair of the St. Joseph the Worker School Board and myself. I will write to you again when this review is going to take place so that you may make written representations, which we will take into account.***

When we have made our decision, I shall write informing you of it together with our reasons. If you need to speak to me or a staff member about any matter, please contact the school via telephone call, and I will make the necessary arrangements and confirm them to you in writing. You will not be allowed to come onto the school premises unless you have an authorization letter from me.

If you do not comply with this ban, you will be guilty of causing a nuisance or disturbance on educational premises. This is a criminal offence. If you were to commit this offence, you would be liable to prosecution. If you were to be convicted, you would be liable to a fine and a criminal conviction.

I regret that I have had to take this action and hope that I can rely on your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,
Principal



Appendix 4

Model Letter 4 – Lifting a ban from school premises from the Principal/School Board

Dear _____

Re: Your conduct on school premises on (*insert date*)

On (*insert date*), I wrote informing you that I had temporarily withdrawn permission for you to come onto the school premises. To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to provide your written comments regarding this incident by (*insert date*).

I have not received a written response from you/I have now received a letter from you dated (*insert date*), the contents of which I have noted. (*delete either sentence as appropriate*). (However) in the circumstances, (*insert detail*) I have decided to restore permission onto the school premises, effective immediately.

Nevertheless, I remain very concerned at the incident which occurred on (*insert date*), and I must warn that if there is any repetition of said behaviour, I shall not hesitate to revoke your permission onto the school premises again.

Yours sincerely,
Principal