



Visitors Code of Conduct Policy 2025-2028

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Approved by: Full Governing Body	
Last review: December 2025	Next review: December 2028

Purpose & Key Principles

Dorset Studio School aims to be a safe, respectful environment for staff, students, and visitors by promoting positive partnerships with parents/carer(s), families, and other visitors.

We believe that parent(s)/carer(s) and families are keen to collaborate with us and are supportive of the school. However, there may be rare occasions when there is a disagreement about a certain matter and its resolution. In such cases, it is important to maintain a solution-focussed dialogue in the best interests of the student(s).

To keep relationships respectful and dignified, we have set out the following key principles:

- All parties will seek to promote mutual respect and shared responsibility in school-home relationships.
- The School will maintain rights for staff and students to feel safe without fear of aggression or abuse.
- The School will ensure its expectations of behaviour and conduct are clear. It will also act in a manner that is fair, reasonable, and proportionate, whilst placing student welfare and well-being as its priorities.

Legislation & Guidance

- Based on DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2025)
- Based on DfE guidance including 'Understanding & dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility (August 2024)
- Based on DfE guidance, including 'Controlling access to school premises' (Nov 2018)
- Enforceable under Section 547, Education Act 1996: individuals can be prosecuted for trespass or abusive conduct on school grounds.

The school does everything it can to ensure that its policies do not discriminate against any of its stakeholders or others, directly or indirectly, in line with duties under the Equality Act.

Rights of Entry

Although fulfilling a public duty, Dorset Studio School is a private establishment. The public have no automatic right of entry. Parent(s)/carer(s)/family of enrolled students have an 'implied licence' to come onto the school premises at certain stated times.

Dorset Studio School defines its access by the following means:

- Parent(s)/carer(s)/families with a query or concern can report them at reception. However, without an appointment, this does not guarantee they will be able to meet with staff.

- Parent(s)/carer(s)/families with an appointment need to report to reception and sign in.
- Parent(s)/carer(s)/families can drop and collect their child/children at the school gate. They must not enter school grounds.
- Parent(s)/carer(s) can enter the school grounds for calendar events such as Parents Evenings, Information Evenings and Annual Reviews.

Defining Unacceptable Behaviour

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable will not be tolerated, these include, but not limited to:

- Abusive language (spoken, written, online/social media)
- Any behaviour making staff or students feel uncomfortable or threatened.
- Any kind of threat
- Breaching the school's security and safeguarding procedures
- Defamation or threats via social media
- Disruptive conduct i.e. attempting to enter school after a ban has been imposed.
- Harassment or vexatious complaints, including constant telephone calls and/or e-mails.
- Inappropriate electronic activity, including publishing abusive posts about the school, members of staff or students.
- Insults, threats, intimidating actions, raised voices.
- Physical aggression or invasion of personal space
- The use of foul language
- Incidents outside of the school premises or in the locality that may have the effect of undermining good order in school.
- Making covert recordings of staff without their permission
- Malicious allegations

Covert Recording

Unless explicitly agreed in writing, Dorset Studio School does not consent to any visitor making audio or video recordings of any member of staff, volunteers, or governors, including in-person meetings, remote/virtual meetings, or telephone conversations.

Making a covert recording without the consent of members of staff is regarded as a breach of the relationship of mutual trust and respect between the visitor and the school.

Responding to Incidents

If a visitor, including parent(s)/carer(s)/family, behaves in an unacceptable manner towards a member of the school community, the Principal or Vice-Principal will assess the level of risk before deciding on a future course of action. The course of action will be reasonable and

proportionate in line with the assessed level of risk. The initial responses to an incident should include:

- **De-escalation**
Staff should remain professional and attempt to calm the situation. They have the authority to terminate abusive conversations and refer to senior staff.
- **Incident Logging & Risk Assessment**
Senior leadership should record details: who, when, where, how, take witness statements, consider prior incidents, and assess likelihood of recurrence. In the event of likely recurrence, the senior leader should refer the incident to the Principal.

The Principal will consider a reasonable and proportionate response to an incident. In most cases, this will follow a graduated response, and these steps are outlined below. However, the Principal has the right to issue a ban if any incident is deemed as a serious 'one-off' incident.

1. **Informal Warning**
Clarify acceptable conduct and issue an informal warning, ideally face-to-face or in writing.
2. **Conditions on Contact through a Restricted Communication Plan**
Establish boundaries (e.g., scheduled meetings only, no unscheduled visits, restrict telephone/email contact)
3. **Formal Warning Letter**
If inappropriate behaviour continues, send a formal letter notifying of consequences if behaviour persists.
4. **Banning**
As a last resort, the school may impose a temporary ban from the school premises after repeated incidents of abusive behaviour or a 'one-off' serious incident. A ban is enforceable under education law.

Any ban will be reviewed by the Governing Body after approximately six months. The parent(s)/carer(s)/family will be invited to make a written representation to the Governing Body. The decision of the review will be communicated in writing to the parent(s)/carer(s)/family within ten school days.

In deciding whether to remove or extend a ban or impose conditions, the Governing body will give consideration to the extent of compliance with the original ban. Any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct.

Police Referral

The school will contact the police and local authority safeguarding teams if behaviour involves threats, violence, or behaviour that it considers breaches legal threshold.

Removal from school

Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 allows the removal of individuals causing disturbance to daily school life. Those individuals who have been banned from the school premises and continue to cause a nuisance will be considered as trespassers. In such circumstances, the offender may be removed from school. This is likely to be conducted by the police.

Support for Staff

Formal support is available including debriefing, revisiting safeguarding procedures and, if necessary, counselling.

Complaints

Any complaint that arises from incidents of abusive behaviour will be dealt with under the school's complaints policy.

Appendix 1 - Letter Template 1: Formal warning sent by the Principal.

Re. Formal Warning regarding unacceptable behaviour

Dear <Name>

I have received a report about your conduct on <date, time>. This appears to fall short of what we expect of a parent(s), carer(s), or family member. Please find a summary of the incident that has been reported to me:

<Factual summary of the incident, including its impact on others>

I must inform you that Dorset Studio School will not tolerate any behaviour that we deem to be unacceptable towards a member of our school community and act to protect them from it. I should warn you that any future conduct of this nature could result in the imposition of conditions restricting access to staff and the school premises or banning you from contacting staff members or attending school altogether.

I wish to offer you the opportunity to provide any comments in writing in relation to the summary of your conduct that I have provided. Please do so within ten school days of the date of this letter. These comments may include assurances about your future good conduct.

Details of our policy on dealing with unacceptable behaviour can be found on our website.

Yours sincerely,

Principal
Cc: Clark to Governors

Appendix 2 - Letter Template 2: Imposition of conditions about contact & attendance at school

Re. Imposition of the conditions of your contact with and attendance at school

Dear <Name>

I have received a report about your conduct on <date, time>. This appears to fall short of what we expect of a parent(s), carer(s), or family member. Please find a summary of the incident that has been reported to me:

<Factual summary of the incident, including its impact on others>

You will recollect that I have already written to you about a previous incident on <date> warning you of the consequences of any further unacceptable behaviour on your part.

I must inform you that Dorset Studio School will not tolerate any behaviour that we deem to be unacceptable towards a member of our school community and act to protect them from it. I am therefore writing to inform you that I am imposing the following conditions on the contact with school and/or the attendance at school.

<Bullet point conditions>

The restrictions are provisional until they are reviewed by the nominated governor <name>. However, please consider them to be in force until you receive their confirmation.

<Named Governor or Named title> will decide whether it is appropriate to confirm or overturn this decision. You may send your comments or observations of your own to:

clerktogovernors@dorsetstudioschool.co.uk

within ten school days of the date of this letter. These comments may challenge or explain the facts of the incident from your point of view or express regret and give assurances about your future conduct.

The Clerk to Governors will confirm the outcome of the decision in writing within ten school days of your response. This will supply details of how the imposition of conditions will be reviewed if my decision is upheld.

Yours sincerely

Principal
Cc. Clerk to Governors

Appendix 3 - Letter Template 3: Imposition of a ban

Re. Imposition of a ban

Dear <Name>

I have received a report about your conduct on <date, time>. This appears to fall short of what we expect of a parent(s), carer(s), or family member. Please find a summary of the incident that has been reported to me:

<Factual summary of the incident, including its impact on others>

You will recollect that I have already written to you about a previous incident on <date> warning you of the consequences of any further unacceptable behaviour on your part.

I must inform you that Dorset Studio School will not tolerate any behaviour that we deem to be unacceptable towards a member of our school community and act to protect them from it. I am therefore writing to inform you that I am recommending the imposition of a ban on you contacting or attending school.

This means that you may not attend the school for any reason. You must not attempt to contact members of staff by any means whatsoever. You do have the right to attend one meeting per year to discuss the progress of your child/children. This meeting will be arranged with you by a senior member of staff and coincide with the next Parents Consultative Forum.

The restrictions are provisional until they are reviewed by the nominated governor <name>. However, please consider them to be in force until you receive their confirmation.

<Named Governor or Named title> will decide whether it is appropriate to confirm or overturn this decision. You may send your comments or observations of your own to:

clerktogovernors@dorsetstudioschool.co.uk

within ten school days of the date of this letter. These comments may challenge or explain the facts of the incident from your point of view or express regret and give assurances about your future conduct.

Yours sincerely

Principal
Cc. Clerk to Governors