The Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham MAT

So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves." ***– Philippians 2:3***

One Charter

(A Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Visitors)

1. Core Principles:

- All interactions and intentions are underpinned by **courtesy and respect**.
- All staff at SNMAT partner academies have the right to work without fear of aggression, abuse, defamation or being subject to unsubstantiated allegations.
- Leaders have the right to prioritise the core work of delivering high quality learning over dealing with unreasonable, vexatious or persistent complainants.
- Parents and carers have the right to appropriately and respectfully challenge actions or decisions where they believe there to be a secure and sound cause for concern.

2. Purpose and context

- The purpose of the One Charter is to clearly define the expectations around the conduct of all parents, carers and visitors connected to SNMAT partner academies.
- Parents and carers are hugely valued partners in the work that academies do.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers similarly value all members of staff.
- A very small proportion of parents and carers do not conduct themselves with courtesy and respect.
- An even smaller number of parents and carers subject members of staff to aggressive, abusive and inappropriate behaviours.
- An equally small number of parents and carers make allegations that are unfounded, misleading or vexatious. In most instances, the allegations are made based on a child's version of events without first checking with a member of staff. The serious nature of such allegations must not be under-estimated with regard to the impact that they have on the member of staff concerned.

- The behaviours cited in section 5 (Code of Conduct: unacceptable behaviours) derive from the experiences of members of staff across the Trust. All partner academies within SNMAT have experienced some, or all, of the examples cited.

3.One Charter

- **Courtesy* and Respect**** are at the heart of all that we do as a Trust.
- This is our **One Charter.**
- All stakeholders within the Trust can expect to be treated with courtesy and respect.
- Where parents or carers fail to demonstrate courtesy or respect:
    - They will be informed that the interaction will be ended if the breach of the One Charter continues, be it in person or on a telephone.
    - It will also be explained that the conversation/discussion can recommence at a later stage with an expectation that the One Charter can be complied with.
    - Written communication (email, text, social media or written letter) that are courteous, respectful and proportionate (i.e. not making excessive or unreasonable demands) will be responded to in the normal manner. Any that breach the One Charter will not be responded to, other than to state that they are in breach of the One Charter and that a response will be provided when the communication is both courteous and respectful.

Staff will convey this using (an approximation of) the following form of words;

I understand that you have strong feelings about this, and that this is making you angry / upset. Can I suggest that we arrange a time in the future when we can talk and find a solution together?

In the event that this approach is unsuccessful and the parent or carer continues to be discourteous or disrespectful, staff will suspend the interaction – with (an approximation of) the following form of words:

I am going to leave this conversation now – in line with our Trust's One Charter. We will be in touch to continue at a later stage.

At this stage, staff will inform their line-manager of the breach of the One Charter. The parent or carer will be contacted briefly to explain that a conversation was suspended because it was in conflict with the Trust One Charter. An invitation to reconvene the conversation will be offered on the condition that it is undertaken with courtesy and respect.

* Courtesy is here defined as **politeness, respect, and consideration for others**.

** Respect is here defined as having **due regard for the feelings, wishes, or rights of others**.

4. Core Statements

- SNMAT does not tolerate any breach of this charter.
- Where a breach is inadvertent, minor or the result of a vexatious allegation by any stakeholder, the headteacher will seek to resolve the issue informally.
- Where breaches occur that are neither inadvertent or minor, we will act swiftly to protect staff from any future repetition.

5. One Charter: expectations

Without exception, parents, carers and visitors are expected to:

a) Act in accordance with the One Charter at all times: Be courteous and respectful during all interactions with pupils, staff and any other person associated with the school.
b) Support and reflect the school's ethos and values through their behaviour.
c) Set a good example to pupils through their behaviour and the way they interact with staff, pupils and other adults.
d) Work together with staff for the benefit of their child.
e) Work with the school to resolve any associated problems.
f) Contact members of staff to clarify a situation prior to lodging a complaint or making an allegation.
g) Resolve any differences that may exist between parents and carers of other pupils without impacting the work of the academy, or seeking to use the academy as a means of resolution.
h) Where appropriate, clarify their child's version of events with members of staff in advance of raising concerns with senior leaders.
i) Correct their child's behaviour appropriately, particularly on the school grounds where it could otherwise lead to conflict or aggressive or unsafe behaviour.
j) Respect the school's property and environment by keeping it clean and tidy.
k) Follow the school's parking rules and procedures for dropping-off and collecting pupils from school.

l) Dress in an appropriate manner when on the school premises and attending school events. Be mindful of setting a good example for pupils.

6.One Charter: unacceptable behaviours

Without exception, the following behaviours will not be tolerated:

a) Aggression* of any form: verbal, behavioural, written, physical or threat thereof.
b) Abuse** of any form: verbal, behavioural, written, physical or threat thereof.
c) Making misleading, unfounded or vexatious allegations in any form: written, verbal, text, voicemail or on a social media platform.
d) Discrimination*** in any form.
e) Defamation in any form: written, verbal, text, voicemail or on a social media platform.
f) Contacting other parents and providing them with false and/or misleading information.
g) Providing children with false and/or misleading information.
h) Breaching security procedures.
i) Recording conversations or interactions without first seeking the consent of all and any parties concerned.
j) Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with any of our partner academies normal operation or activities.
k) Making false or misleading allegations based on a child's version of events without first consulting with staff.
l) Using loud, abusive or offensive language or displaying temper
m) Causing intentional damage to school property
n) Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child towards their own child. (Such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and may have legal consequences)
o) Smoking, taking illegal drugs or the consumption of alcohol on school premises. (Alcohol may only be consumed during authorised events)
p) Bringing domestic pets on to the school premises (other than guide dogs or authorised dogs, i.e. pet therapy dog).

* Aggression is here defined as a type of behaviour intended to produce injury, harm, fear or offence.

** Abuse is here defined as being when someone causes harm or distress. It can take many forms, ranging from disrespect to causing someone physical or mental pain.

*** Discrimination is here defined as to exclude, disadvantage, harass, bully, humiliate or degrade someone because of their protected characteristics (age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation).

7. Consequences of breaching the One Charter

Without exception, a breach of the code of conduct will result in a response which will protect members of the academy community from being subject to future breaches.

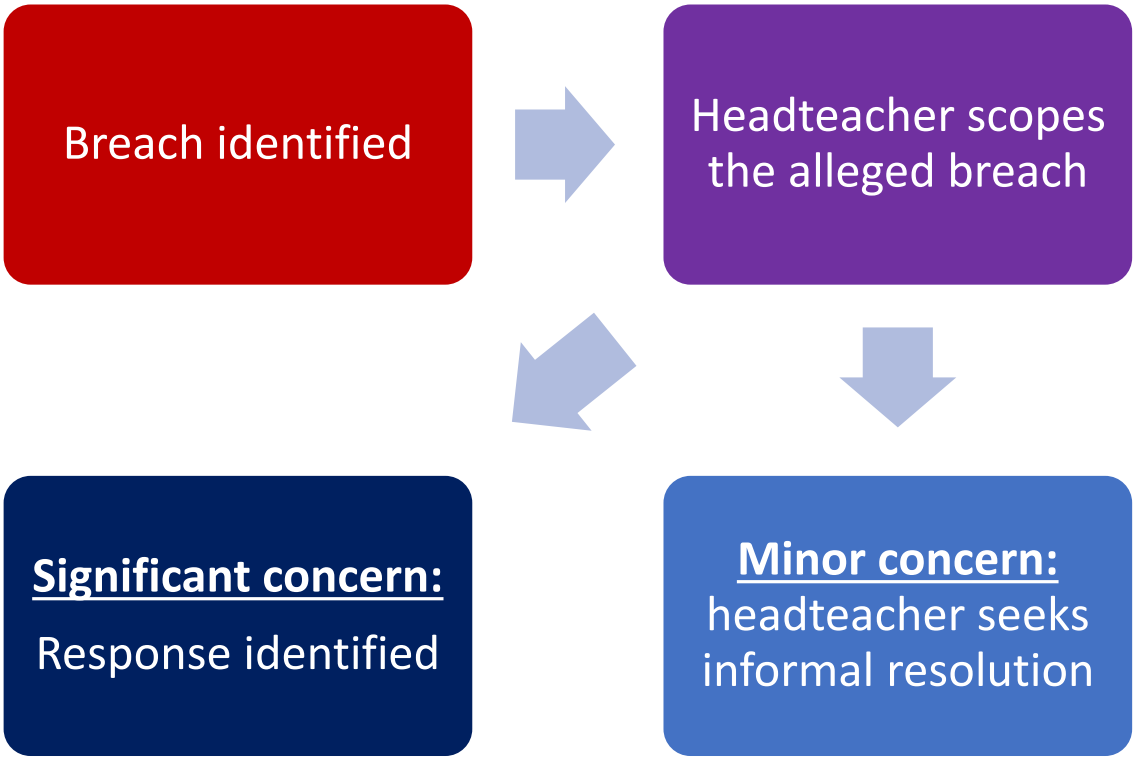
Any breach of the One Charter will trigger an immediate response: the conversation, telephone call or interaction will be brought to an end and the parent or carer directed to the One Charter.

Where a potential breach is identified, the headteacher undertakes an initial scoping activity to identify if an informal solution is appropriate (where the potential breach is minor, inadvertent or the result of a vexatious allegation from any stakeholder). If the headteacher considers the breach to be significant, the headteacher will consult with the Trust in order to identify an appropriate response.

8. Breaching the One Charter and Governance Eligibility

If a parent, carer or visitor has been in breach of the One Charter as set out in sections 5 and 6, or has previously been identified as a serial, persistent or vexatious complainant, they are ineligible to be considered as a candidate for the role of governor for a period of three years.

9. Breaching the One Charter: process and responses



The responses that will be considered include, but are not limited to:

a) Barring the parent, carer or visitor from the school premises with immediate effect. Academies can bar someone from the premises if they feel that their aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language is a risk to staff or pupils. It is enough for a member of staff or a pupil to feel threatened.
b) Restricting channels of communication. This may include removal of contact via email, telephone calls, texts or other channels of communication to be sent directly to staff
c) Contacting the police and reporting the behaviour.
d) Seeking legal redress through the courts.
e) Reporting online content and the individual concerned to the website's admin.
f) Making a referral to social care where behaviour indicates that there is a potential risk to children or other adults.
g) Meeting the Headteacher.
h) Meeting with any other member of staff as appropriate.