



Northfield St. Nicholas Primary Academy

St Margaret's Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 4HN

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Headteacher: Mr. I. W. Owens



Deputy Headteacher: Mrs. J. Catchpole

Deputy Headteacher: Mrs. T. Freeman

18/11/20

Dear Parents/Carers,

CONDUCT ON SITE

It is with great sadness that I write to you today to challenge the unacceptable conduct of a very small minority of parents. In my 12 years of being a Headteacher I have never had to write such a letter before.

It is important I make it clear that it is not acceptable to be rude, aggressive and hostile to any staff or behave in a way that undermines their authority to uphold rules and expectations that have been put in place to maintain a safe and orderly site.

All parents are visitors when they come onto the school site and as such have to comply with the rules in place. **The rules are not negotiable** and it is the moral and professional duty of all staff to guide, remind and support all members of the community in their responsibilities to adhere to these school site rules. When visitors refuse to follow the rules, are dismissive of staff requests or simply ignore staff, then it is an active attempt to undermine and subvert the safe and orderly running of our school and as such cannot be tolerated.

Furthermore, visitors to the school have a duty to act as responsible members of the community and be role models for our children by speaking politely, respectfully and with courtesy to our staff at all times. It is what we wish our children to learn and children learn what they see and hear.

Staff will always be polite, respectful and courteous to visitors. Staff sometimes have to guide and remind visitors in a firm and concise way. This is to ensure the site rules are observed and safety for all is ensured. Do not take it personally. Instructions, when given, are done so in a firm and concise manner. By their very nature, this is how we ensure instructions carry the gravity they need to carry in order to be taken seriously. Do not think staff are being rude by asking visitors, reminding visitors, or guiding visitors to follow the rules. They are simply applying their authority to keep the school safe. We should expect nothing less of our staff. Ensuring rules are followed to keep everyone safe is a key part of our jobs in school.

The Health & Safety Executive has the power to shut our school down if safety rules are not adhered to. Earlier this term the Health & Safety Executive contacted the school and reviewed the systems in place to keep our school and site safe. Ensuring visitors were not congregating; were staying 2 metres apart and could move freely along pathways was a key

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The Northfield St Nicholas way !

Learning Leadership Enjoyment Responsibility Inspiration Inclusion Integrity





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part of their challenge. We were able to demonstrate that we have acted appropriately to minimise risks to visitor safety using the strategies we have put in place across the school site. **To keep our school open we need to work together to follow the new rules. It is as simple as that.**

Staff work tirelessly and with diligence to keep children and visitors safe and are especially vigilant currently in order to keep our school open. Please remember this is also their place of work. I cannot allow staff to come to work and for them to be treated with disrespect, rudeness, hostility or active disregard for their authority to remind parents to uphold the school rules.

Such inappropriate behaviour from visitors includes facetious remarks, rude comments or actively ignoring attempts of staff to make polite contact. All such behaviour seeks to undermine staff and is an active attempt to damage their wellbeing. As a school community we will not allow this to continue. All visitors on site are expected to behave appropriately and will be held accountable if they do not.

Visitors to the school site who continue to behave inappropriately will be asked to leave the site and if necessary will be banned from coming onto the site in the future. This expectation for visitors to be polite, courteous and respectful towards staff is not negotiable and all **inappropriate conduct will continue to be challenged** for the sake of both our staff wellbeing and that of other visitors and pupils who are unfortunate enough to witness such conduct.

It is a parental choice which school parents choose to send their children to. Please support the school you have chosen by supporting the staff in keeping all visitors and children safe. Children who hear and see criticism, hostility and aggression towards staff soon learn to disengage with school and the hard work all staff are undertaking to make it a great place to learn and feel safe is therefore much less effective.

Please remember, although **safety rules are non negotiable**, staff just want to help, guide and support you to ensure your children are safe and learn well in the school you have picked for them to attend because you support its ethos, values and principles.

I would like to end this letter with a **grateful acknowledgement to the vast majority of fantastic families, parents, carers and visitors** who have been so helpful and engaging with their kind words and actions that support our staff during these most challenging and worrying times. It is very much appreciated.

Please remember that if you have a query or question about anything that goes on at school or need help or guidance about staying safe or learning at our school then please do take the opportunity to touch base with any of our staff on duty in their yellow *Hi-Vis* vests before

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and after school. Staff are there on duty in the playground to help you. Please be as kind and as patient and calm as you can so that they can help you in the best way possible to resolve your concern or help you understand what you might need to do next to find a solution.

Yours sincerely,

Mr I. W. Owens
Headteacher

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