

Code of Conduct Guidance – To be shared with all pupils on Monday 26th November during period 1

St. Joseph's Academy

This support document outlines the reason(s) for each element of our code of conduct. It should be noted that this code of conduct does not place unrealistic demands on young people and is designed to promote good order and to create an environment conducive to purposeful learning and teaching. As a community, it is crucial that we show respect to one another and understand the importance of routine and consistency. A review will take place later in the session as part of a wider consultation on our vision, values and aims.

Attend school and arrive on time

It should go without saying that attendance in school is absolutely necessary to make progress across all areas of the curriculum. While we appreciate that from time to time, short term illness is possible, we must also recognise that St. Joseph's Academy has the lowest attendance rate across every school in East Ayrshire. If you are not in school, you cannot participate in lessons, and we cannot assist you to catch up on work missed.

Timekeeping is an important life skill and we are often asked to pass honest comment on your attendance and timekeeping when writing references.

Young people found to routinely return late from break or lunch will remain in school at break or lunch for a period of one week until we can be assured of an improvement in timekeeping.

Attend all timetabled classes and remember to bring your ipad to school

When in school, it is important that you attend all classes. We have noted a trend in recent weeks whereby a small number of young people truant within school. That is to say that they do not report to classes, and instead try to wander around the building undetected. This is a serious breach of school rules and is a health and safety issue first and foremost. You must always attend timetabled classes and respond to the direction of staff.

We recognise some ongoing issues with ipad repair times and the delayed distribution of ipads to S1 pupils. Please be assured of the fact that we are working with East Ayrshire's IT team to resolve these issues. Where you do have an ipad, please bring it to school every day.

Respect one another, your teachers, support staff and visitors

Our Junior Leadership Team, under the guidance of the Head Boy and Head Girl of the Junior school, recently launched our 'Bee Kind' initiative. This initiative, along with the form on the school website provides you with guidance on what to do if you believe you are being bullied or targeted by others. Thankfully, bullying is not reported as a major issue within our school. Your own feedback and that of parents/carers consistently shows that your relationships with one another are generally strong, and I thank you for that.

However, in more general terms, we must all be mindful of the need to demonstrate respect to one another. As an example, many support staff report that requests to tidy up litter, remove outdoor jackets or direction around conduct between lessons is routinely ignored by many young people. Regardless of the adult addressing you, you have a responsibility to be respectful and courteous. Similarly, the S6 leadership team who monitor the top floor during break and lunch should be

respected as they carry out their leadership duties. It is not acceptable to only follow the instruction or direction of some teachers.

A respectful environment works to create good order and strong positive relationships. Please continue to respect one another and remember to extend the same level of respect to all staff regardless of who they may be. When out in the community during break or lunch, the same respect should be extended to local residents, pupils of other schools and shopkeepers.

Promote good manners by saying please, thank-you and sorry when necessary

This is included as part of our code of conduct as a result of observations made during break and lunch. Our catering staff work very hard to prepare and distribute food to up to one thousand pupils per day (when accounting for St. Andrew's and St. Joseph's pupils). However, it is often the case that orders are placed in a manner that can only be described as rude. You will recognise the care demonstrated to you by our catering staff, who will often learn your name quickly and refer to you by name when ordering food. It is not acceptable or appropriate to simply say 'mince' or 'tuna baguette' while omitting the words please and thank you.

Similarly, we all make mistakes, it is part of human nature. If you do make a mistake in school and upset or offend another member of our school community, the easiest way to begin to repair your relationship is to say sorry when you need to. This applies to all members of our community, including staff and parents/carers. I have witnessed first hand some pupils demonstrate incredible humility this session when they have recognised that they have upset or offended a peer. Please continue to use good manners whenever possible.

Wear seat belts, and be considerate to one another when using school transport

When travelling to and from school, you do so without parents or staff present. The overwhelming majority of pupils are respectful to one another and do wear seatbelts. In a small number of cases, issues are brought to our attention by drivers or parents/carers. It is important that you recognise the need to stay safe when on the bus and you should always wear provided seatbelts.

Where a young person persistently demonstrates disregard for their safety and that of others, or where they are routinely inconsiderate or disrespectful to fellow pupils, we reserve the right to temporarily seek an alternative form of transport in collaboration with parents/carers. Thankfully, these situations are incredibly rare. Please continue to demonstrate respect for one another on the journey to and from school.

Use the pupil entrance/exit rather than the main office doors

The main office doors prevent access to the street area without a 'fob'. For this reason, it is impractical to use these doors first thing in the morning, and the pupil entrance behind Modern Languages is always staffed by Pastoral Care staff and senior leaders.

However, many pupils take to using the main office doors to access the van at break and lunch time, or to try to get onto the school bus as quickly as possible at the end of the day. This presents a health and safety issue, as we welcome several mother and toddler groups who gather in the foyer area. The gathered toddlers are at risk when hundreds of young people attempt to use the foyer as an exit route at the same time. It is also important that the foyer is not overcrowded, particularly as our school often welcome several workmen and visitors on a daily basis.

The issue here is mainly to do with using the main office doors in the absence of staff. There does not need to be a teacher present at the main door for pupils to know that they should exit via the doors at Modern Languages. Support staff report that a significant number of pupils ignore requests to use the agreed exit point unless the Head Teacher or a DHT is present. This is not acceptable, and any pupil found to ignore support staff will not be allowed to leave school during break or lunch.


Exceptions apply to those pupils who have a pass to use the main office doors which was issued in light of a specific need.

Observe the school dress code when in school and remember your PE kit

Across a community of approximately five hundred families, it is very unlikely that unanimous agreement will be reached on what constitutes appropriate school uniform. Personal opinion must be respected but cannot take priority over the school's dress code, as variations in opinion across so many families renders the task of upholding each personal preference impossible without defaulting to a non-uniform policy.

Our uniform provides for three layers of clothing, and there is nothing to prevent young people from wearing a white t-shirt or vest under their school shirt as a fourth layer. The temperature within school is regulated, and as such there is no reason that a young person should feel cold if wearing full school uniform. Those who elect not to wear jumpers or blazers should not then wear items that are not part of our agreed dress code instead. Ultimately, if a young person refuses to wear a jumper/cardigan and blazer, they then need to take responsibility for feeling colder than those who are wearing full uniform.

I would like to state that we will always support any young person or family who has a genuine issue in terms of purchasing uniform items. We will do so in a very discrete and respectful manner and have already supported a number of families this session. I intend to send a letter to all parents/carers in December, outlining in some detail the reasons I believe school uniform is important. I am also more than happy to keep blazers brought in from home on site so that young people can collect first thing and leave overnight. Additional lockers will also be purchased to allow for this.

<p style="text-align: center;">Blazer School Tie White Shirt Black Jumper/Cardigan (optional) Black skirt or trousers Plain black footwear</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Jackets Tracksuit tops or bottoms Black or coloured shirts/t-shirts Hoodies Caps Jeans Footwear that is not black</p> 
--	--

Please remember your PE kit. The PE department keep a supply of clean kit for those who forget, and it is expected that pupils will make use of this kit should they forget to bring their own to school.

Under no circumstances should you leave class without permission from your teacher

For health and safety reasons, we need to know where you are at all times. If you believe that you need to leave class for whatever reason, you must seek the permission of your teacher. This will ensure that staff know where you are and are able to locate you in the event of a fire or evacuation.

If your teacher decides that there is no good reason for you to leave class, then you should respect their decision without issue.

When changing class between periods, you should always report to your next class as quickly as possible. There is a trend for some young people to leave one class and to then self-refer to another teacher or the Pastoral Care department. This practice should end with immediate effect. Pastoral Care staff are often at meetings, or already with a young person or family. You cannot wander around the building looking for your Pastoral Care teacher. Please report to the next class, where your class teacher can provide advice and guidance and make contact with other staff if they feel it appropriate. This also applies to those pupils who self-refer to the home link worker room. Under no circumstances should you report anywhere else other than your next class unless you have been given prior permission to do so.

Keep the school and school grounds clean and tidy

A recent push on tidying litter has worked to a significant extent, and I thank you for this. There are two ongoing issues in relation to litter. The first is in stairwell areas, particularly on the ground floor. If you sit here during break or lunch, you must take your litter to the nearest bin when moving to class. If this issue is not addressed, no pupil will be allowed to sit in the inlets around staircases.

The other issue is 'group litter' whereby a group of pupils sit together and then refuse to take responsibility for an accumulation of litter when at a table. Please routinely tidy up after yourself and remind peers to tidy up their own litter. Where we know of the group of pupils leaving a collective mess at a table, we will return you to the table as a group and ask that you tidy up the litter. Should the issue persist, all pupils within the group will be sent a letter in the post to raise awareness and seek support amongst parents/carers. Blaming one another to avoid tidying the litter is not acceptable and should be addressed as a priority.

Do not access the top floor during break or lunch

There are less than ten staff on duty at break and lunch time, and as such we cannot guarantee your health and safety when on the top floor. Staff will periodically patrol the top floor, but we must prioritise the canteen and street area. Senior students man each stairwell and should not be challenged or disrespected if they ask that you remain downstairs. Our school grounds are also vast, and there is no good reason to be on the top floor at break or lunch.

However, we know that some extra curricular clubs take place in the library and a few other departments on the top floor. As long as you make staff or senior students supervising the staircase aware, you can use the staircase at Modern Languages to access the library or lunchtime clubs. At no time should any pupil use the stairs at Maths or HE/Technical during break or lunch.

If a pupil were to take unwell upstairs, there is no guarantee that a staff member would be present. The issue is one of health and safety and as such cannot be negotiated. Senior pupils can observe those attending clubs as they make their way from the staircase to the club and can notify staff if any issues arise. Other than when journeying to an extra-curricular club, or directed by a member of staff, no pupil should be present on the top floor at break or lunch time.

Do not enter the street area during St. Andrew's lunch break (period 4/5 changeover)

During the changeover between periods 4 and 5, pupils from St. Andrew's primary school will use our shared street area. There can be up to four hundred primary age pupils, often moving around the street area with hot food. For obvious reasons, you should not walk through the street area during this changeover. The only exception is for pupils moving from PE to the staircase at HE/Technical, and those moving to or from the PE classroom from the staircase at Maths. Respect should be extended to staff from St. Andrew's primary school. Please treat St. Andrew's staff as you would our own and follow any guidance they provide during this changeover.

Fill water bottles before the start of the day, during break or during lunch only

Pupils are encouraged to bring refillable bottles to school and can access the water fountain in the street to top up bottles at the start of the school day, during break and during lunch only. No pupil should fill water bottles during lessons or between periods. Similarly, the vending machine cannot be used between periods or during lessons. Water is not issued via the school office, other than to those pupils who are unwell and have been referred to the office by staff because they are unwell. Should you feel unwell, please let your teacher know. Pupils should not ask teachers to be released from class simply to fill water bottles. If you have PE, it is a good idea to bring a water bottle and to fill it up at the start of the day, before break or during lunch. There is plenty of time before school, during break and during lunch to take responsibility for filling water bottles without disrupting your own learning and that of others.

Do not listen to music or use mobile phones unless at break or lunch time

To ensure consistency across the school, no pupil should listen to music via their phone or other electronic device during lessons. Teachers may, on a rare occasion, play music for the whole class and retain the right to do so should the music have direct relevance to the task at hand or as part of periodic reward mechanisms. Under no circumstances should pupils challenge a member of staff if asked to remove headphones during lessons. Pupils should not routinely ask teachers to play music for the whole class.

Similarly, mobile phones cannot be used during lessons unless under the direction of a teacher and for the purposes of accessing material relevant to the lesson. Some staff may allow pupils to use their phone to take notes or add in calendar reminders. Playing games, playing music and use of social media is strictly prohibited during lessons.

Photographs, videos and audio recordings cannot be taken during lessons unless under the direction of the teacher and directly relevant to learning. The terms of the GDPR prevent pupils from taking photographs or videos of one another without the prior permission of parents/carers. Any pupil who breaches this rule will be asked to hand their device in to be collected from the office at the end of the school day by parents/carers.

There is no need for any pupil to use their phone to contact a parent/carer or friend during a lesson, other than young carers, for whom permission will be granted via the Head Teacher or a Depute Head Teacher in very specific circumstances. The school take responsibility for you when you are here and can make direct contact with your parent/carer should the school feel it relevant. Should you believe that there is an emergency that means you need to contact home, please notify your teacher immediately and the school office staff will make necessary arrangements to allow you to

call home via the school telephone system. It should be noted that occasions where this is necessary are incredibly rare.

Keep to the left when moving between classes

When moving between classes, please keep to the left to avoid overcrowding and congestion within corridors.

Do not chew gum during lessons

Chewing gum is not acceptable during lessons, primarily to ensure your own health and safety. If asked to remove gum, staff should not be challenged, and you should do so quickly and quietly before returning to the task at hand.

Do not smoke on school grounds or near the school gates

Smoking cessation services are willing to support young people who smoke, and we will routinely provide advice and guidance in relation to smoking cessation where we know that a young person is struggling with addiction. Out of respect to the wider pupil body, and in light of the fact that the school entrance is used by nursery aged pupils throughout the school day, it is not permissible to smoke at the school gates. Where a pattern emerges, parents/carers will be notified, and young people found to be smoking at the gates will attend smoking cessation sessions during lunch break and under the supervision of staff.

Report concerns to teachers or school staff

Should any pupil at any time have a concern for the safety or wellbeing of another pupil, they should report this to school staff as soon as possible. Pastoral Care staff, DHTs and the HT are routinely available at the pupil entrance first thing in the morning. If you have a concern during a lesson, please share this with your teacher. During break and lunch, please report concerns to Pastoral Care staff, DHTs or the Head Teacher. In the case of emergencies, please report concerns to any available member of staff.

Concerns can be wide ranging, and also include situations whereby you hear rumours of issues that may arise later in the day. School staff will always support young people with concerns but can only help if we know of the issue. I thank you for the numerous occasions when you do notify us of your concerns or potential issues. If you pass an issue onto your teacher, they will make a judgement as to what happens next. In the even that you wish to leave class but the teachers judgement is that there is no good reason to do so, you will be expected to remain in class and allow the teacher to handle the issue on your behalf.