

Code of Conduct for working with families and advocates

This document sets out expectations for advocates working with parents of young people and students at William Ellis School. It has been agreed with the local SENDIASS service as setting out reasonable expectations of advocates and schools. It aims to recognise the rights of parents, the obligations of the school and advocates working with schools and parents.

All parties should expect to prioritise the safeguarding of young people according to the expectations of the most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education and other relevant legislation.

If concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a young person are raised, these may necessarily be routed through other school pastoral or safeguarding processes to ensure the needs of a child are best met.

The school will:

- Recognise that parents have a right to choose a friend or advocate to attend meetings with them, and the school will accommodate this wherever possible.
- Wherever possible, work enthusiastically and constructively with advocates when appointed by parents.
- Recognise that advocates and parents are committed to getting the best outcome for their child.
- Work with advocates and parents to secure the best outcomes for the child/young person.
- Share information with parents and advocates in a timely fashion.
- Keep a clear record of discussions and decisions taken at any meeting.
- Publish this code on our website and share a copy of this code with any parents who appoints an advocate and any advocates appointed.

In return, the school will expect that advocates:

- Work constructively and respectfully with the school staff in and outside meetings, including in any public comments they make about the school and its staff.
- Act appropriately, in good faith and competently.
- Do not record meetings without prior consent.
- Respect confidentiality of discussions with the school and their clients.
- Use social media in a responsible and constructive way, without targeting or harassment of school staff or pupils.
- Any verbal abuse or conduct that crosses the boundary of appropriate behaviour will lead to the meeting being stopped.

Should the school believe that an advocate's conduct has breached reasonable expectations of professional conduct, we may restrict our engagement with that advocate and their participation in meetings with the school as it will not be in the interest of the child. Where this is the case, we will always signpost the parent to SENDIASS where they can secure free impartial and specialist advice. We are also happy to participate in a meeting in order to resolve any issue and where necessary, enter formal mediation.