



Learning for life

GEMS PARENT AND CARERS CODE OF CONDUCT



GEMS PARENTS AND CARERS CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Audience:	This GEMS Christian Education Limited (GEMS) Policy applies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerald Christian College • Ontrack College • ECC Little Gems 		
Purpose:	This Code has been developed so that parent/carers and those with parental responsibilities are aware of and meet the GEMS expectations with regard to their interaction with its colleges, teachers, staff, other parents/carers and students.		
Scope:	GEMS Board, officers, workers, contractors and service providers, other persons associated with the College, including students and parents/carers and third-party providers.		
Status:	Approved		
Related Documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GEMS Complaint Handling Policy • Complaint Procedure Parent Information Pamphlet • GEMS Foundation Statements 		
Appendix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GEMS Parent, Carers and Community Code of Conduct - Factsheet 		
Supersedes:	GEMS Parents Code of Conduct, February 2022		
Authorised by:	GEMS Governing Body Chairperson	Date of Authorisation:	November 2023
Review Period:	Annually	Next Review Date:	November 2024
Policy Owner:	GEMS Governing Body		

UNDERPINNING POLICY FOUNDATION

GEMS Christian Education Ltd. bases its governance and operations on Biblical truths and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

GEMS Christian Education Ltd. pursues the following strategic intentions towards its core purpose so that:

- Students will embrace the GEMS values of God, Excellence, Members and Service; discover who they are as individuals and pursue God's purpose for their lives.
- Employees will embrace the Core Values and personally display Christ to students by utilising stimulating, creative, innovative curriculum and teaching practices.
- Resource sustainability will continue to provide and maintain an outstanding and inspiring place of teaching and learning within an environment of seeking partnerships with the wider community.
- Culture is Christ-centred, driven by GEMS values and demonstrated by GEMS FACETS of Friendly, Appreciative, Compassionate, Encouraging, Truthful and Self-Controlled.

PARENTS AND CARERS CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Rationale

The Parents and Carers Code of Conduct works alongside the GEMS Christian Education Ltd values of GEMS and FACETS. The health and welfare of all members of our GEMS Christian Education Community is important. All students and employees have the right to feel safe. Parents/carers play a formative role in the development of a child's sense of justice, equity, dignity and worth of all members of our GEMS Christian Education Community. They act as one of the most influential role models within a child's life. The responsibility for upholding the values of GEMS in this matter must fall on those with the greatest capacity to reason and control their actions. As such the adult community of GEMS Christian Education is expected to model courteous behaviour and treat all members of our community with respect and consideration.

2. Principles

GEMS Christian Education welcomes community participation at each of its campuses and values involvement of families and the wider community. Parents/carers play a crucial role in the academic, social, emotional and physical development of their children. We are committed to ensuring that children feel happy, safe and secure, and have the maximum opportunity to learn. As members of GEMS Christian Education community, parents/carers are expected to conduct themselves in a lawful, ethical, safe and responsible manner that recognises and respects the rights of others and the expertise, experience and qualifications of Employees.

The GEMS Parents and Carers Code of Conduct provides statements which serve as a reminder to all members of the GEMS Christian Education community of their obligations as a member of the GEMS Christian Education community. This Code applies to all adults including parents/carers, step-parents, grandparents, extended family, advocates and any others involved in activities or communication related to the student's enrolment.

3. Guidelines

- 3.1 As a minimum, all members of the GEMS Christian Education community are expected to behave with respect, civility and in the manner of a responsible person.
 - 3.1.1 There may be times when it is felt the actions of a member of the GEMS Christian Education community have infringed the rights of a student. Under no circumstances is a parent/carer to approach another student, whilst they are in the care of GEMS Christian Education, to discuss or chastise them because of their actions. Such an approach to a student may be seen to be an assault on the student and may be referred to outside agencies such as the Police. In addition to this, direct adult-to-adult contact should be avoided when there has been an incident at GEMS Christian Education involving their own student/s.
 - 3.1.2 It is appropriate to approach the class teacher in the first instance to seek their intervention in bringing about an equitable and peaceful solution to the situation. If the situation remains unresolved, an approach should be made to the Head of Primary/Secondary and then the Principal and/or Executive Principal.
 - 3.1.3 Bullying has no place within our community. This is as true for adult-to-adult interaction as it is for child-to-child. All interactions between members of our community must be in keeping with the values of GEMS Christian Education. Instances of bullying must quickly be brought to the attention of the teacher, Head of Primary/Secondary, Principal or Executive Principal.
 - 3.1.4 Parents/carers and the wider community should ensure that everyone within the GEMS Christian Education community is treated with respect, fairness and dignity. Therefore, inappropriate use of social media regarding GEMS Christian Education or any of its campuses will be responded to firmly.
 - 3.1.5 In order to help protect the individual's good name; problems, differences of opinion and personality clashes are not resolved by involving other persons in a disagreement or by taking sides in an argument. We will attempt to resolve these issues through calm dialogue between the parties directly involved whilst respecting the dignity of each and every person.
 - 3.1.6 There is an expectation that persons working within GEMS as volunteers avoid forming opinions on any student or sharing their opinions with the broader community.

4. Communication

4.1 In General

Parents/carers will use courteous and acceptable written and spoken language in all communications with students, employees, other parents/carers and members of the GEMS Christian Education Community. No swearing, insulting, harassing, aggressive or otherwise offensive language may be used in any interactions.

- 4.1.1 Parents/carers will act in the best interests of students, their families and employees. They will not engage in malicious or judgemental gossip, and should ensure that anything they say about others is fair and truthful.
- 4.1.2 We value our diverse community and respect the rights, religious beliefs and practises of individuals and their families. We respect the right to points of view that are different from our own.
- 4.1.3 Members of our college community must refrain from actions and behaviour that constitutes harassment, discrimination or vilification.
- 4.1.4 To protect students, do not discuss any complaint or perceived failings in front of them regarding GEMS, it's employees or other students.
- 4.1.5 Listen to your children, but remember that they see their own version of an event and it may be interpreted differently to other versions.

4.2 With GEMS Employees

All GEMS employees are entitled to a safe and happy work environment. This is in the best interests of the students as well as employees themselves. Parents/carers should therefore ensure that their interactions with employees do not create unnecessary stress and anxiety.

- 4.2.1 The priority for GEMS employees is the welfare and education of all students in GEMS Christian Education. GEMS employees are therefore not required to respond to emails and telephone calls instantaneously. Responses are not expected outside normal working hours or during school holidays.
- 4.2.2 The time available for parents/carers to meet with teachers is limited and must not disrupt the classroom. Parents/carers should be mindful of the teacher's time, communicate the reason for the meeting and allow the teacher time to prepare, unless there is a genuine emergency.

4.3 With Students

As members of the GEMS Christian Education Community, parents/carers can support the students in learning and encourage them to always try their best. This can be modelled by:

- a) sharing our knowledge, learning and experiences with the students;
- b) praising the students and encouraging them for all their efforts;
- c) encouraging the development of 'enquiring minds';
- d) recognising and encouraging a student's individuality; and
- e) ensuring that our children are 'equipped' to learn by:
 - i) providing appropriate items that support the learning opportunities & if unsure to see the student's teacher;
 - ii) ensuring that you support GEMS Christian Education in its curriculum priorities and value-adding programs; and
 - iii) encourage decision making, letting the students make their own mistakes ('risk taking') and learning for themselves;
 - iv) encouraging an active and healthy lifestyle;
 - v) setting realistic and achievable goals; and
 - vi) being confident, to show students that we can have a go.
- f) Taking an interest in our children's school work by:
 - i) encouraging and supporting students to complete their homework;
 - ii) asking students about their day;
 - iii) having a happy, confident and positive outlook; and
 - iv) show and encourage a passion for maintaining a healthy and quality lifestyle.

4.4 **With Other Parents/Carers**

Parents/carers will respect the privacy of other GEMS Christian Education Community members email addresses and will not send unsolicited emails or “spam” to, nor forward other members email addresses without their permission. GEMS does not give out the email address of parents/carers without their permission.

5. **At GEMS Christian Education Properties or Events**

Where possible parents/carers are encouraged to be involved in the GEMS Christian Education Community and support college-based events. Whilst on Company grounds parents/carers are asked to adhere to the following:

- a) treat all property with care;
- b) respect policies that support the safe and effective operations of the Company and its community;
- c) follow the car park guidelines;
- d) all visitors to GEMS Christian Education campuses, during operating hours, must sign the Visitors' Register located at the Main Office (excluding pick-up and drop-off times) and comply with all safety and emergency procedures in place;
- e) when attending any kind of assembly or event, parents/carers will listen respectfully, in the same manner required of students and employees, and will refrain from creating any noise or disturbance during performances or speeches by students, employees or guests;
- f) parents/carers may not interrupt or distract a teacher while classroom instruction or learning activities are underway;
- g) when visiting a classroom, parents/carers accept the authority of the teacher and that they are in attendance on the teacher's terms. Teachers value visitor involvement and assistance, but they may ask a visitor to leave for any reason, such as:
 - i) assistance not being required;
 - ii) presence in the classroom or activity is disturbing or distracting to students or teachers;
 - iii) not being in control of their emotions.

6. **Physical Safety**

6.1 All GEMS Christian Education Parents/carers must not:

- a) use any object to threaten or intimidate another person;
- b) cause injury to any person; and
- c) be in possession of, or under the influence of, or provide others with any illicit substances.

6.2 Any parent/carer or GEMS Christian Education Community member who invites any other person to be present at any official activity held by or for the benefit of GEMS Christian Education and its students must, at all times, be responsible for that person and ensure they act in a manner consistent with this Code of Conduct.

7. **Using Technology and Social Media appropriately**

7.1 The expectation set out in this Code can also apply to the way a parent/carer uses technology and behaves online. For example, parents/carers will:

- a) respect a staff member's professional and personal boundaries, by not using their personal online presence to raise college matters (or otherwise engage in disrespectful behaviour);
- b) not take photos, videos or other recordings of a staff member or parent/carer without their consent, or of a student without their parent/carer's consent, and not publish information (including personal details, contact information, images and recordings) concerning a staff member, parent/carer, student or other member of the College community online without express consent;
- c) avoid publishing information which may bring the College (or any of its staff, students, parents/carers and other members of the College community) into disrepute. This may include an image or recording which shows a student in college uniform, or a member of the College community at the College or at a college activity or event, behaving inappropriately;
- d) not communicate with students from another family outside of the College, including by email or on social media, without prior consent from that student's parent/carer(s);
- e) not discuss confidential or sensitive college matters, including in relation to grievances about a particular staff member or student, online; and
- f) obtain express permission to use the College's name or insignia in the title of any online website, forum or group, or printed or online publication. In addition, no suggestion should be made that any such platform or material is operated or sanctioned by the College.

8. Conflict Resolution

- 8.1 GEMS is committed to the education and wellbeing of each student. It is therefore critical that parents/carers are able to raise genuine concerns they may have about such matter in an appropriate constructive and respectful forum.
- 8.2 GEMS Complaints Handling Policy and procedure sets out how concerns and grievances may be raised with the College; who they should be raised with; and how the College will deal with these in a respectful and timely manner.
- 8.3 Parents/carers with complaints should consult the GEMS Complaints Handling Policy. However, in general:
- a) parents/carers should take care with volume, tone and vocabulary when communicating with another family's child;
 - b) parents/carers should not communicate with another student about an issue concerning their own child. In particular, parents/carers should refrain from any attempt to discipline a student who is not their child, unless they are attempting to restrain a student from causing a risk to themselves or others;
 - c) parents/carers should raise their grievances with their child's teacher in the first instance. More serious concerns or grievances, including where a parent/carer is dissatisfied with a teacher's response to a grievance, may be raised with the appropriate member of the College (as set out in the policy);
 - d) parents/carers should arrange a face-to-face meeting to discuss their grievances, rather than relying on email or other written communications;
 - e) parents/carer should clearly identify their grievances, and what they would practically like to see happen. If there is more than one issue or problem, parents/carers should write a list so that they are adequately prepared and then decide which issue or problem matters most;
 - f) parents/carers should appreciate that while the College is committed to dealing with their grievances in a timely manner, it will not always be practicable for staff to provide an immediate acknowledgement or response (particularly where a concern or grievance is sent by email);
 - g) parents/carers should respect that the College employs experienced educators and other professionals who are well-trained in making academic, disciplinary, extracurricular, pastoral and wellbeing decisions every day. Please understand that while the College will always take into account the interests of the parent/carer's child, the College must ultimately make decisions that take into account the interests of all students (and others who may be affected by the College's decisions);
 - e) parents/carers should recognise that just as the College will seek to respect each student's privacy, the College will also respect the privacy of other members of the College community. This means there are limits to what information the College will share with a parent/carer when issues arise. This does not mean that the College is not taking an issue or situation seriously, or hiding information from a parent/carer;
 - g) if a parent/carer is not satisfied with the College's response to a grievance, a College policy may provide a parent/carer with a right to request an internal review of the College's decision. The College respects a parent/carer's right to invoke any formal grievance-resolution procedures which may exist. However, parents/carers who refuse to engage in constructive processes that may resolve their grievances, or who choose to publicly air their grievances about the College (and in particular about staff or students) on social media or in the community, are not welcome.

9. Consequences of a Breach

- 9.1 Any parent/carer, employee or student may notify the Head of Primary/Secondary or Executive Principal of a possible breach of the GEMS Parents and Carers Code of Conduct. The Executive Principal will have absolute discretion for deciding how to best respond to concerns about a parent/carer's compliance with the Code. GEMS will investigate the complaint and where it considers that a parent/carer has breached the Code, the Executive Principal, or their delegate may implement one or more of the following consequences (and not necessarily in any particular order):
- a) a request that the relevance conduct immediately cease;

- b) a written warning;
- c) a parent/carer (or another relevant person) being banned from the College grounds, either for a particular period of time or permanently;
- d) a parent/carer (or another relevant person) being excluded from College activities or events;
- e) a requirement that a parent/carer (or another relevant person) only communicate with a nominated College representative; and
- f) termination of the enrolment of a parent/carer's child(s).

9.2. Staff and volunteers are empowered to take steps to protect their own health and wellbeing. If they feel that a parent/carer is being inappropriate, they are encouraged to indicate this and ask that it stop. If it does not, or if a staff member feels that a parent/carer's actions are posing a risk to their or someone else's health and wellbeing, they are empowered to remove themselves from the situation. This may include immediately concluding a meeting or phone call, or demanding that a parent/carer immediately leave the College grounds (or College activity or event).

9.3 Correspondence that is in breach of this Code of Conduct, because of language, an expression used, or the manner in which it is sent or delivered, will not be responded to.

10. Right of Appeal

10.1 Nothing in this policy precludes any person from exercising their individual legal rights.

10.2 This policy will apply to any decisions made by the College and parents/carers may use the GEMS Complaint Handling Policy to appeal any decision made.

END OF POLICY

APPENDIX

1. [GEMS Parent, Carers and Community Code of Conduct - Factsheet](#)



PARENT/CARERS AND COMMUNITY CODE OF CONDUCT

Supporting, Learning, Wellbeing and Safety in GEMS Christian Education

Learning for life

We welcome parents/carers and other members of our community into colleges.

Working together with the GEMS community, staff support the learning and well-being of every student and are entitled to a safe work environment.

Parents/carers and other visitors to our colleges support safety by ensuring their communications and conduct at the college and college activities are respectful.

Elements of engagement	It is expected that parents/carers and visitors to our college communities will:	Parents/carers and visitors to our college communities demonstrate this by:
<p>Communication</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be polite to others • act as positive role models • recognise and respect personal differences • use the college's communication process to address concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using polite spoken and written language • speaking and behaving respectfully at all times • being compassionate when interacting with others • informing staff if the behaviour of others is negatively impacting them or their family, respecting staff time by accepting they will respond to appropriate communication when they are able • requesting a meeting to discuss any concerns about their child's education — allowing staff time to prepare and appreciate their time may be limited
<p>Collaboration</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (parents/carers) ensure their child attends school ready to learn • support the GEMS Student Code of Conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking responsibility for their child arriving and departing the College safely on time every day • reading and encouraging their child to understand and follow the GEMS Student Code of Conduct
<p>College Culture</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognise every student is important to us • contribute to a positive college culture • work together with staff to resolve issues or concerns • respect people's privacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • valuing each child's education and acknowledging staff are responsible for supporting the whole college community • speaking positively about the college and its staff • not making negative comments or gossiping about other college community members, including students — in person, in writing or on social media • understanding, at times, compromises may be necessary • considering the privacy of all college community members at all times and understanding that the college cannot share confidential information.

Emerald Christian College • ECC Little Gems • Ontrack College

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