<Creative Academy>

<Parental Engagement Policy>

Overview

Parental engagement in Higher Education (HE) is evolving beyond traditional school-level models, focusing on supporting student independence. Policies now often navigate data protection (GDPR) to ensure student privacy and greater independence.

Effective policies shift from parental *involvement* (doing things for the student) to *engagement* (supporting the student to be independent).

Key Aspects of HE Parental Engagement Policies

- **Transition Support:** Engaging parents during open days to help them understand their changing role, fostering, rather than hindering, student independence.
- **Communication Protocols:** Establishing clear guidelines on when and how parents are contacted, particularly regarding student safety and mental health. This often involves navigating strict GDPR constraints where students must consent to sharing information.
- **Welfare & Academic Support:** Providing assurance for parents the university pastoral services and, where appropriate, academic departments will communicate when and where necessary while respecting the legal autonomy of adult students.
- **Inclusion:** Ensuring policies reach diverse family backgrounds, are available on the website and provide tailored support for students.

At The Creative Academy, our commitment lies in providing a supportive and empowering environment for **adult** students to pursue their educational and artistic endeavours. To foster independence, ownership and personal growth, we have developed a policy regarding parent or guardian communication with the Creative Academy.

We kindly request that parents or guardians refrain from contacting The Creative Academy to discuss their student's progress, grades, teaching methodologies, complaints, learning techniques, assessment procedures, participation in performances, access to support services, or financial arrangements. Our approach is to encourage students to take ownership of their educational journey and to be responsible for their own communication with the Creative Academy.

We understand that there may be circumstances that require parents or guardians to inform us about their student's health or absences. In such cases, we expect them to send an email address, info@creativeacademy.org, solely for the purpose of sharing this vital information and the Creative Academy will not respond, it is important to note that these communications should solely serve as notifications and not intended for any discussion.

Please utilise the designated generic email address mentioned above, to inform The Creative Academy of any instances where a student may be absent due to health or other personal matters. This ensures that we are aware of the reason behind their absence and can assist in making any necessary accommodations or adjustments, although students are still encouraged to complete absence forms.

Conversely, we would like to assure you that The Creative Academy will promptly reach out to parents or guardians, in the event that, a student is refusing to engage with their personal tutors or Creative Academy staff or if there are serious concerns about their well-being. We place great importance on the well-being and success of our students, so any such circumstances will be handled with care and urgency.

To encourage individual growth and responsibility, we strongly urge our students to directly engage with The Creative Academy regarding any issues they may encounter during their educational journey. They can also reach out to our student representatives who are available to provide support and guidance. We believe that this approach promotes independence, critical thinking, communication, accountability and effective problem-solving skills.

In the unlikely event that a student feels they need support in addressing issues at the Creative Academy, which they don't feel comfortable doing themselves, they can request the appointment of an advocate (in line with the Student Advocate statement). Appointing an advocate for students who may require additional support is a vital step in ensuring equitable access to educational resources and fostering an inclusive environment. Typically, this role is filled by a student representative who understands the unique challenges and aspirations of their peers. However, in some cases, it may be better to appoint a tutor or independent advocate (youth worker) based in Slough who has the expertise and community insight needed to navigate complex issues. These advocates serve as crucial intermediaries, offering guidance, amplifying student voices, and promoting effective communication between students and educational institutions. By providing personalised support, advocates empower students to engage fully with their education and advocate for their own needs, thus enhancing their overall academic experience and personal growth.

We highly appreciate your understanding and cooperation in adhering to this policy as we strive to create an environment that fosters self-sufficiency, resilience, independence, personal development, and open lines of communication at The Creative Academy. We are confident that by collectively supporting our students' growth and empowering them to take responsibility for their own educational journey, we can create a fulfilling and successful learning experience for all.

At The Creative Academy, we prioritise providing a safe and nurturing environment for all students, staff, and supporters. We believe in fostering a positive and respectful community, where individuals can freely express their passion for the arts. With this in mind, we would like to address an important matter regarding behaviour at Creative Academy events and performances.

Parent and Guardian Code of Conduct: Summary

Creative Academy is committed to giving students, staff, volunteers and visitors a safe, respectful and supportive environment. We value a positive relationship with parents and guardians, and welcome concerns raised through the correct channels. However, some parents and guardians have contacted staff excessively, posted damaging comments online, or behaved aggressively or threateningly at visits, events and performances, or by email, phone or social media. This goes against our values and **will not be tolerated**.

We expect all parents, guardians and carers to treat everyone with courtesy and respect. They should raise concerns calmly, follow the Creative Academy's official procedures, and contact staff only through approved channels and at reasonable times and professional means (email only). They must also follow staff instructions and venue rules and respect the privacy of students and staff. Unacceptable behaviour includes abusive, discriminatory, threatening or violent conduct, as well as harassment or excessive contact. It also includes posting untrue or harmful content online, approaching other people's children, filming without permission, attending under the influence, and disrupting Creative Academy activities.

Any breach will be taken seriously. Depending on how serious it is, the Creative Academy may issue a warning, limit communication, remove the individual from an event, or ban them from premises and events for a set period or permanently. If the matter is serious, the Creative Academy will report it to the police or other agencies, and legal action may follow. Where there is an immediate risk to safety, the Creative Academy may ban someone straight away, without any earlier warning.

The Creative Academy will act fairly and in proportion to the behaviour. Decisions will be confirmed in writing, with a chance to ask for a review. A restriction on a parent or guardian is not a sanction against their child, and we will make other arrangements where possible so the student can keep taking part. We will consider individual circumstances in line with the Equality Act 2010 and keep records in line with data protection law. By enrolling a student, attending events or contacting the Creative Academy, parents and guardians agree to follow this Code of Conduct. Thank you for helping us keep Creative Academy a safe, positive and inspiring place for everyone.