



Managing Aggressive Behaviour from Parents or Visitors Policy

Approved at School level

Reviewed May 2022

Next review due May 2024

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Introduction

All members of the school community have a right to expect that their school is a safe place in which to work and learn. Abuse, threatening behaviour, or violence against school staff, or other members of the school community is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All incidents will be treated seriously.

Abuse, threatening behaviour, or violence are not considered to be an acceptable part of any job, nor does it form part of the duty of any employee to accept such behaviour.

Throughout this document where the term 'visitor' is used, it covers any abusive parent or visitor to the school and is not confined to adults.

The school is committed to reducing the risks for its staff from acts of violence and aggression by:

- Demonstrating to staff that the potential for violence at work is recognised
- Issuing clear procedures
- Supporting staff who have been subject to violent, threatening, or abusive behaviour and offering counselling where appropriate
- Allocating adequate resources to support this policy
- Reviewing this policy regularly.

Expectations

This school encourages close links with parents and the community. It believes that pupils benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one.

The vast majority of parents, carers and others visiting our school are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. However, on the rare occasions when an unjustified negative attitude towards the school is expressed, this can result in aggression, verbal and or physical abuse towards members of school staff or the wider school community.

The school expects and requires its members of staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations. Where possible, staff should seek the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues. However, all members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse, and the right, in an extreme case, of appropriate self-defence.

We expect parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards members of school staff. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

Types of abuse

In identifying types of abuse, the school recognises that staff can be intimidated or threatened by a variety of circumstances, not simply physical assault. Elements of abusive behaviour could include any of the following:

- Abusive or insulting telephone calls, letters, faxes, emails, planner notes, website entries, social media posts
- Using raised voices or shouting at members of staff, either in person or over the telephone
- Intimidating a member of staff through a gesture or communication
- Kicking, biting, punching, poking, pushing, spitting, scratching, head butting, tripping
- Any form of aggressive or threatening behaviour due to substance abuse
- The use of aggressive hand gestures
- Threatening behaviour including shaking/holding a fist or finger towards another person
- Swearing
- Actions that restrict movement
- Unwanted physical contact which results in no injury
- Sexual, racial, or other harassment
- The use of weapons/missiles
- Damage to personal property
- Innuendo
- Unreasonable demands or blackmail
- Deliberate silence
- Other verbal or written abuse/aggression which causes offence or distress
- Vexatious complaints

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour. Unacceptable behaviour may result in the local authority, safeguarding services, and the police being informed of the incident.

Procedure to be followed

Single significant incidents will result in the Headteacher or Chair of Governors banning the visitor from the school premises for a period of time, subject to review as defined in section 547 of the Education Act (1996). All relevant authorities will be informed.

If a visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the Headteacher or appropriate member of senior staff will follow the steps below. These steps can be moved through over a matter of days, months, or years. The incidents can include a variety of 'Types of abuse' as listed above.

- 1) After the first incident: a verbal discussion will take place with the visitor stating how the incident is deemed unacceptable and how matters should be approached in the future. This discussion should take place within one week from the date of the incident. Reassurance from the visitor should be received. If the visitor fails to respond to communication requests or reassurance is not forthcoming, the school may proceed to step 2.
- 2) After a second incident: a verbal discussion with the visitor will take place about how the incident is deemed unacceptable and how matters should be approached in the future. Additionally, a recorded statement of the subsequent incident and a copy of this policy is sent to the visitor. Within one week from the date of the incident, documentation should be sent to the visitor and the discussion should take place. Reassurance from the visitor should be received. If the visitor fails to respond to communication requests or reassurance is not forthcoming, the school may proceed to step 3.

3) After a third incident, steps will be taken appropriate to the type of abuse involved. Steps may include some or all of the following for a period of time to be decided by the Headteacher:

- a. communication by letter only from and to a single named contact meaning a withdrawal of email and planner communication, removal of live parent evening interactions etc
- b. collection and drop off with a single named contact with withdrawal from childcare facilities and clubs
- c. A change of drop-off and collection times or locations
- d. a complete ban from the school site

A visitor will be informed in writing if they will or have been barred. The letter or email informing visitors of this will usually be signed by the Headteacher. Banned visitors will be allowed to present their side to negate the ban. However, the school can either:

- bar visitors temporarily, until the individual has had the opportunity to formally present their side
- or tell visitors that they intend to bar them and invite them to present their side by a set deadline

Following this, the school can decide whether to continue with barring visitors. Any decision would be reviewed within a reasonable time, decided by this school.

Conclusion

The local authority itself may take action where behaviour is unacceptable or there are serious breaches of visitor conduct or health and safety legislation.

In implementing this policy, the school will, as appropriate, seek advice from education, health and safety and legal departments, to ensure fairness and consistency.

Further information can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/controlling-access-to-school-premises/controlling-access-to-school-premises>