

Dealing with Abusive Parents and Carers Policy

Approved by: Headteacher

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This policy takes into account the advice of the local authority legal team (October 2019).

As a general rule, schools are orderly, safe places, where relationships between staff and visitors, especially



Knowledge



Spark



Humanity



Grit



Team

parents/carers, demonstrate mutual respect and recognition of shared responsibility for pupils' welfare and educational progress. Parental involvement is an important factor in educational success and in dealing with emerging problems at an early stage.

The governing body at Clapgate Primary School, value the positive relationships with parents and visitors to the school. We encourage close links with parents and the community and believe that students benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one. We also strive to make our school a place where, as adults, we model for students the behaviour we teach and expect.

The vast majority of parents, carers and others visiting the school are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. However, a tiny minority of parents, carers and visitors have a negative attitude towards the school and sometimes; this can result in aggression, verbal and/or physical abuse towards school staff.

In these situations, we expect members of staff to behave professionally, attempting to defuse the situation where possible and seeking the involvement, as appropriate, of other colleagues. Staff who face these situations have licence to end any conversation (face to face or on the telephone). They should then refer the incident to a member of senior leadership who will take appropriate action or invoke the provisions of this policy.

The overriding principle is that all members of the school community have the right to work or be in school, without fear of aggression or abuse from parents, carers or other visitors. The board of governors has a requirement to protect staff and students from such aggression. The governors of the school expect parents, carers and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards school staff. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where parents' behaviour is unacceptable and what parents, carers or other visitors can expect from staff. Where parents, carers and visitors display unacceptable behaviour and go through the stages of our system, they will have the opportunity to put their views forward at every stage.

Definition of Unacceptable Behaviour

Unacceptable behaviour is such that makes a member of staff or student feel uncomfortable or threatened. This can be through face-to-face contact, on the telephone or in written communication (including social media). The following is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour:

- any kind of insult that attempts to demean, embarrass or undermine
- any kind of threat
- raising of voice in a manner that is intimidating
- physical intimidation, e.g. standing very close to someone or using aggressive hand gestures
- use of foul or abusive language
- any kind of physical abuse
- malicious or untrue allegations

Staff Approach to Dealing with this Behaviour

If a parent/carer/visitor demonstrates 'unacceptable behaviour', staff will approach the situation using the following strategies:

Always

- remain calm and polite
- call on a second member of staff to be present
- stay in control of the situation
- actively listen – repeat information back to ensure their understanding of the issue and gain their agreement
- explain that you are trying to help
- be clear and avoid using jargon
- if necessary, apologise for an error and take action to put it right
- if you have to go and get some information, let the parents know why
- make notes of the conversation on CPOMS (after the event)
- follow the procedure below if appropriate
- refer the parent to the headteacher or deputy if necessary

Never

- respond in the same manner
- allow a situation to continue if you feel at risk of harm

Further actions:

Record details of any incidents on CPOMS and report incidents to the leadership team.

Any member of school staff has the right to ask a person displaying ‘unacceptable behaviour’ to leave the school premises immediately due to their behaviour and explain that the headteacher will contact them.

If a parent/carer/ visitor displays any unacceptable behaviour in any way, the headteacher or appropriate senior staff will assess the level of risk before deciding on a future course of action. The course of action will be reasonable and commensurate with the assessed level of risk.

The School’s Approach to Dealing with Incidents

Please note, at any stage any parent, carer or visitor can be asked to leave the premises by any member of staff if they feel that a person’s behaviour is unacceptable. Any member of staff also has the right to ring the police for assistance.

Recording of Incidents

Staff/students subject to abuse and witnesses will make written statements about the incident. All incidents with parents and subsequent letters will be recorded on CPOMS. A record of what has happened will also be passed to Leeds City Council Legal team for an appropriate letter for their stage to be drafted when necessary.

Letters to parents following abusive behaviour from parents or carers:

Pre-Warning Letter

This letter will be sent by the headteacher after consultation with the chair of governors. It will set out the unacceptable behaviour displayed and ensure the parent, carer or visitor is clear about behaviour standards expected by the school. This letter may contain a warning about further action if there are subsequent incidents. The parent, carer or visitor may be invited to an informal meeting to discuss events. This could be helpful to discuss and defuse the situation. The safety and well-being of those attending will be carefully considered. Members of school staff will always

be accompanied by at least one other colleague at any such meeting. Consideration should be given to the seating arrangements, and care taken to ensure exits cannot be blocked by a parent, carer or visitor who could potentially become aggressive. The main points of discussion and any agreed actions should be noted, and a follow-up letter will be sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions. Parents, carers or visitors who have been aggressive may be asked to sign a behaviour code of conduct statement to ensure they understand the behaviour expected in school.

Letter 1

This letter will be drafted by Leeds City Council Legal Team but sent from the school after consultation with the chair of governors. It will set out the unacceptable behaviour and write to ensure the parent, carer or visitor is clear about behaviour standards expected by the school. This letter will contain a warning about further action if there are subsequent incidents.

Letter 2

This letter will be used where other procedures have been exhausted and aggression or intimidation continues OR where there is an act of violence that means the school will be banning the parent/carers or visitor. This letter will come directly from Leeds City Council Legal Team. It will inform the parent, carer or visitor of the details and length of the ban. A decision to impose a ban will be reviewed by the governing board at the end of the fixed term, including consideration to the extent of the parent's/carers' compliance with the ban, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received, and any evidence of the parent's co-operation with the school in other respects. If the board of governors believes the ban should be extended, advice and guidance from legal services will be taken.

Letter 3

Parents who have been banned from the school premises and continue to cause a nuisance will be reminded in writing about the conditions of their ban. A repeat of unacceptable behaviour or breaking of the ban conditions means that the parent, carer or visitor will be considered as a trespasser. In these circumstances the offender may be removed from school. This may be carried out by a police officer, the Headteacher or nominees authorised by the governing board. Legal proceedings may be brought against the parent, carer or visitor as the case will be passed to the Anti-Social Behaviour Team.

Complaints Policy

Any parental complaint that arises from incidents of abusive behaviour will be dealt with under the complaints policy.