FOREST EDGE FEDERATION

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Tutshill C Of E Primary School

Woolaston Primary School

Forest Edge Federation

Governing Board

Managing violent and abusive visitors in school

Signed: _____

Chair of the Governing Board

September 2022

Review: September 2023

Guidance for dealing with aggressive or abusive parents and visitors to schools who cause nuisance or create a disturbance. This includes contact via telephone and email.

Summary

- Day to day access to a school is within the control of the Executive Headteacher.
- Normally parents/carers (and those with parental responsibility) are granted "implied licence" to visit the grounds and buildings of a school, for instance, for appointments, to attend a school event or to drop off or pick up their children.
- The expectation is that parents/carers will enter the school site when the gates are open and be off site by the time they are closed. Parents/carers can enter the school office, as restrictions allow, to have discussions with the administration staff. When there are restrictions in place, this contact will occur by phone or email.
- Occasionally, the school will host events where parents are invited onto the site either during the learning day, or at other times. In this case, families are expected to follow the advice given for that event.
- Parents may also be invited into school for appointments either with school staff of from other agencies.
- The expectation is that all visitors to the school will behave appropriately showing respect for others at all times.
- Where there is a breach of such procedures the school needs to respond in a measured way, depending on the seriousness of any inappropriate conduct. Following incidents, the school may:
- o Initiate a meeting/dialogue with the individual;
- o Write to the visitor/person making contact, describing their misconduct, explaining its impact on the school and stating its unacceptability;
- Vary the person's "implied licence", say, through the addition of conditions such as specific areas they can enter, times, or specific individuals or types of contact that could help minimise the negative impact of their behaviour on the school;
    - o Warn of the possibility of a "ban", (ie. the withdrawal of their licence), if the misconduct is repeated;
    - o Impose a ban with a review after a fixed period;
    - o Impose a ban without review for a fixed period of time.

The headteacher will be responsible for initiating any of these actions. The Local Authority may be consulted in the event of the more serious sanctions being considered.

Introduction

As a general rule, the school is an orderly, safe place, where relationships between staff and visitors, especially 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 the school is proactive in dealing with emerging problems at an early stage.

On occasion, the behaviour of a few parents/carers/visitors can cause severe disruption or worse, resulting in abusive or aggressive behaviour towards staff, pupils, or other members of the school community.

This policy is mainly about dealing with violence, threatening behaviour or abuse by parents/carers/visitors of a pupil in a school, including those cases where the parent/carer/visitor has been asked not to come onto the premises. Some of the remedies listed are also applicable when dealing with other intruders on school premises. This policy also includes contact by phone or email where behaviour should also follow the expectations of mutual respect.

Violence, threatening behaviour and abuse against school staff or other members of the school community will not be tolerated. All members of the school community, and visitors to the school should be confident that they are operating within a safe environment. All members of the school community have a right to expect their school to be a safe place in which to work and learn. There is no place for violence, threatening behaviour or abuse in schools. Where such behaviour does occur, the school will play a proactive role in taking all possible action to deal with it, and will involve the Local Authority as necessary because they also have a responsibility for protecting the health and safety of their staff and pupils in maintained schools.

In certain circumstances, this may mean the LA taking the lead in initiating action on the school's behalf with the school's support. In other circumstances, the LA is expected to support the school in action that the school itself will initiate.

In circumstances where power does not lie with the LA (eg. under the criminal law) there is an expectation that the LA would support and advise schools to remove as much of the burden from the school as possible.

Expectations of Behaviour

The governing board expects and requires its members of staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to defuse the situation where possible, seeking 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.

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated:

- shouting at members of the school staff, either in person or over the telephone;
- physically intimidating a member of staff, eg standing very close to her/him;
- the use of aggressive hand gestures;
- threatening behaviour either in person or via telephone or email;
- shaking or holding a fist towards another person;
- swearing;
- pushing;
- hitting, eg slapping, punching and kicking;
- spitting;
- breaching the school's security procedures.
- Trespass
- Intentional damage to property
- nuisance or disturbance
- sexual or racial abuse, or abuse covering any protected characteristic.

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour.

Schools can bar someone from the premises if they feel that their aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language is a risk to staff or pupils. It's enough for a member of staff or pupil to feel threatened.

Unacceptable behaviour may result in the local authority and the police being informed of the incident. The school has a school beat officer PC Gregg Steer and has close links with local PCSOs. The school works closely with these professionals and may consult with them regarding incidents.

Immediate Actions when an Incident Arises

- The member of the school community who witnesses the incident will ask the person to leave or invite them to come into a room separately away from other people so they have the chance to calm down. If they do not feel confident to do this, they should contact the headteacher or a senior leader for support and that member of staff will ask them to leave or ask them to go into a separate room.
- Immediately after the incident occurs, any witnesses should fill in an incident form (Appendix 1)

- All incident forms should be given to the headteacher as soon as possible after completion.
- The headteacher, or their representative, will follow this policy regarding next steps, fill in a process form (Appendix 2), and may consult with the LA or the police to decide on any further action that might need to be taken.
- If necessary, school staff will liaise with the police as necessary.
- The employee will be offered support if required. This may include the offer of counselling, occupational health or legal support.

If the school feels that it is necessary, it will display suitable posters in areas of the school that may be entered by visitors.

Procedure to be followed when banning a parent/carer/visitor

If a parent/carer behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the Executive Headteacher or appropriate senior leader will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If necessary, the school's complaints procedures should be followed. Where all procedures have been exhausted, and aggression or intimidation continue, or where there is an act of violence or aggression, a parent or carer may be banned by the Executive Headteacher from the school premises for a period of time, subject to review. In imposing a ban, the following steps will be taken:

1. The headteacher/senior leader will gather all the relevant information including witness statements following the event.
2. There may be a warning letter sent first, outlining the behaviour that is unacceptable and the possible consequences of any repeat incidents (Appendix 4).
3. The parent/carer will be informed, in writing, that she/he is banned from the premises, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, eg that police involvement or an injunction application may follow (Appendix 4).
   This letter will include
   - Details of the incident and why it is considered unacceptable.
   - The length of the proposed ban
   - The period of time (10 working days) that the parent/carer has in which to contest the ban by completing a written explanation of why the ban is unfair or inappropriate and why they should therefore not be banned. The date on which the decision will be finalised.
4. Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating the matter has been reported to the Local Authority and the Police will be included.
5. The Chair of Governors/LA will be informed of the ban.

6. Where appropriate, arrangements for pupils being delivered to, and collected from the school gate will be clarified.

Trespassing

Trespassing is a civil offence. This means that schools can ask someone to leave and take civil action in the courts if someone trespasses regularly. The school will write to regular trespassers to tell them that they are potentially committing an offence.
If a parent/carer's behaviour is unreasonable, and their 'implied' permission to be on school site is withdrawn, they become a trespasser and they can be prosecuted under section 547.

Section 547, Education Act 1996 makes it an offence for a trespasser on school premises to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance, and allows for the removal and prosecution of any person believed to have committed the offence. The penalty for a person convicted of the offence is a fine of up to £500.

The length of a ban

The ban will be finite in length, as only the most serious misconduct, such as consistent trespassing, would justify an indefinite ban.

The duration needs to be sufficient to convey a clear message about the seriousness of the associated misconduct, but not so long as to be disproportionate. The aim should always to be to restore "normal" relations as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Even if a ban is permanent, it should be reviewed periodically, taking account of subsequently demonstrated patterns of behaviour.

What does a ban achieve?

- it confirms to a parent/carer that the school will not tolerate misbehaviour;
- shows the school takes health and safety of its staff, visitors and pupils seriously;
- it provides a key element in making it easier to use legal remedies to prevent repeated misconduct, including use of S547 of the 1996 Education Act to enable Police removal and possible prosecution of those on school premises without permission;
- it may form the basis for an application for an injunction to curtail repeated instances of misbehaviour.

Parental Rights

Every attempt will be made to maintain normal communications with parents/carers, including giving them the opportunity to participate in elections for parent governors.

Even where a parent/carer has been banned from the school premises, they retain their right to an annual consultation in relation to the educational progress of their child/ren.

However, the school may determine who will be present at the meeting (e.g a senior member of staff might accompany the class teacher) and its location (e.g. it may well be arranged off site or completed virtually).

The interests of the child will continue to be paramount.

Risk Assessment

Following any incidents, the school's risk assessment (Appendix 3) will be re-examined to ensure that all stakeholders are as safe as possible.

Other Agencies

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

If there is an injury to staff from an assault, the employer may need to report the injury to the health and safety executive (HSE) under the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR), as amended in 2012.

This Policy will be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1: Incident report form

Any photographic evidence of any injuries or damage, or relevant CCTV footage, will also be gathered if appropriate.

Incident Report Form

Where possible, the form should be completed as fully as possible before any discussion between witnesses is possible, as this might lead to allegations of collusion.

Incident Form			
Date of incident:		Time of incident:	
Name of witness (filling out the form):			
Witness status (staff member, parent, visitor)			
Name of person(s) causing incident:			
If name is unknown, provide other identifying details			
Status of person causing incident (parent/visitor/trespasser)			
Full description of the incident including names of people involved, location, nature of any injuries, attendance of emergency services.			
Do you feel that you need support following this incident		Yes No Delete as necessary	
Please give this form to the Executive Headteacher as soon as it is completed			

Appendix 2 Process Form

Process form	
Incident time and date:	
Witness statement(s) taken from:	
Summary of incident (taken from witness statements(s)	
Initial action/outcome (e.g. Informal conciliation; police intervention; warning or banning letter issued)	
Summary of subsequent actions taken by the school, including risk assessments Linked incidents (if any)	

Appendix 3 Risk Assessment

Managing Violent and Abusive Visitors to School Risk Assessment				
Identified Risk	To whom	Actions	Monitoring	Feedback
Abusive, threatening behaviour, violence from visitor to site at start or end of the day	Teachers on the doors, staff on gates Pupils	Clear expectations about when the gates open and close. Staff to be polite and welcoming. Staff to treat all visitors with respect and be clear about expectations	Staff voice	
Abusive, threatening behaviour, violence from visitor to the building: office	Admin staff Staff in the reception area Senior staff Pupils	Staff to be polite and respectful to visitors Staff to listen to visitor concerns, taking them to a room to hear their concerns if appropriate. Staff to have training in managing angry people	Staff voice CPD records	
Abusive, threatening behaviour, violence from visitor to the building: site	All staff Pupils			

It is recommended that members of staff are offered personal safety training, which can help in:

reducing violent attacks by parents and others;

- enabling staff to defuse aggression and prevent situations escalating;
- teaching staff to recognize verbal and nonverbal precursors to aggression and use techniques to calm a potential assailant;
- improving staff confidence in dealing with aggression and the resulting stress; and
- minimising the risk of an attack causing injury.

Appendix 4 (Suggested warning letter, from the Executive Headteacher: to parent/carer with child/ren at the school that may be used as a whole, or in part in the event of an incident.)

Recorded delivery

Dear ……..

I have received a report about your conduct at the school on **(enter date and time). (Add factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils, other parents).**

I must inform you that the local authority/ governing board **(delete as appropriate)** will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to protect its staff and pupils.

Therefore if, in the future, I receive any reports of conduct of this nature I will be forced to consider removing your licence to enter the school grounds and buildings. If you do not comply with that instruction I will be able to arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

Nevertheless, I wish to give you an opportunity to give me in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to the report which I have received about your conduct. These comments may include any expressions of regret on your part and any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct. To enable me to take a decision on this matter at an early point, you are asked to send me any written comments you wish to make by **(state date ten working days from the date of letter).**

Yours sincerely

Executive Headteacher

(Suggested banning Letter from the executive headteacher, LA or governing board to parent/carer with child/ren at the school which may be used in whole or in part as needed.)

Recorded delivery

Dear ……..

I have received a report from the Executive Headteacher at **(insert name)** School about your conduct on **(enter date and time).**

(Add factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils, other parents.)

I must inform you that the local authority/ governing board **(delete as appropriate)** will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to protect its staff and pupils. On the advice of the Executive Headteacher I am therefore instructing that until …….. **(add date)** you are not to reappear on the premises of the school. If you do not comply with this instruction I may arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

For the duration of this decision, you may bring your son(s)/daughter(s) **(complete as appropriate)** to school and collect them/him/her (delete as appropriate) at the end of the school day, but you must not go beyond the school gate.

In the case of infant children, also insert arrangements have been made for your **(delete as appropriate)** son(s)/daughter(s) (insert child/rens' names) to be collected, and returned to you, at the school gate by a member of the school's staff.

The withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises takes effect straightaway. However, I still need to decide whether it is appropriate to confirm this decision. Before I do so, I wish to give you an opportunity to give me in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to the report which I have received from the Executive Headteacher. These comments may include any expressions of regret on your part and any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct. To enable me to take a decision on this matter at an early point, you are asked to send me any written comments you wish to make by **(state date ten working days from the date of letter).**

If on receipt of your comments I consider that my decision should be confirmed, or extended, you will be supplied with details of how to pursue a review of the circumstances of your case.
In any event, the decision to withdraw your licence to enter the school premises will be reviewed by ..... (complete as appropriate). That review will take account of any representations that you may have made and of your subsequent conduct.

Yours sincerely

LA Officer / Chair of Governing Board

(Banning Letter, from the executive headteacher, LA or governing board: to member of the public)

Recorded delivery

Dear .....

I have received a report from the Executive Headteacher at **(insert name)** school about your conduct on **(enter date and time).**

(Add factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils, other parents.)
I must inform you that the authority/ governing board (delete as appropriate) will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to protect its staff and pupils.

On the advice of the Executive Headteacher I am therefore instructing that you are not to reappear on the premises of the school. If you do not comply with this instruction, I may arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

Yours sincerely

Executive Headteacher / LA Officer / Chair of Governing Board