

Dealing with unacceptable parent behaviour

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Chair of Governors: David Lovelock

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Our Vision

At Tadley Primary School, we are passionate about equipping our children with the personal characteristics and educational outcomes for their successful futures. Our vision for each child is to develop an active curiosity of their world, discover their own interests and talents, and grow in their own confidence and love of learning. We do this by providing children with an irresistible invitation to learn through our knowledge-rich and diverse curriculum.

Learning for Life the Tadley Way! **Pride Kindness Diversity Community**

Introduction

As a local community we strive to ensure that relationships within our school are reflective of our roles within our community. Our vision and values perfectly demonstrate this and clearly illustrates our belief that we should treat others as we would wish to be treated. All staff and pupils are made aware of this expectation and school leaders should set an example in this respect.

Within the school we have a Code of Conduct which applies and adhered to by

- All members of staff, including teaching and support staff;
- Volunteers, including governors;
- Casual workers;
- Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly;
- Student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training, and apprentices.

We would also expect parents and visitors to our school not only to support this aspiration, but also to demonstrate such values themselves. Staff have a right to feel secure, happy and unthreatened by

the parents of the pupils that they teach and we recognise that almost without exception, parents are highly supportive of our school community values.

However, on the rare occasion where parents may act in an unacceptable manner, the school governors and leadership team, reserve the right to act to prevent staff being treated in a way which contradicts our ethos.

This policy defines what constitutes unacceptable behaviour by parents (or other adults connected with them) and how the school will respond if such circumstances should arise.

Definition of unacceptable behaviour

We consider that aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language from a parent presents a risk to staff or pupils. Unacceptable behaviour is such that makes a member of staff or pupil feel 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 as an attempt to demean, embarrass or undermine
- Any kind of threat
- Raising of voice so as to be intimidating
- Physical intimidation, eg by standing very close to him/her or the use of aggressive hand gestures
- Use of foul or abusive language
- Any kind of physical abuse
- Allegations which turn out to be vexatious, malicious and/or spurious.

The school's approach to dealing with incidents

If a parent/carer/visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, 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.

Risk Assessment

The Headteacher will carry out a risk assessment in order to help make a decision about the level of response. In all cases the response will be reasonable and proportionate. The Headteacher will consider the following questions:

- What form did the abuse take?

- What evidence is there?
- What do witnesses say happened?
- Are there previous incidents to take into consideration?
- Do members of staff/pupils feel intimidated by the parent's behaviour?
- Is there any evidence of provocation?
- How high is the assessed risk that this will be repeated or there will be retaliation at the school's action? (low, medium, high).

Recording of Incidents

Staff/pupils subject to abuse and witnesses will make written statements about incident(s). Depending on an assessment of the risk of retaliation to witnesses or individuals, statements made by adults may be made available to the parent if they request it.

The School's response

Following the completion of the risk assessment, the Headteacher will decide the level of action to be taken. Actions may include the following:

1. Clarify to the parent what is considered acceptable behaviour by the school

In most instances, it will be appropriate simply to ensure the parent is clear about behaviour standards expected by the school. This could be explained in writing, or verbally, by the Headteacher. Such communication may contain a warning about additional action, if further incidents arise. If appropriate, the parent may be invited to write to the Headteacher with his/her version of events, within 10 working days. Depending on the parent's response a meeting may then be held to discuss the situation and how this can be avoided in future.

2. Invite the parent to an informal meeting to discuss events

If necessary such a meeting, could be helpful to discuss and diffuse the situation. The safety and well-being of those attending such a meeting must be carefully considered. Members of school staff will always be accompanied by at least one other colleague at any such meeting. The main points of discussion and any agreed actions should be noted, and a follow-up letter or e-mail sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions.

3. Impose conditions on the parent's contact with the school and its staff

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Parents of enrolled pupils have an 'implied licence' to come onto school premises at certain

stated times. It is for schools to define and set out the extent of such access. Parents exceeding this would be trespassing.

Depending on the type, level or frequency of the unacceptable behaviour, the school may consider imposing conditions on the parent's contact with the school. These conditions may include (but are not exclusively):

- Being accompanied to any meeting with a member of school staff, by a member of the senior leadership team
- Restricting contact by telephone to named members of staff
- Restricting written communications to named members of staff
- Restricting attendance at school events to those, where the parent will be accompanied by a member of the senior leadership of the school
- Any other restriction as deemed reasonable and proportionate by the Headteacher.

In such cases the parent will be informed by letter from the Headteacher about the details of the conditions that are being imposed, including how long these will remain in place. The parent would then be given 10 working days from the date of that letter, should they wish to make representations in writing about the conditions, to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors would then decide whether to confirm or remove the conditions. This would be communicated to the parent in writing within 10 working days of the date of the parent's letter.

If the decision is to confirm the conditions imposed, this decision will be reviewed by the governing body after approximately three months (and every three months after that, if appropriate). The parent will be invited to make written representation to the governors. This and the evidence from the Headteacher, will be considered at a meeting of a panel made up from the governing body. Governors may decide to maintain, extend or remove the conditions. The decision of the review will be communicated to the parent by the clerk to the governors within 10 days of the date of the meeting.

When deciding whether it will be necessary to maintain, extend or remove the conditions, governors will give consideration to the extent of the parent's compliance with the conditions, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from him/her and any evidence of the parent's co-operation with the school in other respects.

4. Imposing a ban

Where other procedures have been exhausted and aggression or intimidation continues OR where there is an extreme act of violence or incident(s) of significant harm to a member of staff, the school may consider banning the individual from the school premises. This will include banning a parent from accessing school staff by written communication or telephone.

In these circumstances, the individual will be advised in writing by the Headteacher that a provisional ban is being imposed, including how long this will last for. Should they wish to, the parent would be given 10 working days from the date of that letter, to make representations about

the ban in writing, to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors would then decide whether to confirm or remove the ban. This would be communicated to the parent in writing within 10 working days of the receipt of their letter.

Parents who are banned from the school, will still normally be offered the usual two meetings per year about their child's progress. The Headteacher will determine whether it is more appropriate for these to take place remotely, or in person, with a member of the SLT present at the meetings.

A decision to impose a ban will be reviewed by a panel of governors after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The parent will be invited to make written representation to the governors; this and the evidence from the Headteacher will be considered at a meeting of the full governing body. Governors may decide to remove the ban, extend the ban or impose conditions on parent's access to the school. The decision of the review will be communicated to the parent by the clerk to the governors within 10 days of the date of the meeting.

In deciding whether to remove or extend the ban or impose conditions, governors will give consideration to the extent of the parent's compliance with the ban, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from him/her and any evidence of the parent's co-operation with the school in other respects.

5. Removal from school

Parents who have been banned from the school premises and continue to cause a nuisance will be deemed to have committed a section 547 offence. They will be considered as trespassers. In these circumstances the offender may be removed from school. This may be carried out by a police officer or person authorised by the governing body. Legal proceedings may be brought against the parent.

6. Complaints policy

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

SIGNATURES:

.....(HEADTEACHER)

..... (CHAIR OF COMMITTEE)