



Policy on Managing Abusive Incidents Involving Parents/Carers or Visitors to the School

Agreed by Governors: 7.3.20

1 Statement of principles

The ethos of Seven Hills School encourages close links with parents and the community. The staff and governors believe 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 a negative attitude towards the school is expressed, this can result in aggression, verbal and physical abuse towards members of school staff or the wider school community.

The governing body 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. 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.

2 Behaviour

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

- Shouting at members of the school staff, parents or children either in person or over the telephone;
- Intimidating a member of staff, parent or child eg standing very close to her/him;
- The use of aggressive hand gestures;
- Threatening behaviour;
- Shaking or holding a fist towards another person;
- Swearing;
- Using abusive/ offensive language;
- Pushing;
- Hitting, e.g. slapping, punching and kicking;
- Spitting;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or transgender comments;
- Breaching the school's security procedures.

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

Unacceptable behaviour may result in the local authority and the police being informed of the incident.

3 Procedure to be followed

If a parent / carer or visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the Headteacher or appropriate senior staff will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation, and if the unacceptable behaviour continues, terminate the meeting or phone call and ask the visitor to leave the premises. Abusive phone calls will be terminated with notice and a reason from the recipient, e.g. 'I am going to terminate this call because you are shouting at me, please ring back later when you are calmer, if you need my help'. 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 extreme act of violence, a parent or carer may be banned by the Headteacher or Chair of Governors from the school premises for a period of time, subject to review as defined in section 547 of the Education Act (1996).

In imposing a ban, the following steps will be taken:

1. The school may in the first instance write to outline their concern to the parent and expect in return an acknowledgement of the issue and a reassurance about their future behaviour. If reassurance is not forthcoming, then the school will proceed as below including details of how long the ban will last. Depending on the severity of the offence, the school may impose an immediate ban from the premises.
2. 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, e.g. that police involvement or an injunction application may follow.
3. In the case of abusive phone calls the school will not correspond with the parent on the phone and will inform the parent in writing that future contact for an identified period must be by e-mail or home school book. A third party may be agreed to act as contact with the school on behalf of the parent. In the event of a child centred emergency the school would still contact parents during this banned period.
4. Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the local authority and the police will be included.
5. Where appropriate, arrangements for pupils being delivered to, and collected from the school gate will be clarified.

Conclusion

If a parent / carer / visitor is intimidating, threatening or aggressive towards any member of the school community any interaction will be terminated immediately and the person will be instructed to leave the premises. Further action may be taken by the school.

The local authority itself may take action where behaviour is unacceptable or there are serious breaches of our home-school code of conduct or health and safety legislation.

In implementing this policy, the school will, as appropriate, seek advice from the Local Education, to ensure fairness and consistency.