



Managing Aggressive Behaviour from Parents and Visitors Policy

Drafted By:	Pauline Guevara
Date:	October 2016
Ratified by Governors:	11 th November 2016

Winsor Primary School

Procedure to be followed

If a parent/carer/visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the Head Teacher or appropriate senior member of staff will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. This may include meeting the parent, clarifying the school's expectations and agreeing strategies to manage future incidents. 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 Local Authority from the school premises for a period of time, subject to review.

In imposing a ban the following steps will be taken:

1. The Head Teacher (or other appropriate member of SLT) must contact NPW School Management Support for advice and actioning a ban. If a ban is necessary the parent/carer will be informed, in writing by NPW, that they are 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.
2. Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the Police will be included.
3. The Chair of Governors/LA will be informed of the ban.
4. Where appropriate, arrangements for pupils being delivered to, and collected from the school gate will be clarified.

Conclusion

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 Authority's education, health and safety and legal departments, to ensure fairness and consistency.

This policy will be reviewed annually or when revised information is available.

APPENDIX 1

Risk Assessment

In the event of a parent/carer behaving in an inappropriate way, each situation will need to be considered individually by the Head Teacher or a designated member of staff. The following factors should be taken into account as a risk assessment, before deciding on the most appropriate course of action:

- Has the parent been verbally aggressive/threatening/intimidating?
- Has the parent been physically aggressive/threatening/intimidating?
- What evidence is there? What do witnesses say happened?
- Does the parent have a known previous history of aggressive/violence? (information can only be sought from the police when an official complaint has been made).
- Do members of the school staff/community feel intimidated by the parent's behaviour?
- Have pupils witnessed aggressive/threatening/intimidating behaviour from the parent?
- Have pupils been approached inappropriately by the parent?
- Has the parent been abusive to staff, pupils or visitors?
- Has the parent been persistently abusive to staff, pupils or visitors?
- Was the parent provoked in any way prior to the behaviour and/or does the parent claim to have been provoked?
- Is there evidence of provocation?
- How frequently have the behaviours occurred?
- Is there a risk (low, medium or high) that the behaviour may be repeated?

APPENDIX 2

Options for future actions

Inviting the parent to a meeting to discuss events

This could be helpful where a planned and structured meeting has either not been held before or has previously been productive. Skilled facilitators may need to be used. A full restorative meeting may be considered, but if it is not safe to bring all the parties together at a meeting, a restorative process can still take place through the exchange of information.

The safety and well-being of those attending such a meeting must be carefully considered. It is strongly recommended that members of school staff should 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 who could potentially become aggressive.

The main points of discussion and any agreed actions should be noted, and a follow up letter sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions. Some parents may covertly record meetings and then seek to use the information obtained to support their case, and therefore schools should state explicitly that information obtained without permission will not be permissible.

Clarifying to the parent what is considered acceptable behaviour by the school

In some instances it may be appropriate simply to ensure the parent is clear about behaviour standards expected by the school. This could be explained at a meeting, or by letter, however any verbal explanation should be followed by a written confirmation of the discussion and the standards of behaviour outlined.

Forming strategies to manage future situations of potential conflict

It is sometimes possible to identify situations of potential conflict and to plan for these in a way that minimises potential risks. For example, where a parent persistently engages in arguments with staff in corridors at the beginning or end of the school day, the parent could be informed that any discussions with school staff must be held by prior appointment.

Alternatively, the parent may be asked not to approach the teacher, but should instead arrange to meet the Head Teacher (or other member of the Senior Leadership Team), who will deal with their concerns.

In more serious cases a further option may be to advise the parent that in future their concerns should be dealt with by written communication. Any such arrangements should be confirmed in writing to the parent.

Withdrawing permission for the parent to enter the school site and/or buildings

In more serious cases of actual or threatened aggression/violence, or persistent abuse/intimidation, the Head Teacher may need to consider whether it is safe for the parent to continue to come onto the school site or enter the buildings. In these circumstances NPW School Management Support must be contacted for advice.

APPENDIX 3

Calling for police assistance

In an emergency, police assistance should be sought. In cases where a ban is in place but is ignored and the person comes onto the school site, the police should be notified immediately. (Staff will need to be aware of the ban and have agreed procedures in place should the person come onto the school site). In situations where there is no immediate threat to staff, pupils, other members of the school community or the school's property, the Head Teacher may still wish to make their local community police officer (e.g. neighbourhood support team, youth intervention officer) aware of the situation. The police could give consideration to warning the offender of formal action, which may include legal proceedings.

APPENDIX 4

Record keeping

This form should be completed as fully as possible, using a continuation sheet, if necessary. For any incident involving or witnessed by a pupil or parent/carer/visitor, a member of staff should complete the form on their behalf.

The completed form should be passed to the Head Teacher, for appropriate action and recording.

There should be clear and detailed records of all events which must be kept up to date. Any witness statements (where appropriate) and notes of any subsequent meetings held to discuss the events should also be retained. Notes should be signed and dated.

It is also advisable to ensure that in every case, even where a formal letter is not required, parents receive a written confirmation of the events and the Head Teacher's response. If the police are asked to deal with an incident as a criminal investigation, there are a number of actions that may thwart this process. Witness details should not be made known to suspected offenders or their families. Where possible, the form must be completed before any discussion between witnesses is possible, as this might lead to allegations of collusion. If in doubt always seek the advice of the police officer first.

Relevant incidents include trespass, nuisance or disturbance on school premises, verbal abuse, sexual or racial abuse, threats, aggression, physical violence and intentional damage to property.

APPENDIX 5

Reported incident form

Date of incident	
Time of incident	
Name of person reporting incident	
Date incident reported	
Member of staff recording incident	
Date incident recorded	
Name(s) of person(s) causing incident (where name(s) is/are unknown, provide other details of which may allow their identification)	
Status(es) (parents/carers/visitors/trespassers)	
Full description of incident (e.g. names of persons involved; location; nature of any injuries; attendance of emergency services)	
Names of any witnesses	Statuses
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)	

Relevant legal information is shown below. For further information contact NPW School Management Support.

Criminal Damage Act 1971

Under this, if a parent or carer destroys or damages property belonging to the school, or to a teacher, he or she can be prosecuted for causing criminal damage.

Common Assault

Where a member of staff is assaulted by a parent or carer and minor injury is caused, the parent or carer may be charged with common assault in accordance with section 39 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.

Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm

Under section 47 of the Offences Against the Persons Act 1861, a parent or carer can be charged with assault occasioning actual bodily harm where more serious injury is caused to a member of staff (such as broken teeth, extensive bruising or cuts requiring medical treatment).

Offences under the Public Order Act 1986

There are four separate relevant offences under this Act. The behaviour that they criminalise has some overlap with the Protection from Harassment Act, but unlike that Act, one incident alone is sufficient to constitute a public order offence. Three of them (sections 5, 4A and 4) are heard within the magistrates' court.

Section 5 is the lower level of public disorder where a parent or carer causes a disturbance in or outside the school and causes alarm, harassment or distress.

Section 4A creates an intentional form of this offence.

Section 4 is more serious, where there is a fear or provocation of violence.

Section 3 of the Act, affray, may be tried either in the magistrates' court or the crown court. This offence is committed when a person uses or threatens unlawful violence such as would cause a reasonable person to fear for his safety; the threat cannot be made by the use of words alone.

Criminal Justice Act 1988

Section 139A of the Act (as amended by the Offensive Weapons Act 1996) makes it an offence to carry an offensive weapon or knife on school premises. Under section 139B a police officer may enter a school and search for a weapon; where one is found they may seize and retain it.

In general, where a school suspects a weapon to be on school premises the police should be called. Where the police have reasonable grounds for suspecting a weapon to be on a school's premises they can enter without permission from the school.

Non statutory remedies

Aside from the legal remedies, there are other strategies that can help in preventing conflicts with parents or stopping them escalating. These include mediation and conflict resolution. Schools might also be able to develop non-statutory acceptable behaviour contracts for some parents similar to those that have been developed by the Metropolitan Police mainly in respect of pupils. These require the agreement of the person to adopt an acceptable level of behaviour.