Expected Behaviour of Parents and Visitors to our Schools

Policy

Adopted by Trustees: 25th May 2021

Reviewed: 16th July 2024 (updated April 2025)

Next Review Date: July 2026

Person responsible for overseeing the implementation: CEO and Head of Governance

Chair of Trustees signature:

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1. The Trust welcomes visitors to our schools. We will act to ensure the schools remain a safe place for pupils, staff and all other members of the community. If a parent/carer has concerns we will always listen to them and seek to address them.

1.2. The Trust expects that members of the public, parents and other visitors to our schools will behave in a polite and courteous manner to each other, to staff and to pupils. It is expected that parents and carers will be good role models with respect to conduct and managing individual concerns.

1.3. We appreciate that sometimes, visitors or parents may be frustrated and upset and this could lead to them demonstrating some aggression, towards school staff. The school expects its 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 staff have the right to work without fear of violence and intimidation and thus we will not tolerate instances of these types of behaviour on our premises.

1.4. The Trust will not tolerate aggressive, violent, abusive or anti-social behaviour towards anyone on school sites. This includes abusive or threatening telephone calls, teams meetings or emails and abuse using cyber technology. Should there be clear evidence that there has been a breach of this behaviour code, The Trust will take action, or support the Headteacher/Head of School in taking action, to protect members of the school community. This may include banning the individual from the school premises or pursuing other legal action.

1.5 Parents/carers should : Promote positive online safety and model safe, responsible and positive behaviours in their own use of technology, including on social media: not sharing other's images or details without permission and refraining from posting negative, threatening or violent comments about others, including the SVMAT/School staff, volunteers, governors, contractors, pupils or other parents/carers.

1.6 Recording of phone calls or meetings : recording is not permitted without the express permission of all parties prior to the meeting and must only be shared with the permission of all concerned.

2. **EXAMPLES OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

2.1. Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable include (but are not limited to):

- Shouting at members of school staff, either in person or over the telephone
- Physically intimidating a member of staff e.g. standing very close to her/him
- Unwelcome physical contact of staff or pupils
- The use of aggressive hand gestures
- Threatening behaviour or language
- Shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- Swearing
- Pushing
- Hitting e.g. slapping, punching and kicking
- Spitting
- Racist or sexist comments
- Breaching school security procedures
- Inappropriate comments used on social media or via email to third parties

3. ADVICE TO PARENTS AND CARERS FOR RAISING CONCERNS WITH STAFF

1. Make an appointment to see the relevant person. If you just turn up at the school, they may not be able to give you the time you need.
2. Make a note of the things that you are unhappy about. It will help to clarify the issues and help you when you meet the member of staff.
3. Don't jump to conclusions. What made you angry may not be exactly what happened in reality.
4. Deal with your anger before going to the school. An angry confrontation will normally get a defensive response rather than a helpful one. School staff may also refuse to talk to you while you are angry, so you will have achieved nothing.
5. Consider having a friend with you when you have your meeting if you find it difficult to manage meetings.
6. Don't expect an immediate solution. The person you're talking to may need to investigate your concerns before being able to take any action or reach a solution.
7. If you feel that your concern has not been dealt with effectively you should ask for a copy of the school complaints procedure. This will tell you the informal and formal procedure for taking your concerns further.

4. PROCEDURES FOLLOWING AN INCIDENT OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

4.1. If a parent or carer behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community the Headteacher/Head of School or designated member of staff will seek to resolve the situation through discussion.

4.2. Following an incident there are a number of options the Headteacher/Head of School may wish to take. Theses can include:

- Inviting the parent to a meeting to discuss the event.
- Clarifying to the parent what is considered acceptable behaviour by the school.
- Forming strategies to manage future situations of potential conflict.
- 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, Headteachers/Heads of School may need to consider whether it is safe for the parent to continue to come onto the school site or enter the buildings and may withdraw permission for a person to enter the school site for a defined period.

PROCEDURE FOR BANNING A PARENT / VISITOR

Prior to being banned the following steps will be taken:

1. The parent / visitor will be warned, in writing, that s / he is banned from the premises for a week and the dates of the ban made clear.
2. The letter will also make clear what will happen if the ban is breached, e.g. that police involvement or an injunction may follow.
3. Where the ban is as the result of an assault on a member of staff a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to Stowe Valley Multi Academy Trust, the Chair of Governors and the Police will be included.
4. Where appropriate, arrangements for children to be delivered to and collected from the school gates will be clarified in the letter.
5. Following the letter being issued, the Chair of Governors will be informed of the ban.
6. Within 7 schools days a panel of Governors will meet to review the information.
7. Following that meeting the ban will either be lifted, upon signed promises of future good behaviour, or will continue for a period deemed appropriate by the panel of Governors.
8. At the end of any renewed ban, two governors will invite submissions from the parent or invite them to a meeting to discuss how the situation can best be resolved for the future.
9. In exceptional circumstances the Head teacher may request the Chair for a ban lasting longer than one week in the first instance.

No meeting at the school may be electronically recorded without the express permission of all parties, and that information obtained without such permission will not be admissible in any proceedings.

In this guidance, the definition in the Education Act 1996 of the word parent is somewhat extended and includes an individual who has care of the child whether or not s/he is the natural parent of has parental responsibility for the child. This includes step parents. Where an individual does not fall within this broad definition, the principles of this guidance should still be applied.

CONCLUSION

Children learn best when there is a positive partnership between home and school. Staff make every effort to work in harmony with parents for the benefit of pupils. However this is only possible where parents behave in accordance with our expectations.

In implementing this policy, the school will, as appropriate, seek advice from but not limited to the following The Police, Legal Services, Health and Safety and the Local Authority and the wider Trust to ensure fairness and consistency.

NB All references to legislation and guidance are as updated, amended or replaced from time to time.

Department of Education Guidance Controlling Access to School Premises

(Guidance issued 27th November 2018)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/controlling-access-to-school-premises

1. Who can go onto school premises?

Schools are private property. People do not have an automatic right to enter. Parents have an 'implied licence' to come on to school premises at certain times, for instance:

- for appointments
- to attend a school event
- to drop off or pick up younger children

Schools should set out their rules for this and tell parents what they are. Anyone who breaks those rules would be trespassing.

2. Barring individuals from school premises

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 may want to write to regular trespassers to tell them that they are potentially committing an offence.

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 a pupil to feel threatened.

The school should tell an individual that they've been barred or they intend to bar them, in writing. Letters should usually be signed by the Headteacher, though in some cases the Executive Headteacher, Chief Executive Officer or Trust Board may wish to write instead. The individual must be allowed to present their side. A school can either:

- bar them temporarily, until the individual has had the opportunity to formally present their side
- tell them they intend to bar them and invite them to present their side by a set deadline

After the individual's side has been heard, the school can decide whether to continue with barring them. The decision should be reviewed within a reasonable time, decided by the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) does not get involved in individual cases.

3. Removing individuals from school premises

Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a person who is on school premises without legal permission to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance. Trespassing itself does not constitute a criminal offence.

To have committed a criminal offence, an abusive individual must have been barred from the premises or have exceeded their 'implied licence', then also have caused a nuisance or disturbance.

If a school has reasonable grounds to suspect that someone has committed an offence, then they can be removed from the school by a police officer or a person authorised by the Academy Trust:

- **Headteacher**
- **Chief Executive Officer**
- **Trust Head of Estates**