



# BLETCHINGLEY VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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## **Behaviour towards Staff by Parents, Carers and Visitors Policy and Guidance**

REVIEWED BY	Local Governing Committee
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### 1: Statement of Principles

#### Expectations of Parents, carers and visitors to the school:

We welcome visitors to our school. We will act to ensure it remains a safe place for students, staff and all other members of our community. If a parent/carer has concerns, we will always listen to them and seek to address them.

However, abusive, threatening or violent behaviour will not be tolerated. If such behaviour occurs, we will follow the procedures outlined in the school policy.

The BVPS Local Governing Committee actively encourages close links with parents/carers and the community. It believes that students 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. From time to time it is necessary for parents/carers and the school to deal with problems relating to particular students. It is important that discussions between parents/carers and staff are conducted in a calm and respectful manner. In the vast majority of such situations this is what happens, but on rare occasions, aggression and verbal and or physical abuse is directed towards members of school staff or members of the wider school community.

The BVPS Local Governing Committee 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.

Violence, threatening behaviour and abuse against school staff or other members of the school community, including other parents/carers and students, will not be tolerated. All members of the school community have a right to expect that their school is a safe place in which to work and learn. There is no place for violence, threatening behaviour or abuse in our school.

We expect parents, carers and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards members of school staff and the wider school community at all times. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and which will not be tolerated in relation to members of staff and volunteers working within our schools are:

- shouting, either in person or over the telephone
- swearing, either in person or over the telephone

- constant emails and/or phone calls which amount to harassment and intimidation, despite the school's best efforts to address a situation
- Inappropriate electronic activity including publishing abusive or inappropriate content with regards to the school, teachers or students on social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter or in email communication
- hitting, slapping, punching, kicking or pushing
- physically intimidation, e.g. standing unnecessarily close to her/him
- the use of rude or aggressive hand gestures, including shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- spitting
- breaching the school's security procedures

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour. Whilst the use of such behaviour is unacceptable in all circumstances, the school is particularly concerned to protect its students from being exposed to such behaviour (whether or not directed at them).

## **2: Procedure to be followed when behaviour is inappropriate**

If a parent/carer/visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the Headteacher and/or appropriate senior staff will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If necessary, the school's complaints procedures should be followed by the parent/carer.

In and during any interaction with a parent/carer or visitor, a member of staff reserves the right to submit a formal complaint of the incident to the Headteacher.

If the Headteacher deems appropriate, the Headteacher will then appoint a member of the Leadership Team to investigate the incident. This would include in speaking to the member of staff and the parent/carer involved. They will then submit a report and recommendation to the Headteacher who will then decide if and what sanction should be applied

During the investigation, any contact with the school will be through a designated member of staff and by prior appointment only. The parent/carer will be informed of this by letter.

## **3: Escalation of sanctions**

3.1 Inviting the parent/carer to a meeting to discuss events

3.2 Clarifying to the parent/carer what is considered acceptable behaviour by the school

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

3.4 Where all procedures have been exhausted, and aggression or intimidation continues, or where the circumstances otherwise require it, a parent/carer or visitor may be banned by the Headteacher from the school premises for a period of time, subject to review.

In imposing a ban the following steps will be taken:

- The parent/carer will be informed, in writing, that s/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
- Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the local police
- The Chair of Local Governing Committee will be informed of the ban
- As appropriate, arrangements for meetings at school regarding students, and arrangements for students being delivered to and collected from the school will be clarified.

#### **4: 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, volunteers and students or the school's property, headteachers 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.

#### **5: Legal proceedings**

Where individuals persist in coming onto the school site even when permission to do so has been withdrawn, it is possible for legal proceedings to be pursued. The options include:

##### **a. Prosecution under section 547 of the Education Act 1996**

This requires substantial evidence to be gathered and presented by the police. Clearly it is not a quick process, and whilst in most cases the threat may prove to be a sufficient deterrent, prosecution can only be seen in the last resort as a punitive measure.

##### **b. Appropriate behaviour contracts**

These are voluntary agreements made between people involved in anti-social behaviour, and the agency/school concerned. They are flexible in terms of content and format, and can be an effective means of encouraging young adults, children and parents/carers to take responsibility for unacceptable behaviour. Conditions can be put on the contract, e.g. not to enter school grounds.

##### **c. Restraining orders (Protection from Harassment Act 1997)**

Section 2 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 provides for criminal or civil prosecution, for cases where someone causes alarm or distress to another person on more than two occasions. Section four provides for criminal or civil prosecution where people have been put in fear of violence on at least two occasions. In each case the sanctions include both criminal penalties (fines, imprisonment or community sentences) and a restraining order. These orders are generally quicker and easier to obtain, but are part of a criminal conviction.

##### **d. Prosecution for criminal damage/assault**

Prosecutions for causing deliberate damage or injury may occasionally be the most appropriate course of action. If the police are called, the option to make criminal allegations is readily available, and they may arrest suspected offenders there and then.

### **Record keeping**

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.

Any physical evidence should be bagged and labelled, and witnesses should be asked to make a record of exactly what they saw and heard at the earliest opportunity.

It is also advisable to ensure that in every case, even where a formal letter is not required, parents/carers receive a written confirmation of the events and the headteacher'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. Groups of witnesses or suspects should not be left together, or allowed to discuss what happened, before the police interview them. If in doubt always seek the advice of the police officer first.

A model form is attached as **Appendix 4** to this document and is provided for headteachers and the SSB to adapt as necessary.

### **Support for employees**

If a member of staff is unfortunate enough to be one of the very small minority subject to serious physical and/or verbal abuse there are a variety of sources of potential support available to them.

In such circumstances the immediate and ongoing support of colleagues will be invaluable.

Staff can obtain confidential specialist support by calling the helpline offered our Employee Assistance Programme on 0800 028 5147

The staff associations/trade unions are also likely to be a source of assistance.

Headteachers should contact the TLT HR Department if they wish to discuss the support available for a member of their staff.

### **Expectations of Parents, Carers and visitors to the school**

We welcome visitors to our school. We will act to ensure it remains a safe place for students, staff and all other members of our community. If a parent/carer has concerns we will always listen to them and seek to address them.

However, abusive, threatening or violent behaviour will not be tolerated. If such behaviour occurs we will follow the procedures outlined in the Bletchingley Village Primary School's Behaviour towards Staff by Parents, Carers and Visitors Policy.

## Incident recording form

Date and time of incident	
Details of person(s) assaulted/ verbally abused	
Name	
Address and telephone number	
Role	
Details of perpetrator	
Name	
Address and telephone number	
Relationship to the school	
Details of witnesses	
Witness 1: Name, contact details and relationship to the school	
Witness 2: Name, contact details and relationship to the school	
Witness 3: Name, contact details and relationship to the school	



Description of the incident (include relevant events leading up to the incident, details of those present, whether weapons were involved etc.)	
Location of incident (attach sketch if appropriate)	
<b>Outcome</b> (were police called, what happened after the incident)	
Other information to be recorded as appropriate Any possible contributory factors	
Is the perpetrator known to have been involved in any previous incidents? (if yes, give details)	
Were measures in place to try to prevent an incident of this type occurring? Could these be improved? If no measures were in place, could action be taken now?	
Name and contact details of police officer(s) involved. Incident number/ crime reference number	
Any other relevant information	

### Dealing with abusive telephone calls

Sometimes staff may have to deal with challenging, abusive, aggressive or threatening telephone calls. It is unacceptable for any member of staff to be subjected to such abuse but staff may not know how to handle such a telephone call. This guidance has been produced to assist staff if they are faced with such a situation. To reduce the likelihood of callers becoming abusive staff should conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner and make every attempt to meet the needs of the caller. Staff should also have the confidence that it is acceptable to end an abusive telephone call.

#### Always:

- remain calm and polite
- stay in control of the situation
- actively listen - repeat information back to the caller to test understanding of the issue and gain their agreement
- inform the caller they are trying to help them
- be positive and say what you can do
- be clear and avoid using jargon
- if necessary, apologise for an error and take action to put it right
- if you have to go and get some information, let the caller know why you are putting them on hold and do not leave them on hold for a long time. Update them as necessary
- make notes of the conversation
- follow the procedure below if appropriate refer to the caller to the headteacher, deputy etc.

#### Never:

- respond in the same manner as an abusive caller
- take it personally
- allow yourself to be bullied □ slam the phone down.

#### Script for abusive telephone calls

##### When the caller starts to raise their voice/be abusive:

Mr/Mrs/Ms...please don't raise your voice/swear at me, I am not raising my voice/being rude to you. If you continue to raise your voice/be rude to me then I will be forced to terminate the call.

##### When the caller continues to raise their voice/be abusive:

Mr/Mrs/Ms..... I understand you are upset/frustrated however I am not prepared to continue to be shouted/sworn at so you can either call back when you have calmed down or if you prefer you can put your views in writing.

**If, despite the two warnings above, the caller continues to raise their voice/be abusive: Mr/Mrs/Ms....** I advised you earlier during this call about raising your voice/swearing and you have continued to do this, so I am afraid I am going to have to terminate this call. **Hang up.**

#### Further actions:

Make a written note of the telephone call or use the incident report form (Appendix 4) and report the incident to your line manager.

### **Abuse/bullying using cyber technology**

Staff in schools may become targets of cyber abuse/bullying and, like other forms of bullying, it can have a significant impact on their health, well-being and self-confidence. Protecting staff from abuse is best done within a prevention framework, including whole school policies and appropriate practices.

Cyber abuse/bullying may consist of threats, harassment, embarrassment, humiliation, defamation or impersonation. It may take the form of general insults, or prejudice based abuse, e.g. homophobic, sexist, racist or other forms of discrimination. It may involve email, virtual learning environments, chat rooms, websites, social networking sites, mobile and fixed-point phones, digital cameras, games and virtual world sites.

Abuse using cyber technology can occur at any time and incidents can intrude into the victim's private life. The audience for such messages can be very large and can be reached rapidly. The content of electronically forwarded messages is hard to control and the worry of content resurfacing can make it difficult for the victim to move on.

#### **Cyberbullying and the law**

While there is not a specific criminal offence called cyberbullying, activities can be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including:

- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003
- Public Order Act 1986
- The Defamation Acts 1952 and 1996

It is the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees. Incidents that are related to employment, even those taking place outside the hours or place of work may fall under the responsibility of the employer.

#### **Effectively tackling abuse using cyber technology**

School behaviour policies and procedures should explicitly refer to and outline how the school will deal with cyber abuse/ bullying of both staff and students. They should include:

- rules on the use of equipment, software and network access provided by the school,
- the use of staff and student owned equipment and internet access routes, where they are used on school premises and within school hours, e.g. mobile phones, digital cameras and laptops

### Responding to incidents

- Staff should never retaliate i.e. personally engage with cyberbullying incidents.
- Keep any records of abuse - texts, emails, voice mails, or instant messages. Take screen prints of messages or web pages. Record the time, date and address of the site.
- Inform the appropriate person e.g. headteacher, or Head of Year/House at the earliest opportunity.
- Where the perpetrator is known to be a current student or co-worker, this should be dealt with through the school's own behaviour management/disciplinary procedures.
- Monitoring and confiscation must be appropriate and proportionate - parents/carers, employees and learners should be made aware in advance of any monitoring (for example, of email or internet use) or the circumstances under which confiscation might take place.
- A designated member of the leadership team should contact the police where it appears that a law has been broken - for example, where death threats, assault, or racially motivated criminal offences are involved. Where a potential criminal offence has been identified, the school should ensure that any internal investigation does not interfere with police inquiries. School staff are of course able to report incidents directly to the police.
- If a potential criminal offence has been committed and the school is not able to identify the perpetrator, the police may issue a Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) request to a service provider, enabling them to disclose the data about a message or the person sending it.

### Getting offensive content taken down

Where online content is upsetting/inappropriate and the person(s) responsible for posting is known, the quickest way to get material taken down is likely to be to ensure that the person who posted it understands why the material is unacceptable and to request that they remove it.

If the person responsible has not been identified, or will not take the material down, the school will need to contact the host (i.e. the social networking site) to make a request to get the content taken down. The material posted may breach the service provider's terms and conditions of use and can then be removed.

It is important to be clear about where the content is - for example by taking a screen capture of the material that includes the URL or web address. If you are requesting they take down material that is not illegal, be clear how it contravenes the site's terms and conditions.

In cases of actual/suspected illegal content, the school should contact the police.