

# Commonswood Primary & Nursery School Dealing with Abusive Parents/Visitors Policy



**Approved by Governors: Summer 2025**

Next Review: Summer 2027

## Statement of Principles

This policy has been written taking into account the DfE Guidance 'Advice on school security: Access to, and barring individuals from school premises' December 2012 as well as NAHT guidance on dealing with abusive parents.

The Local Authority are responsible for protecting the health and safety of their staff and pupils in schools. All members of the school community have the 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 schools.

At all times the common purpose remains clear, to achieve a zero tolerance of violence, threatening behaviour or abuse in school, and to ensure all members of the school community, and all visitors to the school, can be confident that they are operating within a safe environment.

At Commonswood School we value the positive relationships forged with parents and visitors to the school. We encourage close links with parents and the community and believe that pupils benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one. We also strive to make our school a place where, as adults, we model for pupils the behaviour we teach and expect. In general, we place a high importance on good manners, positive communication and mutual respect.

Almost all parents, carers and visitors to Commonswood School are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. However, on very rare occasions the behaviour of a small number of parents/visitors falls short of what we expect. This sometimes manifests itself in aggression or abuse towards members of the school community. This can be in written communication (including emails and social media), on the telephone or in face-to-face incidents.

In these situations, we expect members of staff to behave professionally, attempting to defuse the situation where possible and seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues. Staff who face these situations have licence to end any conversation (face to face or on the telephone). They should then refer the incident to a senior member of staff who will take appropriate action or invoke the provisions of this policy.

The overriding principle is, however, that all members of the school community have the right to work or be in school without fear of aggression or abuse from parents. The board of governors has a requirement to protect staff and pupils from such aggression.

The progress and well-being of the parent's child(ren) will be fully considered. Actions taken against the parent will be reasonable and proportionate. The parent will have the opportunity to put their views forward at every stage. In the case of the imposition of conditions or a ban from school, robust review processes involving a committee of three Governors and then the Governing Body are in place to ensure fairness.

## **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 written or spoken personal insult as an attempt to demean, embarrass or undermine (including the use of social media)
- any kind of threat
- raising of voice so as to be intimidating
- physical intimidation, e.g. 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 or malicious.

The governing body also considers harassment of school staff to be unacceptable. Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- Requiring a response to a query in an unreasonable timeframe
- Repeatedly raising issues which have already been dealt with and where no new information has come to light.
- Requiring a specific member of senior staff to deal with problems which could be more appropriately dealt with the someone else.
- Refusing to speak with members of school staff who have a legitimate reason to discuss issues.

## **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 member of 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) which will be kept in a file with subsequent letters. This file will be kept by the Headteacher.

## The school's response

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

- *Letter to the parent sharing concerns about the events*
- *Invite the parent to an informal meeting to discuss events*

This 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. 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.

*Clarify to the parent what is considered acceptable behaviour by the school (Code of Conduct)*

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 by letter from the Headteacher. This letter may contain a warning about further action if there are further incidents. A copy of the letter will be sent to the Chair of Governors. The parent will 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.

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.

*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.

In this case the parent will be informed by letter from the Headteacher the details of the conditions that are being imposed. The parent would then be given 10 working days from the date of that letter to make representations in writing about the conditions to the Headteacher.

If the decision is to confirm the conditions imposed, this decision will be reviewed by Headteacher. The Headteacher may decide to maintain, extend or remove the conditions.

The Headteacher will meet with the parent to review the conditions. The outcome of this review will be communicated to the parent by letter.

When deciding whether it will be necessary to maintain, extend or remove the conditions, the Headteacher 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.

### *Imposing a ban*

Where other procedures have been exhausted and aggression or intimidation continues OR where there is an extreme act of violence then the school may consider banning the individual from school premises. This will also include banning a parent from accessing school staff by written communication or telephone.

In these circumstances, the individual would be advised in writing by the Headteacher that a provisional ban is being imposed. The parent would then be given 10 working days from the date of that letter to make representations about the ban in writing to the Chair of Governors. A panel of three Governors will decide whether to confirm or remove the ban. This would be communicated to the parent in writing by the clerk to the Governors within 10 working days of the receipt of their letter.

If the Governors' decision is to confirm the ban, parents in these circumstances will be offered an annual meeting about their child's progress, usually with a member of senior staff.

A decision to impose a ban will be reviewed by the committee 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 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.

### *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. Legal proceedings may be brought against the parent.

### Complaints procedure

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

### Linked documents:

- Home/school agreement
- Parent/visitor code of conduct
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

## **Appendices**

Model letter 1: This is an initial letter from the Headteacher to ensure the parent is clear about behaviour standards expected by the school. This letter contains a warning about further action if there are other incidents. The letter invites a written response and suggests a meeting.

### *Imposing conditions on the parent's attendance at school events*

Model letter 2: This is a letter from the Headteacher informing the parent of the school's decision to impose conditions on the parent pending review by the panel Governors

Model letter 3: Letter from the Headteacher informing the parent of the decision to confirm or remove the conditions in light of information received.

### *Imposing a ban*

Model letter 4: Letter from Headteacher Informing the parent of the school's intention to impose a ban on their attendance at school premises, pending review by the panel of Governors

Model letter 5: Letter from the Governors informing parent of the decision to confirm or remove ban

### *Reviewing the decision to impose conditions or impose a ban*

Model Letter 6: Letter from the Chair of Governors' panel requesting statement from parents to Governing Body for review of decision.

Model letter 7: Letter from the Chair of Governors' panel to confirm the outcome of further reviews of decisions where the imposition of conditions/ban has been extended or removed.

*Model  
Letter 1*

Dear

We have received a concern about your conduct at the school on (enter date and time or details).

This appears to fall far short of that we would expect of a parent of a pupil at Commonswood School.

(Add factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils, and other parents.)

As a reminder, a copy of the parent communication letter/Parent Code of Conduct sent out to all parents has been enclosed. We expect our school community to respect our school ethos and policies so that everyone can visit, learn and work in a safe environment.

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact the school office who will arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs GD Seymour  
Head Teacher

*Model* :  
*Letter 2 Warning (sent by Headteacher)*

Recorded delivery

Dear

A report has been received about your conduct at the school on (enter date and time or details).

This appears to fall far short of that we would expect of a parent of a pupil at Commonswood School.

(Add factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils, and other parents.)

You must be informed that the Governing Body will not tolerate aggression towards members of the school community and will act to protect its staff and pupils from any form of abuse or intimidation. We should warn you that any future conduct of this nature could result in the school imposing conditions restricting your access to the school or banning you from contacting or attending the school altogether.

We also must inform you that personal issues involving members of staff and issues regarding the school, if posted on Facebook and other forms of social media, are directed to the local police service and the Local Authority legal department so that they can be dealt with appropriately.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs GD Seymour  
Head Teacher

cc: Chair of Governors

*Model*

*Letter: 3 Imposing conditions on the parent's attendance at school events, pending review  
(sent by Headteacher)*

Recorded delivery

Dear

A report has been received from a member of staff about your conduct on  
..... at .....

(add summary of incident and its effect on staff and pupils)

(You will recollect that we have already written to you about a previous incident on (date) warning you of the consequence of any further insulting or aggressive behaviour on your part

We must inform you that the governors, in line with our policy, will not tolerate conduct of this nature on the school premises and will act to defend school staff and pupils.

We are therefore writing to inform you that we are imposing conditions on the contact you may have with school. These are as follows: (delete as appropriate)

- You must be accompanied to any meeting with a member of school staff
- You may not contact by telephone or in writing any member of staff. You may contact (name appropriate senior member of staff).

The restrictions above are provisional until (date) when the decision will be reviewed. You will receive a written outcome of the review.

You may, if you wish, send in writing any comments or observations of your own within 10 working days of the date of this letter. These comments may be to challenge or explain the facts of the incident, to express regret and give assurances about your future good conduct.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs GD Seymour  
Headteacher  
cc: Chair of Governors

*Model Letter 4: Imposition of a ban on contacting or attending the school, pending review  
(sent by Headteacher)*

Recorded delivery

Dear

We have received a report from the (name of staff) about your conduct on  
..... at .....

(add summary of incident and its effect on staff and pupils)

You will recollect that we have already written to you about a previous incident on (date) warning you of the consequence of any further insulting or aggressive behaviour on your part.

We must inform you that the Governors, in line with our policy, will not tolerate conduct of this nature on the school premises and will act to defend school staff and pupils.

We are therefore writing to inform you that the Governors are recommending imposing a ban on you attending or contacting the school. This means you may not attend school for any reason whatsoever. You must not make contact with any member of staff by telephone or e-mail. You do, however, have the right to attend one meeting per year to discuss your child's progress. This meeting will be with a senior member of staff. We will contact you to arrange this at the time of the next meeting.

The restrictions above are provisional until they have been reviewed by the Governors. Please consider them to be in force until you receive their confirmation.

The Governors will need to decide whether it is appropriate to confirm or overturn this decision. Please send, in writing, any comments or observations of your own within 10 working days of the date of this letter. These comments may be to challenge or explain the facts of the incident, to express regret and give assurances about your future good conduct.

If on receipt of your comments, the Governors considers that the decision should be confirmed, you will be supplied with details of how this ban will be reviewed by the Governing Body within 10 working days.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs GD Seymour  
Headteacher  
cc: Chair of Governors

*Model*

*Letter 5 Letter to confirm or overturn Headteacher's decision to impose a ban (sent by Governors)*

Recorded delivery

Dear

On (date) you were written to about concerns regarding an incident when your behaviour towards (name) fell far short of what we would expect as a school. You will be aware that ..... has written to you previously about your behaviour towards staff.

A written response from you has/has not been received have received from you dated ....., the contents of which have been considered carefully.

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the school's report and your letter, a panel of Governors has determined that the decision to impose a ban on you should be confirmed. This means you may not attend school for any reason whatsoever. You must not make contact with any member of staff by telephone or e-mail. You do, however, have the right to attend one meeting per year to discuss your child's progress. This meeting will be with (name member of staff) who will contact you to arrange an appointment.

This decision will be reviewed in six months' time by the Governing Body. Governors will write to you in advance of the meeting to ask you to provide a written statement for their consideration. When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the application of conditions to attend school premises, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from you and any evidence of your co-operation with the school in other respects.

OR

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the school's report and your letter, a panel of Governors has determined that the decision to impose a ban should be overturned. You may hence attend school events as normal. However, should there be a repeat of inappropriate behaviour towards staff all of the previous sanctions may be applied.

Yours sincerely,

Chair of Governors

cc: Headteacher

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*Model Letter 6: Letter from Governors requesting parents' statement for review by GB (sent by Governors)*

Recorded delivery

Dear

You were written to on (date) to detail concerns about your behaviour towards school staff/pupils fell short of what we would expect as a school. As a result of this incident, conditions were imposed on you/a ban was imposed.

This decision will be reviewed by the governing body at their next meeting on (date).

We are writing to ask whether you would like to make a written statement to governors for their consideration in making the decision whether to remove the restriction or extend it.

If you should wish to make a written statement, please can you e-mail it to the school in a word document marked private and confidential to [admin@commonswood.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@commonswood.herts.sch.uk) by (date – parents should be given 10 days to respond).

Yours sincerely,

Governor

cc: Headteacher

Model letter 7 – reinstating parent by headteacher following ban on contact

Dear .....

Thank you for meeting with me to review the imposed conditions set by a panel of governors on behalf of the governing body, namely that.....

- You must be accompanied by a senior member of staff to any meeting with a member of school staff.
- You may not speak directly with ..... when you drop off or collect ..... All communication must go through ..... or the admin email address.
- You may not contact ..... by telephone. You may contact the school by email.
- You may not attend any events for parents except those where you have been contacted directly to make arrangements to be accompanied by a senior member of staff. These appointments will be made via the admin team by email.

In the circumstances, and after further consideration I have decided that you should once again be allowed to attend parents' events as usual. All conditions have been removed. However, should there be a repeat of inappropriate behaviour towards staff this decision may be revoked.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs G Seymour

Headteacher

Model letter re social media – not agreed by GB

Address

Date

Dear

It has come to our attention that you have contributed to and/or commented on posts on a social media platform which had led parents to believe that your son has been mistreated by the school. Social networking is being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, school staff, and, in some cases, other parents/pupils. This seems to be the case by your posts.

Governors consider this as unacceptable and not in the best interests of the children or the whole school community. All social network sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted, and they provide robust mechanisms to report activity which breaches this. In serious cases, the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking.

Almost all parents, carers and visitors to Commonswood School are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. However, on very rare occasions the behaviour of a small number of parents/visitors falls short of what we expect. This sometimes manifests itself in aggression or abuse towards members of the school community. This can be in written communication (including emails and social media), on the telephone or in face-to-face incidents.

In these situations, the Governing Body will review individual cases and as a result a ban from the school site could be imposed which would be reviewed annually as per our Dealing with Abusive Parents policy which is on our website.

The school will also expect that any parent/carers or pupil removes such comments made on social media immediately.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs G Seymour

Headteacher

CC Chair of Governors

