St Paul's CE Primary School

Dealing with Abusive Parents, Carers or Visitors Policy

Agreed by Governing Body on:	20 May 2026
Policy Review Date:	May 2027

Introduction

The governing body at St Paul's CE Primary School recognises that it has a statutory duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of the staff. All staff and members of our school community have the right to work or be in school without fear of aggression or abuse from parents.

The overwhelming majority of parents interact with staff and other members of the school community in a polite, appropriate and mutually respectful manner. The governing body greatly values and appreciates the positive impact such behaviour has on the school and its pupils.

This policy is intended to apply in the very rare circumstances where a parent has behaved in an aggressive, threatening, abusive or violent manner towards a member of staff or other member of the school community. Such behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Any incident will be treated seriously and may result in a ban from school premises, violation of which could lead to a criminal prosecution under s547 of the Education Act 1996.

This policy has been written taking into account the Department for Education guidance documents ***Controlling access to school premises*** (November 2018) and ***Potential security threats and preventative measures*** (October 2023), both of which are publicly available on the DfE website.

For the purposes of this policy, the word "**parent**" incorporates the definition of "parent" in the Education Act 1996, and unless otherwise stated, should also be taken to include any carer or visitor to the school who does not fall within that definition.

The Headteacher is encouraged to make all staff aware of this policy.

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 behaviour or language that makes a member of staff or pupil feel threatened. Unacceptable behaviour can be in person, on the telephone, via virtual communication platforms or in written communication (including email and social media). Types of behaviour that are considered unacceptable and will not be tolerated include:

- Any kind of threat
- Any kind of insult as an attempt to demean, embarrass or undermine
- Raising of voice so as to be intimidating
- Physical intimidation e.g. by standing very close to a member of staff or other member of the school community
- 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
- Breaking the school's security procedures
- Any other behaviour likely to cause the recipient (or anybody witnessing it) alarm, distress or fear that violence may be used against them or others.

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide examples of unacceptable behaviour.

The School's Response

Where a parent has behaved in an unacceptable way towards a member of staff or another member of the school community, the Headteacher (or in circumstances where the Headteacher is unavailable, an appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team) will conduct a risk assessment before deciding on the appropriate level of action to be taken.

In cases where unacceptable behaviour has been directed at the Headteacher, it may be appropriate for the Chair of Governors to carry out the risk assessment and decide on the level of action to be taken.

Risk Assessment

The Headteacher (or, where relevant, an appropriate member of the senior leadership team, or the Chair of Governors) will carry out an assessment of the circumstances, evidence and risk factors in order to identify the most appropriate level of action to be taken. The person carrying out the risk assessment will consider the following questions:

- What form did the behaviour take?
- What evidence is there?
- What do witnesses say happened?
- Are there previous incidents to take into consideration?
- Does the parent have a known previous history of aggression/violence?
- Do staff or other members of the school community feel threatened or intimidated by the parent's behaviour?
- Is there any evidence that the parent was provoked in any way prior to the behaviour?
- Is there a risk (low, medium or high) that the unacceptable behaviour will be repeated?

Levels of Action

Following completion of the risk assessment, the Headteacher (or, where relevant, an appropriate member of the senior leadership team, or the Chair of Governors) will determine the level of action to be taken. In all cases, the level of action taken will be reasonable and commensurate with the assessed level of risk. Actions include the following:

1. ***Clarify to the parent what is considered appropriate 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 via a telephone or face-to-face discussion, or by letter or email. However, any verbal explanation should be followed by a written confirmation of the discussion and the standards of behaviour outlined.

2. ***Invite the parent to an informal meeting to discuss events.***
   In some instances, this could be helpful to discuss and defuse the situation. However, the safety and well-being of those attending must be carefully considered. Members of staff should 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. The main points of discussion and any agreed actions should be noted, and a follow-up letter or email sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions.

3. ***Issue a formal warning.***
   In some instances it may be appropriate simply to warn the parent that withdrawal of access to the school site would be considered if the behaviour is repeated.

4. ***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. Depending of the type, level or frequency of the unacceptable behaviour, the school may consider imposing conditions on the parent's contact with the school. These conditions may include (but are not exclusively):

   - being accompanied to any meeting with a member of school staff by a member of the Senior Leadership Team
   - restricting contact by telephone to named members of the Senior Leadership Team
   - restricting written communications to named members of the Senior Leadership Team
   - restricting attendance at school events to those where the parent will be accompanied by a member of the Senior Leadership Team
   - any other restriction deemed reasonable and proportionate by the Headteacher.

   The parent will be informed of the details of the conditions that are being imposed by letter from the Headteacher (or, in cases where the unacceptable behaviour was directed at the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors). The parent would then be given 10 school days from the date of that letter to make representations in writing to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors would then decide whether to confirm or remove the conditions. This would be communicated to the parent in writing within 10 school days of the date of the parent's letter.

   If the decision is to confirm the conditions imposed, this decision will be reviewed by a panel of 3 governors (to include the Chair of Governors) each term. 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 panel. Governors may decide to maintain, extend or remove the conditions. The decision of the review will be communicated to the parent by the clerk to the governors within 10 school days of the date of the meeting.

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

5. ***Impose a ban.***
   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 is enough for a member of staff or a pupil to feel threatened.

Where a ban has been deemed appropriate, the parent will be informed of the details of the ban (including the length of time for which the ban will be in effect) by letter from the Headteacher (or, in cases where the unacceptable behaviour was directed at the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors). This will include banning the parent from accessing school staff by written communication or telephone.

The parent would then be given 10 school days from the date of that letter to make representations about the ban in writing to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors would then decide whether to confirm or remove the ban. This would be communicated to the parent in writing within 10 school days of the receipt of their letter.

A decision to impose a ban will be reviewed by a panel of 3 governors (to include the Chair of Governors) each term. 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 panel. Governors may decide to remove the ban, extend the ban or impose conditions on the 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 school 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 them and any evidence of the parent's co-operation with the school in other respects.

6. ***Removal from school.***
   Parents who have been banned from the school premises and continue to cause a nuisance will be deemed to have committed an offence under s547 Education Act 1996. 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 Policy

Any parental complaint that arises from incidents of unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with under the school's Complaints Policy.