



Handling Unreasonably Persistent, Harassing or Abusive Behaviours

The head teacher and governing body are fully committed to the improvement of our school. We welcome feedback from parents/carers and will always try to resolve any concerns as quickly as possible. There is a procedure for parents to use if they wish to make a formal complaint. The complaint procedures are available at the school office or on the school website.

Sometimes, however, parents or carers pursuing complaints or other issues treat staff and others in a way that is unacceptable. Whilst we recognise that some concerns may relate to serious and distressing incidents, we will not accept threatening or harassing behaviour towards any members of the school community.

What do we mean by 'an unreasonably persistent' behaviour?

An unreasonably persistent behaviour may be anyone who engages in unreasonable behaviour when making a complaint and/or makes slanderous/ defamatory comments which may appear in the public domain. This will include persons who pursue concerns in an unreasonable manner.

Unreasonable behaviour may include:

- Actions which are
 - Out of proportion to the nature of the complaint.
 - Persistent – even when the complaints procedure has been exhausted.
 - Personally harassing.
 - Unjustifiably repetitious.
- An insistence on
 - Pursuing unjustified complaints.
 - Unrealistic outcomes to justified complaints.
 - Pursuing justifiable concerns in an unreasonable manner (e.g. using abusive or threatening language.
 - Making complaints in public or via a social networking site such as Facebook.
 - Refusing to attend appointments to discuss the concern.

What is 'harassment'?

We regard harassment as the unreasonable pursuit of issues or concerns, particularly if the matter appears to be pursued in a way intended to cause personal distress rather than to seek a resolution.

Behaviour may fall within the scope of this policy if:

- It appears to be deliberately targeted at one or more members of school staff or others.
- The way in which a concern or other issues is pursued (as opposed to the complaint itself) causes undue distress to school staff or others.
- It has a significant and disproportionate adverse effect on the school community.

What does the school expect of any person wishing to raise a concern?

The school expects anyone who wishes to raise concerns with the school to:

- Treat all members of the school community with courtesy and respect.
- Respect the needs of pupils and staff within the school.
- Avoid the use of violence, or threats of violence, towards people or property.

- Recognise the time constraints under which members of staff in schools work and allow the school a reasonable time to respond to a complaint.
- Follow the school's complaints procedure.
- Avoid harassing or abusive behaviours.

Schools' responses to unreasonably persistent behaviours or harassment

This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the school's complaints procedure. Taken together, these documents set out how we will always seek to work with parents, carers and others with a legitimate complaint to resolve a difficulty.

However, in cases of unreasonably persistent complaints or harassment, the school may take some or all of the following steps, as appropriate:

- Inform the complainant informally that his/her behaviour is now considered by the school to be unreasonable or unacceptable and request a changed approach.
- Inform the complainant in writing that the school considers his/her behaviour to fall under the terms of the unreasonably persistent behaviours/ harassment policy.
- Require all future meetings with a member of staff to be conducted with a second person present. In the interests of all parties, notes of these meetings may be taken.
- Inform the complainant that, except in emergencies, the school will respond only to written communication.
- Inform the complainant in circumstances where complaints are being regularly made but with no substantial evidence that they will be limited to the number of complaints made each term. This would usually be reviewed after six months.

Physical or verbal aggression

The governing body will not tolerate **any** form of physical or verbal aggression against members of the school community. If there is evidence of any such aggression the school may:

- Issue a written warning
- Ban the individual from entering the school site, with immediate effect
- Call the police to remove the individual from the premises, under powers provided by the Education Act 1996
- Seek police advice and follow any necessary course of action. This could include civil orders, or in extreme examples prosecution under anti-harassment legislation.

Barring from the School Premises

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. The schools will therefore act to ensure it remains a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of our community.

If a parent's behaviour is a cause for concern, the school can ask him/her to leave school premises. In serious cases, the headteacher or the local authority can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the parent may wish to make. The school will give the parent the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing.

The decision to bar should then be reviewed, taking into account any representations made by the parent and either confirmed or lifted. If the decision is confirmed the parent should be notified in writing explaining how long the bar will be in place.

Anyone wishing to complain about being barred can do so, by letter or email, to the headteacher or Chair of Governors. However, complaints about barring cannot be escalated to the Department for Education. Once the school's own complaints procedure has been completed, the only remaining avenue of appeal is through the Courts; independent legal advice must therefore be sought.

Legitimate new complaints will always be considered, even if the person making them is (or has been) subject to the Unreasonably Persistent Behaviours/ Harassment Policy. The school nevertheless reserves the right not to respond to communications from individuals subject to the policy.