



## **Acceptable behaviour policy for Parents/Carers/Visitors**

At Brighton Hill Community School, we value the relationship which we build with every parent/carer in our school community, whose support we are reliant upon in ensuring that our aim of *"Making Success Inevitable"* is achievable. Almost every parent/carer we work with conducts themselves impeccably, in a professional, supportive manner. We like to feel that you, as parents/carers feel part of our community and that the part you play in your child's education complements ours. However, there have been some occasions where staff members have been subjected to unacceptable behaviour from parents/carers. Unacceptable behaviour is such that makes a member of staff or student feel threatened, intimidated or anxious. 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:

- shouting, either in person or over the telephone
- using intimidating language or behaviour
- using threatening language or behaviour
- using abusive language or behaviour
- using insulting language or behaviour
- swearing
- any unwanted physical contact
- actions which seek to undermine a member of staff
- actions which deliberately seek to question the integrity of a member of staff
- any other behaviour likely to cause anybody witnessing it (including the recipient) alarm, distress or to fear that violence may be used against them or others.

The board of governors has a responsibility to ensure that all staff are protected from such unacceptable behaviour from parents/carers. In order to eliminate the forms of unacceptable behaviour above, we ask that our parents follow our three **"Non-Negotiables"** with regards to positive communication with our staff team:

1. **Please only come onto school property for one of the following reasons:**
  - For a pre-booked appointment with a staff member
  - To attend an official school event
  - To collect or drop off a child for a reason which requires the parent/carer to escort their child to/from reception (e.g. safeguarding/SEN/illness)
  - To drop off any belongings which your child may need for the school day
  - To drop off something for a member of staff.
2. **Please respect our school behaviour policies.** These are in place for the safety/happiness of our whole school community and will be enforced consistently by all staff members.
3. **When communicating with staff members, please do so respectfully.**

Further guidelines with regards to the “**Non-Negotiables**” above:

1. *Please only come onto school property for one of the reasons above*

Schools are private property. People do not have an automatic right to enter.

Parents/carers have an ‘implied licence’ to come on to school premises at certain times, such as those listed above, and are very welcome to do so, unless their reason for doing so negatively impacts on the school community. This includes making demands to see a member of staff with whom you have not booked an appointment. If a parent refuses to leave the site when asked to do so, it is very likely that the police will be called to remove them. Clearly, we never want a situation to reach this level of intervention, if it can be avoided.

As laid out in the Department for Education’s “*Controlling access to school premises*” document of 2019, 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.

In the event that a barring order needs to be invoked, the school will let an individual know that they’ve been barred or they intend to bar them, in writing. Further details are available later in the section entitled “*The school’s approach to dealing with incidents.*”

2. *Please respect our school behaviour policies.*

Often, if a student is sanctioned for poor behaviour, they take the opportunity to tell their parent/carer their version of events before the member of staff’s version has been shared. In these circumstances, please exercise caution and always remember that the trained adult’s version of events is most likely to be the correct one. Members of staff who enforce the school policies correctly will always have the full support of the school leadership team. However, if you believe a policy has not been enforced correctly, you do, of course, have a right to question this by raising it with either the member of staff involved, or their Head of Faculty/ Head of Year. If your concerns are not resolved to your liking at this stage, **you are then entitled to follow the school’s statutory complaints procedure, which can be found here**, on our website:

<https://www.brightonhill.org/page/?title=School+Complaints+Procedure&pid=105>

3. *When communicating with staff members, please do so respectfully.*

Please try to remember that all staff share your ambition for your child to succeed. Every staff member is employed to support our students and has the right to be able to conduct their duties without the concern that they will be treated abusively by parents/carers. When communicating with staff, even if you disagree with their decisions or actions, please avoid any shouting, swearing or abusive/threatening/insulting language. In these situations, we expect members of staff to behave as professionally as possible, 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 will then refer the incident to their SLT line manager or the Headteacher, who will take appropriate action or invoke the provisions of this policy. If the inappropriate communication is via email, it will be referred to our *inappropriate communication inbox*; the sender will receive an automated message to state that the communication has been deemed inappropriate and therefore disregarded.

## **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 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 decide 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/students 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/students 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's PA. Depending on an assessment of the risk of retaliation to witnesses or individuals, statements made by adults these may be made available to the parent if they request it.

### **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, but are not limited to, the following:

#### *i). Clarify to the parent what is considered acceptable 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 by letter from the Headteacher. This letter may contain a warning about further action if there are further incidents. 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.

#### *ii). Invite the parent to an informal meeting to discuss events*

This could be helpful to discuss and defuse 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 will be given to the seating arrangements. The main points of discussion and any agreed actions should be noted, and a follow-up letter or e-mail sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions.

*iii). 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 students 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 on 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 SLT
- 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 of the school
- any other restriction as deemed reasonable and proportionate by the Headteacher, including a blanket ban from being on the school premises (see *iv.* below).

In these cases, the parent/carer will be informed by letter from the Headteacher the details of the conditions that are being imposed. The parent/carer would then be given 10 working days from the date of that letter to make representations in writing about the conditions 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/carer in writing within 10 working days of the date of the parent/carer's letter.

If the decision is to confirm the conditions imposed, this decision will be reviewed by the Board of Governors after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The parent/carer 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 full Board of Governors. Governors may decide to maintain, extend or remove the conditions. The decision of the review will be communicated to the parent/carer by the clerk to the Governors within 10 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/carer'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/carer's co-operation with the school in other respects.

*iv). Imposing a ban*

Where other procedures have been exhausted and aggression or intimidation continues OR where there is an act of violence or abuse, then the school may consider banning the individual from school premises. This may include banning a parent/carer 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/carer 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. The Chair of Governors would then decide whether to confirm or remove the ban. This would be communicated to the parent/carer in writing within 10 working days of the receipt of their letter.

If the Chair's decision is to confirm the ban, parents/carers 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 may be reviewed by the Board of Governors after approximately six months, if appropriate (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The parent/carer 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 full Board of Governors. Governors may decide to remove the ban, extend the ban or impose conditions on parent/carer's access to the school. The decision of the review will be communicated to the parent/carer 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/carer's compliance with the ban, any appropriate expressions of regret/remorse and assurance of future good conduct received from him/her and any evidence of the parent/carer's co-operation with the school in other respects.

*v). Removal from school*

Parents/carers 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 or person authorised by the Board of Governors. Legal proceedings may be brought against the parent/carer.

*vi). Complaints policy*

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