



Policy on inappropriate parental behaviour, persistent complaints and harassment of staff

Written July 2021

Approved at Full Governing Body on 15th July 2021 as recorded in minutes and signed by the Chair of Governors, Robin Phelan:

This policy is due for review by July 2024

All our policies should be read in conjunction with our Spring Bank Ethos and Values as found on the school website.

Aims of the policy

This policy is intended to address the behaviour of the very small minority of parent/carers who persistently fail to treat staff at Spring Bank primary school reasonably and courteously.

It should be read in conjunction with the schools Values statement and the Complaints policy.

The aims of the policy are:

1. To uphold appropriate standards of behaviour on the part of parents/carers in their dealings with any member of the school community, including pupils, other parents, teaching and non-teaching staff, volunteers, and governors.
2. To support the well-being of all members of the school community.
3. To deal fairly, appropriately and in accordance with agreed procedures, with parents/carers who behave inappropriately in their dealings with school.

Parent/carer expectations of the School

Parents/carers can expect:

1. To be made to feel welcome in school to discuss any aspect of their child's life in school. This may take the form of an informal 'chat' with the class teacher or classroom assistant or a more formal meeting with the class teacher, head/deputy head teacher, learning mentor or other member of staff as appropriate.
2. To be able to raise issues and concerns with an appropriate member of staff and to be listened to courteously.
3. To be able to make an informal/formal complaint if they feel that their issues or concerns have not been addressed properly (see Complaints policy). Such a complaint should be dealt with: courteously; appropriately; and in a timely manner.

The School's expectations of parents/carers

The School can expect all parents/carers

1. To behave appropriately while on School premises, respecting the well-being of staff, pupils, other parents, volunteers and Governors.
2. To avoid any use, or threatened use, of violence to people or property.
3. To avoid any behaviour that is intimidating or aggressive or could be interpreted as such, including verbal abuse.
4. To follow school policies and procedures regarding meetings with staff, raising issues or concerns and making complaints.

Harassment and persistent complainants

For the purpose of this policy a persistent complainant is a parent/carer who complains about issues, either formally or informally, or frequently raises issues and whose behaviour is unreasonable. Such behaviour may be characterized by:

1. Actions, correspondence, email or telephone contact which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious and/or
2. An insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic or unreasonable outcomes
3. An insistence on pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable or inappropriate manner.

For the purpose of this policy harassment is the unreasonable pursuit of such actions as identified above in such a way that they:

1. Appear to be targeted over a significant period of time on one or more members of school staff, and/or
2. Cause ongoing distress to individual member/s of school staff, and/or
3. Have a significant adverse effect on the whole/parts of the school community, and/or
4. Are pursued aggressively.

Actions or behaviours that fall into any of the categories described above, or any other harassing or persistently unreasonable behaviour, may render an individual liable to this policy.

The School's actions in cases of inappropriate behaviour on the part of parents

In the event of unacceptable behaviour on the part of parents the School will take the following consecutive steps:

1. Inform the parent/carer orally that his/her behaviour is considered to have been unreasonable or unacceptable and may be considered to fall under the terms of this policy. If the Headteacher or his/her nominee feels that the parent/carer has displayed/is likely to display a high level of aggression they may choose to set out their concerns in writing instead. The incident will be recorded on a database (see Annex 1).
2. In the event of a further incident Headteacher will inform the parent/carer in writing that his/her behaviour is unreasonable/unacceptable and warn of further sanctions that might be taken in the event of a further occurrence (see Model Letter 1). The incident will be recorded on a database (see Annex 1).
3. In the event of a further incident the Headteacher should make an immediate decision as to whether to request that the parent/carer concerned leaves the school premises and/or call the police. Subsequently the Headteacher, in consultation with the Chair of Governors and taking legal advice, will decide which of the following further sanctions should be put in place:
 - All meetings between the parent/carer concerned and a member of staff will be conducted with a second person present and a record kept of the meeting (see Model Letter 3)
 - Inform the parent/carer that, except in emergencies, all communications to the school should be carried out in writing (See Model Letter 4)
 - Temporary or permanent ban from the School premises (see Model Letters 5 and 6)
 - Legal action against the parent/carer

The parent/carer will be informed in writing (see Model Letter 2) of the sanctions that are to be applied; the incident will be noted on the database and all staff informed as appropriate.

Although there are model letters provided with this policy, in practice such decisions (especially banning) are taken in conjunction with Legal Services who issue their own letters.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be subject to review by the Governing Body at least every three years or earlier if deemed necessary.

The Headteacher will report all incidents where this policy has been invoked, to the Governing Body. All such incidents will be logged in school.

Annex 1: Entry of incident onto database

All incidents that are deemed by the headteacher to fall under the terms of this policy will be entered onto a database which includes the following information:

Date of incident	Nature of incident-very brief description	Name of parent/carer or other person involved	Name of victim/s	Has a CF50a form been filled in and sent to Personnel?	Has a note been made on their child's CP record?	Date on which parent /carer spoken to and warned verbally	Date on which parent/carer sent a formal written warning	Date matter referred to legal Services
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Model Letter 1: Written warning from Headteacher

Dear [Add name]

I am writing to inform you that your behaviour in school on [Add date/time] was unacceptable/unreasonable and in breach of the School's policy on Parental Behaviour. Specifically [add very brief description of aspects of the behaviour that were unacceptable/unreasonable].

Please note that the school's *Policy on Parental behaviour, persistent complaints and harassment of staff* sets out standards of behaviour expected of all people towards school staff, pupils and other parents. These include:

- Mutual respect and courtesy between parents/carers and school staff
- Behaving appropriately at all times while on school premises in your dealings with staff, children, and other parents.
- Avoiding aggressive behaviour towards, or harassment of, any member of the school community.

If there is a further incident of inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour the Headteacher and/or Governors may take all or some of the following further steps:

- Ask that you leave the school premises immediately.
- Call the police
- Ban you from School premises
- Take legal action against you.

I very much hope that you understand the importance of ensuring that School is a safe and welcoming environment for all pupils, parents and staff and ensure that your behaviour does not give further cause for concern.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Model Letter 2: Letter informing parent/carer that sanctions referred to in Letter 1 will now be invoked.

Dear [Add name]

You will recall that I wrote to you on [Add date of Letter 1] informing you that your behaviour in school had been unreasonable/unacceptable and was in breach of the School's *Policy on Parental behaviour, persistent complaints and harassment of staff*.

I am now writing to inform you that your behaviour in school on [Add date/time] was again unacceptable/unreasonable and in breach of the School's policy on Parental Behaviour. Specifically [add very brief description of aspects of the behaviour that were unacceptable/unreasonable].

As a result, having discussed this with the School's Chair of Governors and taken legal advice, I am now applying the following sanctions: [Delete as appropriate]

- The School will not investigate your complaint further
- The School will make special arrangements for meetings and/or communication with the School [Add details as appropriate]. These arrangements do not apply in the event of emergencies concerning [Add name of child/ren] which should be reported to the School in the usual way. Details of these special arrangements are set out in the attached note.
- You are banned from coming on to the School premises. You will receive a separate letter outlining the terms of this ban.
- The School is taking legal advice and is considering legal action against you.

These measures will be reviewed by the School on [add date].

If you wish to make a representation about the contents of this letter, please do so in writing to me at School by [add date].

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Model Letter 3: Letter informing parent/carer that special arrangements will be made for him/her to meet members of staff

Dear *[Add name]*

Following the letter of *[add date]* from the Headteacher to you informing you that we felt your recent behaviour in School has been unreasonable/unacceptable, I am now writing to you to inform you of the special arrangement we have made regarding meetings at the School.

For the foreseeable future, should you wish to meet with a member of staff, we would ask you to note that:

- Any meetings will be by appointment only and confirmed in writing
- An additional member of staff will be present at all times during the meeting
- In the interests of everyone, formal notes of the meeting may be made.

These arrangements do not apply, of course, to any emergencies concerning *[add name of child/ren]* when communication between yourself and school may take place in the normal way.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

Model Letter 4: Letter informing parent/carer that future communication should be by letter only

Dear *[Add name]*

Following the letter of *[add date]* from the Headteacher to you informing you that we felt your recent behaviour in School has been unreasonable/unacceptable, **I am now writing to you to inform you that, for the foreseeable future, all routine communication with the School should be by letter only.** Please address all letters to "The Headteacher" at the School. Every effort will be made to respond as quickly as possible.

These arrangements do not apply, of course, to any emergencies concerning *[add name of child/ren]* when communication between yourself and school may take place in the normal way.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

Model Letter 5: Letter informing parent/carer that a ban excluding him/her from school premises is proposed

RECORDED DELIVERY

Dear *[Add name]*

I have received a report from the Headteacher about your conduct at Spring Bank Primary School on *[add date and time]*.

[Add summary of the incident and its effect on staff/pupils/other parents]

I must inform you that the Governing Body will not tolerate conduct of this nature on school premises and will take action to protect its staff, pupils and other parents. I am therefore instructing that (for a temporary period) you must not enter School premises, including both the buildings and the grounds. If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted you could be liable to a substantial fine.

For the duration of this decision you may bring your son/daughter to school and collect him/her at the end of the school day, but you must not go beyond the school gates.

[In the case of very young children add the following] Arrangements have been made for your son/daughter to be collected, and returned to you, at the School gate by a member of School staff.

The withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises takes effect straightaway. However before I make a final decision to confirm this decision I wish to give you an opportunity to give me any comments or observation of your own in relation to the incident outlined above. Please do so in writing. These comments may include any expressions of regret on your part and any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct. To enable me to make a final decision on this matter as soon as possible, please send me any written comments you wish to make by *add date ten working days from date of letter*.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

Model Letter 6: Letter to parent/carer confirming a ban

RECORDED DELIVERY

Dear *[Add name]*

On *[add date]* I wrote to you informing you that, on the advice of the Headteacher, I had withdrawn permission for you to come onto School premises. To enable the Governors to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by *[give date]*. I have not received a written response from you/ I have now received a letter from you dated *[add date]*, the contents of which I have noted. *[Delete as appropriate]*

After due consideration I have decided that the decision to withdraw permission for you to come onto school premises should be confirmed. I am therefore instructing that until further notice you are not to come into the school buildings or school grounds without the prior knowledge and approval of the Headteacher. If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted you could be liable to a fine.

Regardless of this decision the headteacher and staff of Spring Bank primary school remain committed to the education of your child/ren who must continue to attend school as normal according to the arrangements for dropping them off and collecting them set out in my previous letter.

The Governors will review this decision on *[add date]*. One element of the review will be the extent to which you have complied with this decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurances of future good conduct from yourself and any evidence of your co-operation with the school in other respects.

I understand that you may be disappointed with this decision. You do, however, have the right to a further review by the Local Government Ombudsman.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors