

SLATER PRIMARY SCHOOL



“Together we believe; together we achieve”

Procedure for Allegations of Abusive Behaviour towards Staff

Policy Date:	March 2025			
Policy Review Date:	March 2027	Headteacher	RMiah	
Ratified by Governing Body:				
		Chair of Governors	RKettle	

Our Values

At Slater Primary School, we care deeply for the children; we believe every child is worthy and capable of success and happiness and this shows in every interaction. We create the conditions for children to grow into individuals who care about themselves, each other and the world they live in.

Introduction

The Governing Body of Slater Primary School encourages close links with parents and the community. It believes that pupils benefit when the relationship between home and school is positive.

The vast majority of parents/carers and others visiting our school are keen to work with us and support the school. However, on the rare occasions when a negative attitude towards the school is expressed, this can result in aggression, verbal and or physical abuse towards members of school staff or the wider school community.

The Governing Body expects and requires its staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to defuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement of other colleagues as appropriate.

However, all members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse and the right, in an extreme case, of appropriate self-defence.

We expect parents and other visitors to behave reasonably towards school staff members. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken when behaviour is unacceptable.

At all times the common purpose remains clear: to achieve zero tolerance of violence, threatening behaviour or abuse in schools, 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.

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated:

- Shouting at members of the school staff, either in person or over the telephone
- Physically intimidating a member of staff, e.g. standing very close to her/him
- The use of aggressive hand gestures
- Threatening behaviour
- Shaking or holding a fist or finger towards another person
- Swearing
- Pushing
- Hitting, e.g. slapping, punching and kicking
- Spitting
- Racist or sexist comments
- Breaching the school's security procedures
- Aggressive and threatening phone calls or emails.
- Aggressive or threatening behaviour towards staff or their families via social media

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour.

Unacceptable behaviour may result in the local authority and the police being informed of the incident.

Procedure to be followed

If a parent/carer or person picking up behaves unacceptably towards a member of the school community, the Head Teacher or appropriate senior member of staff will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If necessary, the school's complaints procedures should be followed. Where all procedures have been exhausted and aggression or intimidation continue, or where there is an extreme act of violence, a parent or carer may be banned by the Head Teacher from the school premises for a period of time, subject to review.

In imposing a ban, the following steps will be taken:

1. The parent/carer or other named person will be informed, in writing, that she/he is banned from the premises, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, e.g. that police involvement or an injunction application may follow.
2. Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported the local authority and the police will be included.
3. The Chair of Governors and local authorities will be informed of the ban.
4. Where appropriate, arrangements for pupils being delivered to, and collected from the school gate will be clarified.

The Length of a Ban

The ban should be finite in length, as only the most serious misconduct would justify an indefinite ban. The duration needs to be sufficient to convey a clear message about the seriousness of the associated misconduct, but not so long as to be disproportionate. The aim should always be to restore "normal" relations as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Even if a ban is permanent, it should be reviewed periodically, taking account of subsequently demonstrated patterns of behaviour.

What does a ban achieve?

- It confirms to a parent that the school will not tolerate misbehaviour
- Shows the school takes health and safety of its staff, visitors and pupils seriously
- It provides a key element in making it easier to use legal remedies to prevent repeated misconduct, including use of S547 of the 1996 Education Act to enable Police removal and possible prosecution of those on school premises without permission
- It may form the basis for an application for an injunction to curtail repeated instances of misbehaviour.

Parental Rights

Every attempt should be made to maintain normal communications with parents/carers, including giving them the opportunity to participate in elections for Parent Governors, say. Even where a parent/carer has been banned from the school premises, they retain their right to an annual consultation in relation to the educational progress of their child/ren. However, the school may determine who will be present at the meeting (e.g. a senior member of staff might accompany the class teacher) and its location (e.g. it may well be arranged off site).

Options for the Head Teacher

After evaluating all available information, and any other relevant factors, there are several actions the Head Teacher may wish to take. These can include:

1. Inviting the parent to a meeting to discuss events

This could be helpful where a planned and structured meeting has either not been held before or has previously been productive. Skilled facilitators may need to be used. A full restorative meeting may be considered, but if it is not safe to bring all the parties together at a meeting, a restorative process can still take place through the exchange of information. The safety and well-being of those attending such a meeting must be carefully considered. It is strongly recommended that members of school staff should 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 sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions. Some parents may covertly record meetings and then seek to use the information obtained to support their case, and therefore schools should state explicitly that information obtained without permission will not be permissible.

2. Clarifying 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 at a meeting, or by letter, however any verbal explanation should be followed by a written confirmation of the discussion and the standards of behaviour outlined.

3. Forming strategies to manage future situations of potential conflict

It is sometimes possible to identify situations of potential conflict and to plan for these in a way that minimises potential risks. For example, where a parent persistently engages in arguments with staff in corridors at the beginning or end of the school day, the parent could be informed that any discussions with school staff must be held by prior appointment. Alternatively, the parent may be asked not to approach the class teacher, but should instead arrange to meet the Head Teacher (or other member of the Senior Leadership Team), who will deal with their concerns. In more serious cases a further option may be to advise the parent that in future their concerns should be dealt with by written communication. Any such arrangements should be confirmed in writing to the parent.

4. Withdrawing permission for the parent to enter the school site and/or building

In more serious cases of actual or threatened aggression/violence or persistent abuse/intimidation, the Head Teacher may need to consider whether it is safe for the parent to continue to come onto the school site or enter the buildings. In such circumstances, the Head Teacher will first consult with the school's HR team **Calling for police assistance**

In an emergency, police assistance should be sought. In cases where a ban is in place but is ignored and the person comes onto the school site, the police should be notified immediately. (Staff will need to be aware of the ban and have agreed procedures in place should the person come onto the school site).

In situations where there is no immediate threat to staff, pupils, other members of the school community or the school's property, the Head Teacher may still wish to make their local community police officer (e.g. neighbourhood support team, youth intervention officer) aware of the situation.. Cases of actual assault will be reported directly to the police.

5. Legal Proceedings

Where individuals persist in coming onto the school site even when permission to do so has been withdrawn, legal proceedings can be pursued. The options include:

Prosecution under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996

This requires the police to gather and present substantial evidence. Clearly, it is not a quick process. While in most cases the threat may prove to be a sufficient deterrent, prosecution can only be seen as a punitive measure in the last resort.

Appropriate behaviour contracts

These are voluntary agreements between people involved in anti-social behaviour, and the agency/school concerned. They are flexible in terms of content and format, and can be an effective means of encouraging young adults, children and parents to take responsibility for unacceptable behaviour. The person named does not always agree with the contract, but it can be used as evidence later in an application for an anti-social behaviour order. Conditions can be put on the contract, e.g. not to enter school grounds.

Anti-social behaviour orders (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

These are most likely to be used when the offender (aged over 10) has acted in a manner that causes harassment, alarm, or distress and is needed to protect others in the same area from similar behaviour.

The local authority or the chief officer of police may seek anti-social behaviour orders (asbos). ASBOs are designed to deal with persistent bad behaviour, and the police will need to show that other options have been tried or are unsuitable.

Restraining orders (Protection from Harassment Act 1997)

Section 2 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 provides for criminal or civil prosecution, for cases where someone causes alarm or distress to another person on more than two occasions. Section four provides for criminal or civil prosecution where people have been put in fear of violence on at least two occasions. In each case the sanctions include both criminal penalties (fines, imprisonment or community sentences)

and a restraining order. These orders are generally quicker and easier to obtain, but are part of a criminal conviction.

Prosecution for criminal damage/assault

Prosecutions for causing deliberate damage or injury may occasionally be the most appropriate action. If the police are called, the option to make criminal allegations is readily available, and they may arrest suspected offenders there and then. Official allegations should only be made if there is no intention of later withdrawing the complaint. Criminal proceedings can be initiated at a later date. All possible steps should be taken to prevent the loss of evidence. In particular, witnesses should be asked to record exactly what they saw and heard at the earliest opportunity.

Whilst the emphasis will usually be on ensuring the safety and security of persons and property, the injunction route is likely to be the most effective deterrent legal action, it does not necessarily guarantee against the behaviour of the more persistent offender.

Record Keeping

Clear and detailed records of all events must be kept up to date. Any witness statements (where appropriate) and notes of any subsequent meetings held to discuss the events should also be retained. Notes should be signed and dated.

It is also advisable to ensure that parents receive a written confirmation of the events and the head teacher's response in every case, even where a formal letter is not required.

If the police are asked to investigate an incident as a criminal investigation, a number of actions may thwart this process. Witness details should not be made known to suspected offenders or their families. Groups of witnesses or suspects should not be left together or allowed to discuss what happened before the police interview them. If in doubt, always seek the advice of the police officer first.

Support for Employees

If a member of staff is unfortunate enough to be one of the small minority subject to severe physical and/or verbal abuse, there are a variety of sources of potential support available to them.

In such circumstances, colleagues' immediate and ongoing support will be invaluable.

Appendix A

Dealing with abusive telephone calls

Sometimes staff may have to deal with challenging, abusive, aggressive or threatening telephone calls. It is unacceptable for any member of staff to be subjected to such abuse but staff may not know how to handle such a telephone call. This guidance has been produced to assist staff if they are faced with such a situation. To reduce the likelihood of callers becoming abusive staff should conduct themselves courteously and professionally and make every attempt to meet the needs of the caller. Staff should also be confident that ending an abusive telephone call is acceptable.

Always

- Remain calm and polite
- Stay in control of the situation
- Actively listen – repeat information back to the caller to test understanding of the issue and gain their agreement
- Inform the caller they are trying to help them
- Be positive and say what you can do
- Be clear and avoid using jargon
- If necessary, apologise for an error and take action to put it right
- If you have to go and get some information, let the caller know why you are putting them on hold and do not leave them on hold for a long time. Update them as necessary
- Make notes of the conversation
- Follow the procedure below if appropriate
- Refer to the caller to the Head Teacher/Deputy etc
- Never respond in the same manner as an abusive caller
- Do not take it personally
- Do not allow yourself to be bullied
- Do not slam the phone down.

Script for abusive telephone calls

When the caller starts to raise their voice/be abusive:

Mr/Mrs/Ms... please don't raise your voice/swear at me, I am not raising my voice/being rude to you. If you continue to raise your voice/be rude to me then I will be forced to terminate the call.

If the caller continues to raise their voice/be abusive:

Mr/Mrs/Ms I understand you are upset/frustrated however I am not prepared to continue to be shouted/sworn at so you can either call back when you have calmed down or if you prefer you can put your views in writing.

If, despite the two warnings above, the caller continues to raise their voice/be abusive:

Mr/Mrs/Ms I advised you earlier during this call about raising your voice/swearing and you have continued to do this, so I am afraid I am going to have to terminate this call. **Hang up.**

Further actions:

Make a written note of the telephone call on CPOMs.

Appendix B

Letter to be sent to violent and abusive visitors

Dear xxx

At Slater Primary School, all members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse. We expect parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards members of school staff. Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated:

- * Shouting at members of the school staff, either in person or over the telephone;
- * Physically intimidating a member of staff, e.g. standing very close to her/him;
- * The use of aggressive hand gestures;
- * Threatening behaviour;
- * Shaking or holding a fist towards another person;
- * Swearing;
- * Pushing;
- * Hitting, e.g. slapping, punching and kicking;
- * Spitting;
- * Breaching the school's security procedures.

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour.

I am writing to advise you that I have received a report about your conduct at the school on (enter date and time). (Add factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils, and other parents.)

I must inform you that the Governing Body will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to protect its staff and pupils. Therefore, I am writing to advise you that an incident log has been completed and will be kept on record should further episodes of this type be reported and further action be necessary.

Yours faithfully

Head Teacher
Cc Chair of Governors

Appendix C

Withdraw permission pending review (sent by chair of governors)

Dear XXX

I have received a report from the Head Teacher of Slater Primary School about your conduct on

..... at

(add summary of incident and its effect on staff and pupils or optional reference to first letter from Head Teacher)

I 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. On the advice of the Head Teacher, I am therefore instructing you that, until I have reviewed this incident, you are not to reappear on the school premises. If you do not comply with this instruction, I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises. If you cause a nuisance or disturbance on the premises, you may be prosecuted under section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to pay a fine.

For the duration of this decision, you may bring your child(ren) to school and collect them at the end of the school day, but you must not go beyond the school gate.

For Early Years and Key Stage 1 children – arrangements have been made for your child(ren) to be collected and returned to you at the school gate by a member of the school staff).

Special arrangements can be made for you to meet with the Head Teacher, if necessary, but this may only be with the written permission of the governors.

The withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises takes effect immediately and will be in place for 15 school days in the first instance. I still need to decide whether it is appropriate to confirm this decision.

Before I do so, I wish to allow you to write any comments or observations of your own about the report I received from the Head Teacher. These comments may challenge or explain the facts of the incident, express regret, and give assurances about your future good conduct. To enable me to decide on this matter, please send me any written comments you wish to make by (date 10 school days from date of letter).

If, after receiving your comments, I consider that my decision should be confirmed, you will be supplied with details of how to pursue a review of your case.

I am copying this letter to the Head Teacher and Stour Vale Academy Trust.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

Appendix D

Withdrawal of permission confirmed (sent by chair of governors)

Dear XXX

On I wrote to inform you that on the advice of the Head Teacher I had withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of Slater Primary School. To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I allowed you to give your written comments on the incident concerned by

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated, the contents of which I have carefully considered.

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Head Teacher's report, I have determined 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 onto the school premises without the prior knowledge and approval of the Head Teacher.

If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises of the school. If you cause a nuisance or disturbance on the premises, you may be prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to pay a fine.

Even though we have taken this decision, the Head Teacher and staff at Slater Primary School remain committed to educating your child(ren), who must continue to attend school as expected under the arrangements set out in my previous letter.

This decision will be reviewed again (insert review date, which should be within a reasonable period of no longer than six months). When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the withdrawal of permission to come onto the 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.

If you wish to pursue the matter further, you have a right to complain to a panel of school governors who have not been involved previously and who will consider the circumstances of the decision to withdraw permission for you to come onto the school site. You can make your complaint by writing the Clerk to the Governors, c/o the school.

(Where the incident has arisen in the context of a parental complaint against the school, the following may be inserted)

Finally, I would advise you that I have asked the Head Teacher to ensure that your complaint is considered under the appropriate stage of the school's parental complaints procedure. The school will contact you about this in due course.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

Appendix E

Restore permission after review by Chair of Governors (sent by Chair of Governors)

Dear XXX

On... I wrote to inform you that on the advice of the Head Teacher, I temporarily withdrew permission for you to come onto the premises of Slater Primary School. To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a more extended period, I allowed you to give your written comments on the incident concerned by

.....

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated, the contents of which I have carefully considered.

In the circumstances, and after consulting further with the Head Teacher, I have decided that it is not necessary to confirm the decision. I am therefore restoring your permission to come onto the school premises with immediate effect.

(Optional) I must warn you, however, that if it should become necessary in the future I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the school premises once again.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

Appendix F

Continue ban after second review (sent by Chair of Governors)

Dear

I wrote to you on confirming that permission for you to come onto the premises of Slater Primary School had been withdrawn until further notice. I also advised you I would take steps to review this decision by

I have now completed the review. However, after consultation with the Head Teacher, I have determined that it is not yet appropriate for me to withdraw my decision. (Add brief summary of reasons).

I therefore advise that the instruction that you are not to come onto the premises of Slater Primary School, without the prior knowledge and approval of the Head Teacher remains in place until further notice. If you do not comply with this instruction, I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises and you may be prosecuted under section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

I shall undertake a further review of this decision by (insert review date which should be within a reasonable period and no longer than six months).

In the meantime, you can write to me with a statement of your views, which I will consider.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors