



## CAVERSHAM PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Dealing with Violence, Abuse and Threatening Behaviour Policy

The Governing Body and Headteacher of Caversham Park Primary School share a duty of care with Reading Borough Council in relation to protecting the physical and emotional well-being of all the staff employed at Caversham Park Primary School.

Violence, abuse or any threatening behaviour towards staff, whether in person, in writing or via social media will not be tolerated and the school will not hesitate to seek the support of the Local Authority Legal Department and/or the police to determine possible legal action against the perpetrator (*see Appendix 1*).

#### Definition of violence, abuse and threatening behaviour

Members of school staff have a right to expect that their school is a safe place in which to work. Prompt and appropriate action will be taken on their behalf if they are subjected to any form of abuse, violence or threatening behaviour.

This includes:

- Aggressive, abusive or threatening verbal communication
- Any form of written abuse or threats; including email and social media sites such as Facebook
- Common assault – such as threats of immediate violence or actual minor injury
- Actual or Grievous bodily harm

#### Measures in place to avoid, prevent and minimise incidents

The Headteacher takes the lead role in relation to the policy; the Chair of Governors is responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented.

Regular audits will be carried out in the workplace to identify potential risks, hazards or problems and preventative measures will be put in place to combat these. All incidents will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team when they occur and any significant incidents will be reported to the Governing Body. The policy will be communicated to all staff on site and they will be expected to operate in accordance with procedures outlined in this policy and also those in the Staff Handbook.

#### Action when an incident occurs

School staff will not tolerate abusive or threatening language. Any such interchanges towards school staff, either verbally or in writing (including via social media sites) will be logged and recorded on an Incident Report Form.

Repeated use of threatening or abusive language in any form of communication with, or about, school staff or the school will result in formal action being taken. This could include barring the person from the school site or further action being taken by Reading Borough Council Legal Services Department (*see Appendix 1*).

In the event of a physically threatening, abusive or violent incident, staff should inform the Head Teacher immediately and complete an Incident Report Form. The Headteacher will then determine

what further action is to be taken. This will most likely involve liaison with the Chair of Governors, the Legal department at Reading Borough council and the Police (*see Appendix 1*).

The recording and reporting of incidents involving violence, threatening behaviour and abuse towards staff are important because:

- It may be necessary to collect evidence in the event of the police bringing formal charges against an alleged assailant
- The school's insurers will require information should a claim for compensation be made
- Accurate information regarding incidents is necessary for effective policy review

An LA accident form must be completed for anything more than a minor accident for a member of staff who has been threatened or abused, and accompanied by a statement.

Witness statements (if appropriate) should be written as soon as possible and given to the Headteacher.

Further action will depend on the incident, and can include the following:

- Adult warned by the Headteacher in writing;
- Partner of the person warned by the Headteacher in writing;
- Chair of Governors informed;
- Adult banned from the premises (letters sent by registered post);
- LA informed, advice taken from Legal Department; (*see Appendix 1*).
- Police asked to investigate/prosecute/injunction applied for.

### **Follow-up**

The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher, SENDCo or class teacher will follow-up after an incident if they dealt with it. If external agencies are involved then the Headteacher will follow-up the outcomes, which could include counselling, legal aid, or medical assistance.

### **Harassment**

In the event of a member of staff finding him/herself subjected to a pattern of persistent and unreasonable behaviour from individual parents/carers which is not abusive or overtly aggressive, but which can be perceived as intimidating and oppressive, this may constitute as an offence under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

If the actions of a parent/ carer appear to be heading in this direction, staff should record all incidents in writing, with the date, location, and means of communication (e.g. telephone call, letter, email, verbal, 1:1 conversation, social media posts) and inform the Headteacher who will consult with the LA for advice and support.

An option at this stage would be banning the parent/ carer from the school premises by the Head teacher on behalf of the school. If a person who has been banned subsequently trespasses and causes a nuisance or disturbance, the matter will be referred to Reading Borough Council's Head of Legal Services (*see Appendix 1*).

<b>Policy Date</b>	<b>Review Date</b>
June 2025	June 2028

## **Appendix 1:**

### **Parent Carer and Community Acceptable Behaviour – statement of expectations**

Brighter Futures for Children on behalf of Reading Borough Council strongly believe that our community schools in Reading should be a welcoming and safe place for our children, staff, parents and visitors alike.

Schools have legal responsibilities for the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and staff, and a duty of care to all people who visit a school.

All adults who enter a school site at any time set examples of behaviour and conduct which influence children and young people, and we believe that they should therefore demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same. Parents, carers and visitors must show respect to all other parents, carers, children, staff and visitors.

All members of staff have the right to work without fear of intimidation, violence and abuse and we expect parents, carers and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way at all times.

Adults who do not behave in an acceptable manner may be asked to leave the site and the Headteacher has the right to further restrict their access. The expectations of Brighter Futures for Children on behalf of Reading Borough Council in respect of the conduct of parents, carers and visitors to our school are set out below statement of expectations, which also outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

Brighter Futures for Children on behalf of Reading Borough Council will support schools in the consistent application of these expectations, including providing practical, legal or other support to schools as is necessary. Any Reading community school leader or Chair of Governors who requires support regarding these expectations should contact their School Effectiveness lead professional.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour are as follows:

- Shouting at members of staff, either in person or over the telephone;
- Use of offensive language towards other adults, staff or children;
- Physically intimidating members of staff and/or other parents or pupils;
- Approaching someone else's child in order to question or chastise them;
- Physical abuse, threatening, oppressive or aggressive behaviour;
- Using aggressive hand gestures;
- Swearing;
- Pushing;
- Hitting, e.g. slapping, punching, kicking or poking;
- Breaching the school's security procedures;
- Refusal to leave the school site when asked to;
- Attempting to gain entry to any part of the school in disregard of procedure or without permission;
- Entering the school site under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- Smoking/vaping/using drugs whilst on school property;
- Bringing alcohol onto school premises or excessive consumption of alcohol at school events;
- Bringing dogs, with the exception of Assistance Dogs, on to the school site without the explicit permission of the Headteacher;
- Damaging or destroying school property;
- Displaying any signs and/or handing out notices or messages which could cause unreasonable upset and/or harm to any member of staff, governor, parent or child.

The above list shows examples of unacceptable behaviour, however, this is not exhaustive. Should any of the above occur on school premises, or any other behaviour which is considered unacceptable, including inappropriate behaviour online (see below under Social Media), the school may feel it is necessary to take action by contacting Brighter Futures for Children or the

appropriate authorities or considering restricting the offending adult from entering the school premises.

School-related issues which parents or carers may have concerning the school, pupils or their families must be brought to the attention of a member of staff. Parents or carers must not try to resolve any issues themselves by direct action. If issues cannot be successfully resolved by speaking to a staff member, the correct course of action is for parents and carers to use the school's Complaints Procedure.

We expect all communication between parents and the school to be conducted in a polite and respectful manner. Communication may be similarly restricted if it becomes unacceptable, for example, abusive, persistent or threatening emails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communication.

### **Social Media**

On occasions some parents are tempted to make comments about the school, school staff, other parents and/or pupils on social media. Social media is not the forum for raising concerns or complaints about the school. If parents have a concern about the school, they can raise their concern directly with the Headteacher and complaints can be raised through the school's Complaints Procedure.

Parents and carers should take care when posting messages on social media. Parents are expected to treat everyone with respect and professionalism – even on social media - and adults should set a good example to their children and other pupils, and not use social media to criticise the school or its staff or pupils or make inappropriate comments.

In the event that any pupil or parent/carer of a pupil is found to be posting inappropriate comments on social media, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the social media site and consideration will be given to taking further action. Making potentially defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments about others on social media could have legal implications. In addition, threats of violence can lead to a criminal action. The school will also expect any pupil or parent/carer to remove such inappropriate comments immediately.

### **Legal framework**

Under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 it is an offence for any person to be on school premises to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance. It provides the right to remove and prosecute any person who is believed to have committed an offence.

Whilst a parent or carer of a child attending the school normally has implied permission to be on the school premises at certain times and for certain purposes, this permission may be withdrawn if the parent or carer exhibits behaviour which the Headteacher believes is unreasonable. This also applies to all other individuals invited into the school for other reasons.

In the event of any parent/carer/visitor breaching this Policy then proportionate action will be taken, for example:

- Parents, carers or other visitors exhibiting unacceptable behaviour could have their access restricted which prevents access to the school premises.
- Anyone who has had their access restricted and then ignores the restriction and enters the school site may be removed from the school site and prosecuted, if it is believed they have committed an offence.

The Governing Body, in conjunction with the Headteacher and Brighter Futures for Children will take the lead in authorising the removal of a person believed to be causing a nuisance or disturbance, and, if necessary, will bring legal proceedings against them.

In cases where the unacceptable behaviour is considered to be a serious and potentially criminal matter, the concerns will in the first instance be referred to the Police. This will include any or all

cases of threats of violence, and actual violence, to any child, staff, visitor, contractor or Governor of the school. This will include anything which could be seen as a sign of harassment of any member of the school community, such as any form of insulting social media post or any form of social media cyberbullying.