

Parent and Carer
Code of Conduct
May 2023



**ORCHARD ACADEMY
TRUST**

AIMS and PURPOSE of the Policy

Day to day access to a school is within the control of the Headteacher. Parents, carers and visitors are granted 'limited licence' to visit the grounds and buildings of the school.

The continued success of our school communities are based on a commitment to ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our children. We recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents and carers in order to achieve this, and endeavour to foster positive relationships which are based on trust and mutual respect.

The vast majority of the parents and carers are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school's work. If a parent or carer has concerns, we will always listen and seek to address them.

At Orchard Academy Trust we are committed to:

- Listening to parents carefully and respectfully, including allocating an appropriate length of time for pre-arranged meetings
- Responding appropriately to concerns raised
- Outlining any actions that may be required
- Updating parents and carers on progress and outcomes of the concern
- Listening and responding to updates from parents and carers

At Orchard Academy Trust we expect parents and carers to:

- Communicate their concern respectfully and accurately
- Listen to and consider the responses from the school
- Work in partnership with the school in order to reach a resolution, including supporting the School Behaviour Policy
- Allow time for the school to respond to concerns (3 – 5 working days)
- Acknowledge past support and intervention made by the school

Parents and carers should not make allegations against staff or the school or bring the school into disrepute on social media sites.
A failure to keep to the above standards is likely to limit the school's ability to respond effectively to concerns.

Parents and carers are not permitted to discipline a child who is not their own. They must seek support from a member of staff. Parents or carers who take matters into their own hands may be subject to safeguarding action being taken against them by the school or by the parent(s) of the child involved.

HOME SCHOOL AGREEMENT

When a family enrolls their child at the school, they agree to fulfil their responsibilities as set out in the Home School Agreement school website and/or prospectus – these all set out expectations of conduct for pupils, parents and carers and staff at the school. Parents and carers are asked to abide by this agreement at all times.

WHAT IS ABUSE?

We consider that aggressive, abusive, insulting or intimidating behaviour or language from a visitor presents a risk to staff or students and this constitutes abuse. This can be through face-to-face contact, on the telephone or written communication. Unacceptable behaviour is such that a member of staff / the school community perceives that they are being threatened and also includes any behaviour which undermines the reputation of the school or staff members including social media content.

ABUSE IS:

- Any kind of insult as an attempt to demean, embarrass or undermine;
- Any kind of threat;
- Raising of voice to be intimidating;
- Physical intimidation e.g. standing very close to or the use of aggressive hand gestures;
- Use of foul or abusive language.

TYPES OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

In order to support a peaceful and safe school environment the school cannot tolerate parents, carers and visitors exhibiting the following:

- Disruptive behaviour or disorderly conduct which interferes or threatens to interfere with the running of a meeting, classroom, office or any other area of the school grounds
- Use of loud/or offensive language including:
shouting,
swearing,
using profane language,
attempting to physically intimidate,
attempting to verbally intimidate – threatening staff,
use of aggressive or confrontational body language or displaying temper.
- Threatening to harm a member of school staff, visitor, fellow parent/carer or pupil regardless of whether or not the behaviour constitutes a criminal offence;
- Damaging or destroying school property;
- Sending abusive or threatening e-mails or voicemail/phone messages or other written communications;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or transgender comments;
- Defamation of the school or staff character on social networking platforms;
- The use of physical aggression towards another adult or child;
- Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of their actions towards your own children;
- Smoking and consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs on school premises;
- Dogs being brought on to school premises with the exception of assistance dogs;
- Breaching the school's security procedures.

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour. Please note that unacceptable behaviour may result in the police being informed of the incident if it is deemed to be in breach of any of the Protected Characteristics that are upheld by law.

STEPS TO BE TAKEN IN THE EVENT OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

STEP 1: INFORMAL WRITTEN WARNING

The headteacher (or member of SLT) will write to the person or persons perpetrating such an incident. It will be put to them that such behaviour is unacceptable and an assurance will be sought that such an incident will not be repeated. It will be stressed on this occasion that repetition of such an incident will result in further more serious action being taken. If the headteacher / Executive Headteacher has been subject to abuse this will be done by the Chair of Governors / Chair of Trust (or another appointed governor / trustee). If any such incident occurs near to or within school holidays, weekends or out of reasonable hours, the Chair of Governors / Trust (or another appointed governor / trustee) will write to the person or persons highlighting the incident and any relevant particulars. You may lose the privilege of meeting staff face-to-face without an appointment, or may need to be accompanied by a member of the SLT depending on the seriousness of the incident.

NB A member of staff has the right to refuse to communicate directly with a parent.

STEP 2: FORMAL WRITTEN WARNING

If a second incident occurs involving the same person or persons, the headteacher will write to the adult(s) informing them once again that this conduct is unacceptable. As with Step 1, if the headteacher / Executive Headteacher has been subject to abuse this will be done by the Chair of Governors / Chair of Trust or other appointed governor / trustee. NB: Any incidents of violent conduct would immediately proceed to step 4. At any stage, the school may report serious incidents of abusive and threatening behaviour to the police. The school has a statutory responsibility to report any racist or discriminatory incidents to the Local Authority. Any act of actual or threatened violence will be referred to the police immediately. You will lose the privilege of meeting staff face-to-face without an appointment, and any meetings will be accompanied by a member of the SLT.

STEP 3: EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL PREMISES

If such an incident recurs or if an initial incident is considered serious enough, the Chair of Governors (or other appointed governor) will enforce an exclusion from school premises.

STEP 4: REMOVAL BY POLICE

If, following a decision to exclude a person from the school premises, that person persists in entering school premises, they may be removed by the police as a trespasser under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 and charged with an offence under the Public Order Act 1986.

All parents, even if excluded from school premises, are not excluded from the rights to access to school and have a right to seek an appointment to speak to school staff about their child's educational progress.

Appendix 1

STEP 1 LETTER

This is an example of a warning letter to be sent to a parent, carer or visitor who has caused a disturbance at the school. The actual wording may need to be varied according to the circumstances.

Dear

I have received a report from (name of person) at Allington/ Barming Primary School about your unacceptable conduct on (date).

(Provide a brief summary of the incident and its effect on staff and pupils)

The trust will not tolerate such behaviour and the school requires assurance from you that such an incident will not be repeated. Please email the school office to confirm you understand.

(Optional depending on the severity of the incident) In future, if you wish to meet with a member of staff you will need to make an appointment via the school office; at no point may you approach a member of staff without an appointment.

Should you wish to discuss the content of this letter, please make an appointment to see me via the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 2

STEP 2 LETTER

This is an example of a warning letter to be sent to a parent, carer or visitor who has caused a disturbance at the school. The actual wording may need to be varied according to the circumstances.

Dear

I have received a report from (name of person) at Allington/ Barming Primary School about your unacceptable conduct on (date).

(Provide a brief summary of the incident and its effect on staff and pupils)

I note that you have had previous communication about an incident where you presented with unacceptable behaviour in the past and you reassured me (or member of the SLT) that such an incident would not be repeated. Therefore, this serves as your written warning as determined by our policy.

I must inform you that the governors / trustees will not tolerate conduct of this nature and will act to defend school staff and pupils.

(Optional) If you are unhappy about any aspect of your child's education then you can arrange to have a meeting with the Headteacher at a mutually convenient time.

This letter serves as a final written warning, in accordance with our Parent, Carer and Visitor Code of Conduct and Behaviour on School Premises Policy. I must inform you that any repetition of such behaviour will lead to an immediate withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises.

In future, if you wish to meet with a member of staff you will need to make an appointment via the school office; at no point may you approach a member of staff without an appointment.

Should you wish to discuss the content of this letter, please make an appointment to see me via the school office.

Yours sincerely

cc: Headteacher

Appendix 3

STEP 3 LETTER 1

This is an example of an initial ban letter to be sent to a parent, carer or visitor who has caused a disturbance at the school. The actual wording may need to be varied according to the circumstances. At this stage, the ban takes effect immediately, but as the letter indicates, the parent must be enabled to make representations. A period of a week is recommended to allow for this, at the end of which the Chair of Governors should consider any representations made, then make a decision to either confirm the ban or discontinue it.

Dear

I have received a report from the headteacher of Allington/ Barming Primary School about your unacceptable conduct on (date). (Provide a brief summary of the incident and its effect on staff and pupils)

I note that you have had two previous communications about your conduct in the past.

I must inform you that the governors / trustees will not tolerate conduct of this nature and will act to defend school staff and pupils. On the advice of the Headteacher, I am therefore instructing you that until I have reviewed this incident, you are not to enter 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 currently liable to a fine of £500.

Special arrangements can be made for you to meet with the headteacher, 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 (insert days) school days in the first instance. If you wish to appeal this decision, you have the opportunity to write to me with any comments or observations of your own in relation to the report that I have received from the headteacher. These comments may be to challenge or explain the facts of the incident, to express regret and give assurances about your future good conduct.

If you do wish to appeal, please send me any written comments you wish to make by (date 10 school days from date of letter) so that I can take a further look into this case and make a decision on any appeal. If, on receipt of 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.

Yours sincerely

cc: Headteacher and Chair of Governors

Appendix 4

STEP 3 LETTER 2

This is an example of a letter to state that a ban is being upheld. The actual wording may need to be varied according to the circumstances.

Dear

On (date) I wrote to inform you that on the advice of the headteacher I had withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of Allington/ Barming Primary School. To enable me 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 (date). I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated (date), the contents of which I have carefully considered.

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the headteacher'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 premises of the school 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 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 a fine of up to £500.

Even though we have taken this decision, the headteacher and staff at Allington/ Barming Primary School remain committed to the education of your child(ren), who must continue to attend school as normal (insert for primary age children) under the arrangements set out in my previous letter.

This decision will be reviewed again (insert review date which should be a reasonable period and no longer than 6 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 on to the school site. You can make your complaint by writing to the Clerk to the Governors, c/o 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 headteacher to ensure that your complaint that (insert details) is considered under the appropriate stage of the Trust complaints procedure. The school will contact you about this in due course.

Yours sincerely

cc: Headteacher and Chair of Governors



Orchard Academy Trust

Guidance for staff when dealing with abusive parents / carers /visitors

Procedures

Dealing with abuse – In person

Advice: Always have someone with you if you feel there may be an issue. Remain calm.

If you feel threatened or if you are intimidated say:

“If you continue to speak to me in this manner, I will stop the meeting and you will be required to leave the school site.”

If the warning is not heeded:

“I am unable to continue with this meeting at this time. I am requesting that you leave the premises.”

Keep a record of what happened and what was said; inform a member of the SLT / Headteacher.

Dealing with abuse – On the phone

Remain calm

If you feel threatened or if you are intimidated say:

“If you continue to speak to me in this manner, I will finish the call.”

If the warning is not heeded:

“I am unable to continue with this call at this time. I am now putting the phone down.”

Keep a record of what was said; inform a member of the SLT / Headteacher.

Dealing with abuse – By email or in a letter

Remain calm

If you feel threatened or if you are intimidated:

Copy the email or letter and pass it to a member of the SLT / Headteacher

The SLT / Headteacher to send a response within 48 hours by email or letter.

“Thank you for your letter / email. Due to the nature of the letter / email the matter has been referred to me / a.n.other..... who will be responding.”

Support for the member of staff

Any support should be provided immediately. Any support provided should be recorded.

The member of staff should be provided with the details of the Trust’s free counselling service.

The member of staff should be supported to contact the police, if this is deemed necessary, to record the abuse and to get a crime reference number.

Further follow up meetings must be held with the member of staff as continuing support.