

Eardisley CE Primary School



Policy on Abusive/Aggressive Behaviour towards staff or parents by other parents/members of the public

Agreed: September 2015

(Note that throughout this document, the word 'staff' also applies, where appropriate, to any person, including volunteers and employees of other organisations, authorised by the school to carry out work on its behalf)**

This document explains the policy and procedures to be used in the case of aggressive or abusive behaviour shown towards staff **whether by parents or by any member of the wider public.**

A. INTRODUCTION – Our commitments to good relationships with parents

- A1. Our school encourages close links with its parents/carers and with other members and groups in the local community. We do so in the belief that the education and well-being of pupils benefit greatly when such relationships are positive and responsive.
- A2. Accordingly, we encourage parents/carers to take part in some of the activities (for example class assemblies) that their children are involved in each term.
- A3. We also provide daily opportunities
- every morning, when the teachers are available to address any concerns;
 - at the end of afternoon school, for parents to discuss with the class teacher any concerns they may have about their children's work or welfare.

Many parents take up such opportunities, and the vast majority of the issues raised are easily dealt with quickly in an informal way.

- A4. However, we recognise that some issues raised may be more difficult to resolve and require meetings involving other staff, including perhaps the head teacher and sometimes a local authority adviser.
- A5. Occasionally, in the case of more complex or contentious matters, parents may wish to use the formal stages of the school's **complaints procedure**. Ultimately, that procedure can conclude with an appeal to a specially convened panel of governors. [A full copy of the school's complaints procedure is available for inspection on the school website]
- A6. It is in this context of our close links with parents, including the invitation for parents to raise their concerns with us in a timely and reasonable manner, that we set out below our policy and procedures to be used in those unusual situations in which a tiny minority of parents (or members of the public) behave aggressively or abusively towards staff and/or other parents.

B. STATEMENT OF INTENT – Abusive or aggressive behaviour is always unacceptable. Eardisley CE Primary School operates Zero Tolerance towards this.

- B1. The vast majority of our parents, carers and others visiting the school are keen to work with us. Generally, they are supportive, appreciative and helpful to the school, and happy to use the recognised procedures to deal reasonably with any individual concerns they may have.
- B2. However, some parents – always a tiny minority - may for a while feel so negative about the school or so impatient about an individual matter that it can result in an outburst of physically aggressive and/or verbally abusive behaviour towards a member or members of school staff and/or other parents.
- B3. In these difficult situations, the school expects its staff to behave professionally and attempt in a suitably restrained manner to defuse the situation where possible, seeking to involve other colleagues as appropriate.
- B4. However, all staff are entitled to expect to be able to work without fear of violence or abuse, with the right, in more extreme situations, to take appropriate action(s) in self-defence. All parents are entitled to feel safe without the fear of violence or abuse when they visit the school.
- B5. Accordingly, the school requires parents and other visitors to behave at all times in a reasonable way, including when raising any concerns they may have This policy outlines **(in the following section C**

below) the types of behaviour that will be regarded as unacceptable, and also describes **(in section D below)** the steps that will be taken in response to such behaviour.

C. TYPES OF BEHAVIOUR REGARDED AS UNACCEPTABLE AND INTOLERABLE

- C1. The following list is not exhaustive but illustrates the types of behaviour that the school will always regard as unacceptable.
- Shouting at school staff, or other parents, whether in their presence or over the telephone.
 - Physically intimidating a member of staff and/or parent – for example, by standing very close to him/her.
 - Using aggressive hand gestures
 - Verbally threatening school staff or other parents
 - Shaking or holding a fist towards another person
 - Writing or saying abusive comments about a member of staff, or another parent, such as that he/she is an idiot
 - Racist or sexist comments, and offensive remarks about disability, personal appearance or private life
 - Any form of harassment whether related to race, sex, and disability or any other personal characteristic
 - Swearing at a member of school staff or another parent
 - Pushing
 - Hitting, including slapping, punching or kicking
 - Spitting
 - Breaking the school's security procedures (e.g. by entering the school without invitation or without checking first at the Reception office)
 - Publishing any abusive or negative comments about the school or staff or other parents on websites or in public places or spaces.
- C2. All cases of serious unacceptable behaviour will be reported to Herefordshire LA and, if appropriate (as in the case of violence or serious or persistent aggression), to the Police.

D. PROCEDURES

- D1. When a parent or member of the public behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school staff and/or other parents, the head teacher or appropriate senior member of staff will decide the action to be taken, depending on a judgement of how serious the incident has been. **(The member of staff will report the incident to the head teacher or appropriate senior member as soon as it is possible to do so, and the school will keep a record of all such incidents – the appended Incident Reporting Form is provided for that purpose.)**
- D2. Often, it may be sufficient for the head teacher and/or an appropriate senior member of staff to meet the parent, and to seek to resolve the underlying issue that may have triggered the behaviour. The parent may be guided to make use of the school's procedures for resolving concerns through discussion and mediation, including by using the most formal stages of **the school's complaints procedure.**
- D3. The action the school proposes to take will be explained to the parent who will be asked to sign a summary of any actions that may have been agreed jointly. The school will also warn the parent about the possible consequences if aggressive or abusive behaviour occurs again

D4. In situations where normal procedures have been exhausted, but the parent continues to behave aggressively towards staff and/or parents, or where there has been an extreme act of violence, a parent or carer may be reported to the police and/or banned by the head teacher from the school premises for a defined period of time.

D5. When a ban is to be imposed on a parent, the following steps would be taken:

1. The parent will be warned, in writing, that s/he is banned from the premises, subject to review, and told what will happen if the ban is breached. In some circumstances, **the County Solicitor might be asked to consider appropriate legal action.**
2. Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to Herefordshire LA and the Police, will be included in the written warning.
3. The Chair of Governors will be informed of the ban.
4. If necessary, the parent will be told of any stipulations they must follow (such as not going beyond the school gate) if they wish to continue to accompany their children to school at the start of the day, and collect them later at the end of the day. (Their children, of course, will continue to be welcomed, educated and cared for by the school in the normal way).

E. CONCLUSION

E1. Pupils learn best when there is a positive partnership between home and school. Whilst every effort will be made to work with their parents, this will be possible only where parents behave in an acceptable way.

E2. Unfortunately, where a parent's behaviour is either unacceptable or seriously disruptive, it will not be possible to continue working with him/her. As a final resort, legal action may be taken against them.

E3. The school will take action whenever behaviour is unacceptable or seriously disruptive and when it breaches our home-school code of conduct or the school's health and safety rules.

Eardisley CE Primary School
AGGRESSIVE OR ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR BY PARENTS/MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Incident Reporting Form

Name of Parent acting aggressively:

Name of staff member/student/parent /other
to whom aggressive behaviour shown:

Nature of Incident (Please tick or state)

- Verbal abuse
- Intimidating behaviour
- Refusal to co-operate
- Physical assault
- Racist or sexist comment
- Harassment
- Incitement of others
- Breaching security
- Other

Brief description of the incident

Action Taken (Please continue overleaf if necessary)

Signed **Date**