

Managing Parent/Carer Contact Policy



Name of Policy/Procedure

Managing Parent/Carer Contact Policy

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GB committee responsible for the policy/procedure Safeguarding & ALN

Staff member responsible for writing, reviewing and updating the policy/procedure AHS policy author – Head

Person responsible for monitoring implementation of the policy/procedure

Monitor – Office Manager

Our Parent/Carer Contact Policy

1 Policy statement

- 1.1 As a governing body we do our best to make our school accessible to all and will make reasonable adjustments as necessary.
- 1.2 If you have a concern with our school, in the first instance you should contact school staff directly to discuss your concern. We aim to resolve concerns through an informal discussion but if we cannot resolve the concern informally, we refer you to our complaints procedure.
- 1.3 This policy sets out how contact with parents/carers may be managed in the very small number of cases where the actions or behaviour of a parent/carers challenges our school's ability to deliver an effective education service.
- 1.4 The core aims of the policy are to ensure equity and fairness, improve efficiency and manage risks to the health and safety of school staff and pupils.
- 1.5 All parents/carers will be treated with fairness and respect even if as a Governing Body we perceive actions or behaviour to be challenging. We will always separate the way we may need to manage inappropriate contact with a parent/carers from the way we deal with their regular contact with school.

2 Aggressive, abusive or offensive behaviour

- 2.1 Our school staff have the right to work in an environment free from aggressive, abusive or offensive language or behaviour at all times.
- 2.2 As a governing body we consider such behaviour to include:
- swearing or abusive language
 - over-bearing behaviour; refusing to give staff an opportunity to speak
 - or repeated derogatory comments
 - inappropriate sexual or gender-based remarks
 - inappropriate cultural, racial, political or religious references
 - rudeness or shouting
 - threatening behaviour
 - emotional abuse or manipulative behaviour

2.3 Threats of physical violence or harassment to any person are unacceptable and will be reported to the police.

3 Unreasonable demands and persistence

3.1 As a governing body we are committed to providing a proportionate amount of time and resources to any parent/carer who has contact with a school. Unreasonable demands and persistence may prevent school staff from fulfilling this commitment.

3.2 We consider such behaviour to include:

- excessive telephone calls, emails or letters
- sending duplicate correspondence
- persistent refusal to accept a decision or explanation
- continuing to contact schools after a decision, about the same or similar matters, without presenting new or relevant information
- demanding responses within an unreasonable time scale or information not relevant
- refusing to cooperate with the school's classroom rules and procedures
- raising matters that are immaterial to a request or complaint or repeatedly changing the substance of a request or complaint
- repeatedly contacting or insisting to speak to a member of staff at school who is not directly dealing with a request or complaint

4 Terminating a telephone call

4.1 School staff may terminate a call if subjected to the behaviours outlined in sections 2 and 3. Before taking this action, the parent/carer will be warned once that their conduct is of concern, to allow them the opportunity to moderate their behaviour. If the behaviour persists, no further warnings will be given and the call will be terminated.

4.2 School staff who terminate a call will report it to the Head Teacher. Following a terminated call if the parent/carer makes further contact and the behaviour has not changed, the Head Teacher may restrict telephone contact for one day. This decision will be recorded and communicated at the earliest opportunity to our school staff who take frontline calls.

4.3 In the event that the parent/carer does not modify their behaviour, further consideration will be given to formally managing contact between the parent/carer and our school.

5 Considering when to manage contact

5.1 In the very small number of cases where the actions or behaviour of a parent/carer challenges our school's ability to deliver a safe and effective service to all, the Head Teacher will consider whether a warning should be given and if it is necessary to provide a copy of this policy. If the behaviour is sufficiently serious, or a warning has already been given, a decision may be taken to exercise statutory powers to restrict the parent/carer from school premises.

5.2 During the process of considering implementation of a restriction the Head Teacher will be mindful that independent advocacy could be helpful for the parent/carer in terms of avoiding implementation of this policy. If that appears to be the case, the headteacher will advise the parent/carer of this and provide appropriate help and advice to that end.

6 Formal decision to manage contact

6.1 The Governing Body may through this policy (amongst other considerations) manage the contact by:

- limiting contact to a particular form for example, the parent/carer may be limited to contacting school by email or letter only
- limiting telephone calls to specific days and/or times
- arranging for a single point of contact for all future correspondence
- an agreed behaviour contract, setting out what is expected of the parent/carer, to be signed by the parent/carer
- advising the parent/carer that their correspondence will be read to ensure no new issues are raised, but will then be filed or destroyed without acknowledgement
- Wherever possible, we will endeavour to ensure that at least one line of contact will remain available.

6.2 Decisions on how to formally manage contact are made by the Head Teacher on a case by case basis. For example, where:

- school staff are struggling to be heard, or feel upset, threatened, bullied or belittled by the contacts
- the contact is sexist, racist, culturally inappropriate etc.
- a parent/carer demands disproportionate time is spent relative to the circumstances of the issue, or makes unreasonable demands for action by the school
- there is repetitive contact that is not merited in the circumstances of the case
- there are disproportionate threats of school staff, legal action etc
- the parent/carer is highly needy, emotionally demanding, or appears to be becoming dependent on certain school staff
- there are repeated challenges to decisions

6.4 The Head Teacher will notify the parent/carer of a decision to manage their contact, the reasons why this decision has been taken, how long any restriction will be in place, when it will be reviewed and the right to appeal the decision. A copy of this policy will be enclosed with the decision.

7 Appealing a decision

7.1 The parent/carer can appeal the headteacher's decision to manage contact within 20 working days of receiving, it by writing to the Clerk to Governors c/o the school who will arrange for the matter to be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints procedure.