



# Leominster Primary School

## Unacceptable Behaviour Towards Staff In School Policy

### 1. Statement of principles

At Leominster Primary School, we value the positive relationships forged with parents, carers and visitors to the school. We encourage close links with parents, carers and the community and believe that our pupils benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one. We strive to make our school a place where as adults, we model for our pupils the behaviour we teach and expect. We place a high importance on good manners, positive communication and mutual respect for all with whom we work, and celebrate differences in a positive manner.

Almost all of our parents, carers and visitors are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. However, on very rare occasions when a negative attitude towards the school is expressed, this can sometimes manifest itself in aggression, verbal and/or physical abuse towards members of the school community. This can be in written communication, including social media, on the telephone, in face-to-face incidents or press posts.

All members of the school community have the right to work, or be in school without fear of violence, abuse or intimidation from parents, carers, visitors or any other members of the public. The Governing Body has a requirement to protect staff and pupils from such aggression.

This policy applies to all members of the public, including pupils, parents, carers, contractors, and all those who deal with school based staff. It applies to expectations of behaviour between parents and between all members of the school community.

Our policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

### 2. Unacceptable Behaviour

We recognise that there may be times when you contact our school that you may have reason to feel aggrieved, upset or distressed.

We do not view assertive behaviour (for example, putting forward your case in a persuasive manner) as unacceptable.

However, we will manage behaviour, under this policy that is aggressive, rude or abusive, or which places unreasonable demands on our staff.

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

- raising voice at members of the school staff, parents or children, in such a way as to be intimidating, either in person or over the telephone
- physical intimidation e.g. standing very close to her/him or using of aggressive hand gestures
- threatening behaviour or any kind of insult, as an attempt to demean, embarrass or undermine, which can be through mail, email, social media or press content;
- use of foul or abusive language;
- any kind of physical abuse eg pushing, hitting, slapping, punching, spitting, kicking;
- any form of harassment whether related to race, sex, disability or any other personal characteristics
- allegations which turn out to be vexatious or malicious
- breaching the school's security procedures eg. entering the school without invitation or without checking first at the Reception office

This is not an exhaustive list, but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour. It applies to unacceptable behaviour towards staff members, towards children and towards other parents / carers.

### **3. The Legal Framework**

- Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 makes it an offence for any person to be on school premises to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance and allows for the removal and prosecution of any person believed to have committed an offence.
- A parent of a child attending a school normally has implied permission to be on school premises at certain times and for certain purposes, but if the parent's behaviour is unreasonable, this permission may be withdrawn.
- This also applies to all other individuals invited into the school for other reasons
- Parents, carers or other visitors exhibiting unacceptable behaviour could have a ban which prevents access to the school premises imposed on them.
- Should they ignore this ban, they would then become a trespasser on the school site.

- The Governing Body, in conjunction with the Headteacher(s) and Herefordshire County Council, 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.

**Unacceptable behaviour by parents, carers or visitors may result in the Local Authority and the police being informed.**

#### **4. School's Approach To Dealing With Incidents**

In any of these situations, we expect members of staff to behave professionally, attempting to defuse the situation where possible and seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues. Staff who face these situations have licence to end any conversation (face to face or on the telephone) and refer the incident to a senior member of staff who will take appropriate action.

##### **4.1 Risk Assessment:**

If a parent/carer/visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the Headteacher(s) or appropriate senior member of staff will assess the level of risk, before making a decision about the level of response. In all cases the response will be reasonable and proportionate. The following questions will be considered when risk assessing the situation:

- What form did the abuse take?
- What evidence is there?
- What do witnesses say happened?
- Are there previous incidents to take into consideration?
- Do members of staff/students feel intimidated by the parent's behaviour?
- Is there any evidence of provocation?
- How high is the assessed risk that this will be repeated or there will be retaliation at the school's action? (low, medium, high).

#### **5. The School's Response**

Following the completion of the risk assessment, the Head Teacher(s) will decide the level of action to be taken. The school will always seek advice from the Local Authority and agree on the most appropriate course of action. Actions may include the following:

##### **5.1 Option 1 - Clarify to the parent, carer or visitor what is considered unacceptable behaviour by the school through a meeting**

The Headteacher(s) / senior leader may seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. This may include a meeting to clarify the school's expectations and agreeing strategies to manage future incidents.

This could be helpful where a planned and structured meeting has either not been held before or has previously not been productive.

The safety and well-being of those attending such a meeting will be carefully considered. Members of school staff will always 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 anyone.

The main points of discussion and any agreed actions will be noted, and a follow-up letter or email sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions.

Some parents / carers / visitors may covertly record meetings and then seek to use the information obtained to support their case, and therefore ***we will state explicitly at the beginning of any meeting that information obtained without permission will not be permissible.***

## **5.2 Option 2 – Impose conditions on the parent, carer or visitor's contact with the school and its members of staff**

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Parents and carers of enrolled pupils have an 'implied licence' to come onto school premises at certain stated times. It is for schools to define and set out the extent of such access. Parents / carers exceeding this would be trespassing. Depending on the type, level or frequency of the unacceptable behaviour, the school may consider imposing conditions on the parent/carer's contact with the school. These conditions may include (but are not exclusively):

- being accompanied to any planned meeting with an individual member of school staff by a member of the senior leadership team
- restricting contact by telephone to named members of the senior leadership team
- restricting written communications to named members of the senior leadership team
- restricting attendance at school events to those where the parent will be accompanied by a member of the schools' senior leadership team
- any other restriction as deemed reasonable and proportionate by the Head Teacher(s.)

In this case the parent/carer will be informed by letter from the Head Teacher(s) the details of the conditions that are being imposed. The

parent/carer will then be given 10 working days from the date of that letter to make representations in writing about the conditions to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors will then decide whether to confirm or remove the conditions. This would be communicated to the parent/carer in writing within 10 working days of the date of the parent's letter.

### **5.3 Option 3 - Imposing a Ban**

Where other procedures have been exhausted and aggression or intimidation continues OR where there is an extreme act of violence then the school may consider banning the individual from school premises. This will also include banning a parent from accessing school staff by written communication or telephone.

In these circumstances, the individual will be advised in writing by the Head Teacher(s) that a provisional ban is being imposed. The parent, carer or visitor will then be given 10 working days from the date of that letter to make representations about the ban in writing to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors will then decide whether to confirm or remove the ban. This would be communicated to the parent in writing within 10 working days of the receipt of their letter.

If the Chair's decision is to confirm the ban, parents/carers in these circumstances will be offered an annual meeting about their child's progress, usually with a member of senior staff.

A decision to impose a ban will be reviewed by the Governing Body after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The parent/carer will be invited to make written representation to the governors; this and the evidence from the Head Teacher/s will be considered at a meeting of the full Governing Body. Governors may decide to remove the ban, extend the ban or impose conditions on parent/carer's access to the school. The decision of the review will be communicated to the parent by the clerk to the governors within 10 days of the date of the meeting.

In deciding whether to remove or extend the ban or impose conditions, governors will give consideration to the extent of the parent/carer's compliance with the ban, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from him/her and any evidence of the parent's / carers co-operation with the school in other respects.

## **6. Removal from school**

Parents/carers/visitors who have been banned from the school premises and continue to cause a nuisance will be deemed to have committed a section 547 offence. They will be considered as trespassers. In these circumstances the offender may be removed from school. This may be carried out by a police officer or authorised person

## **7. Recording of Incidents**

Throughout this process thorough record keeping is critical (Appendix 1) All incident reports, witness statements will be kept by the Headteacher(s) in a file.

## **8. Complaints Policy**

Any parental complaint that arises from incidents of abusive behaviour will be dealt with under the school's complaints policy.

## **9. Legal Action**

In certain circumstances, the school may refer details of parent/carers/visitor's behaviour to the legal department at the Local Authority. Where necessary, the Local Authority will issue a warning letter on the school's behalf. Depending on the incident, more robust action will be actioned if required.

## **10. Links with other policies**

This policy links with the Schools' Complaints Policy and Procedure, which also outlines unreasonable requests and communication, persistent and duplicate complaints.

Internal staff conflict is dealt with by the use of the Grievance and Disciplinary policies.

Policy reviewed – April 2024  
Next Review date – April 2026

Ratified by Governors on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024

## Appendix 1

### UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR BY PARENT/CARER/VISITOR INCIDENT RECORDING FORM

Date and time of incident
Incident reported by
Brief outline of incident <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name of person causing incident</li><li>• Status (parent/visitor etc.)</li><li>• Description of incident</li> <li>• Location</li><li>• Any injuries/harm</li></ul>
Any possible contributory factors
Details of any witnesses
Witness statements attached? Y/N
Is the perpetrator known to have been involved in any previous incidents? (if yes, give details)
Were measures in place to try to prevent an incident of this type occurring?  Could these be improved?  If no measures were in place, could action be taken now?
Name and contact details of police officer(s) if involved.

Incident number/crime reference number
Any other relevant information
Initial Action / outcome
Subsequent actions
Form completed by (name & role)
Date completed