



South East Cornwall Multi Academy Regional Trust

Parent & Visitor Behaviour Policy

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Introduction

The Trust Board of SMART encourages close links with parents and the community. It believes that students benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one. The vast majority of parents, carers and others visiting and contacting school are keen to work with us and are supportive. However, on the rare occasions when a negative attitude towards the school is expressed, this can result in aggression, verbal or physical abuse towards members of school staff or the wider school community.

SMART expects and requires its members of staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to defuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues. However, all members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse, and the right, in an extreme case, of appropriate self-defence. We expect parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards members of school staff. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

This policy applies to parents/carers, visitors, contractors and members of the public who have contact with the school. The aim of this policy is to reinforce that all members of the school community including parents, visitors and contractors treat each other with respect.

There is an expectation that the following will not be tolerated and could result in withdrawal of permission to be on school premises:

- adults set a good example to children and young people at all times, showing them how to get along with all members of the school and the wider community
- no members of staff, parents/carers, visitors, contractors or children are the victims of abusive behaviour or open to threats from other adults on the school premises
- Physical attacks and threatening behaviour, abusive or insulting language verbal or written, to staff, governors, parents/carers, children and other users of the school premises will not be tolerated and will result in withdrawal of permission to be on school premises

Any parent/carer or visitor who is asked to leave the school premises will have the right to appeal the decision by writing to the Chair of the Local Governing Committee.

Incidents of rudeness will be recorded in a log by a senior member of school staff.

Persons Causing Nuisance / Disturbance on School Premises.

This is covered by Section 547 of the Education Act 1996.

School premises are private property and parents/carers have been granted permission from the school to be on school premises.

However, in case of abuse or threats to staff, pupils, other parents /carers or visitors, school may ban parents/carers from entering school.

It is also an offence under section 547 of the Education Act 1996 for any person (including a parent/carer) to cause a nuisance or disturbance on school premises. The school may call the police to assist in removing the person concerned. In these circumstances, schools are not responsible for organising arrangements for collecting or bringing children into school and parents/carers will need to provide alternative arrangements.

Guidelines

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated towards any member of the school community: This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour:

- Shouting, either in person or over the telephone
- Inappropriate posting on social networking sites which could bring the school into disrepute or be seen as bullying
- Speaking in an aggressive / threatening tone
- Physically intimidating, e.g. standing very close
- The use of aggressive hand gestures / exaggerated movements
- Physical threats
- Shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- Swearing
- Pushing
- Hitting e.g. slapping, punching or kicking
- Spitting
- Racist or sexist comments including sexual innuendo

Procedures

A parent/carer or a visitor who becomes aggressive in person

Aggressive or abusive behaviour is clearly unacceptable; however, an attempt to understand the issue from the perspective of the person who is upset or frustrated may help in trying to diffuse a potentially escalating situation. If attempts to diffuse the situation or requests for the individual to modify their behaviour fail, the parent/carer or visitor should be advised that their complaint will be addressed but that their behaviour must be modified during any future contact with the school.

Actions:

- Acknowledge the parent/carer or member of the public's position
- Reassure them that their issue will be addressed
- Explain what action the school is going to take
- Advise them their behaviour is unacceptable and must stop
- Remain calm and in control of the situation

A parent / carer who becomes aggressive over the telephone

If a parent/carers or member of the public is behaving in an aggressive or abusive manner on the telephone and fails to modify their behaviour when requested, they will be warned politely that the telephone call will be ended if the behaviour continues.

If a member of staff feels threatened or uncomfortable when involved in a one-to-one interview or telephone conversation with a parent/carers/visitor/member of the public then they have the right to decide to advise the customer that their behaviour is unacceptable and end the call if that behaviour continues. No member of staff will be disciplined for doing so, but you should report the matter to your line manager as soon as possible. Where a parent/carers, visitor or contractor has been threatening and/or violent towards an employee, SMART will support that employee in reporting the matter to the Police if they wish to do so.

Written correspondence

When contact is in writing complainants may need to be advised that:

- Their language is considered offensive, unnecessary and unhelpful
- They must refrain from using such language
- There will be no further exchange of correspondence on the matter if they persist with this behaviour
- Be referred to the SMART Complaints Policy

They may also be informed that future contact may require to be channelled through a third party.

Inappropriate use of Social Networking Sites

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people and there are many benefits to them. However, social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, headteachers, school staff, and in some cases, other parents/carers/pupils. SMART considers the use of social media websites being used in this way as unacceptable and not in the best interests of the children or the whole school community. Any concerns parents/carers may have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, Senior Leader, the Headteacher or the Chair of the Local Governing Committee, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned. In the event that any pupil or parent/carers of a child/ren being educated within a SMART school is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on social network sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. All social network sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted on the site and they provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity which breaches this. SMART will also expect that any parent/carers or pupil removes such comments immediately. In serious cases the SMART will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking

and other sites. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly is the issue of cyber bullying and the use by one child or a parent/carer to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social network entry. SMART will take and deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying.

Unacceptable behaviour may result in the Police being informed.

SMART reserves the right to take any necessary actions to ensure that members of the school community are not subjected to abuse.

All staff and governors agree that any parent/carer/visitor found to be using inappropriate behaviour towards other adults or children should be dealt with using the following steps:

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| A parent/ carer/ visitor approaches another child in an unwelcome manner | The adult will be spoken to immediately and the issue investigated by a school leader. This will be reported to the Headteacher and recorded. The adult will receive a warning letter |
| A parent /carer/visitor approaches another parent/carer | The receiving parent/carer should report this to a member of staff or a school leader. The offending parent/carer will be spoken to as soon as possible after the incident and reminded that we have a zero tolerance of inappropriate behaviour. A letter will be given to the parent/carer. This warns a parent/carer that if it recurs they could be banned from the school site under section 547 of the Education Act 1996 |
| A parent/carer/ visitor approaches a member of staff | This should be reported immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. This will be investigated as soon as possible and the member of staff will be informed of the action taken. The parent/carer/adult will be spoken to and given a warning letter. This warns a parent/carer that if it recurs they could be banned from the school site under section 547 of the Education Act 1996 |
| Recurring inappropriate behaviour | If a parent/carer continues to use inappropriate behaviour, they will be referred to the Parent and Visitor Behaviour Policy. This indicates how antisocial behaviour, when not corrected, can lead to interviews with the HT and Governors. This can then lead to a ban from the school site under section 547 of the Education Act 1996 |

Ongoing situations

Where a complainant repeatedly phones, visits the office, sends irrelevant documentation and/ or repeatedly raises the same issues, the following actions may be taken:

- Only take telephone calls from the parent/carer or member of the public at set times on set days or arrange for one person to be the nominated contact from that individual in future.
- Insist the parent/carer or member of the public makes an appointment to see a specific member of school staff where possible before visiting the school
- Limit access to require the parent/carer or member of the public to contact the school in writing only
- Take any other action considered appropriate within the scope of this policy