



Acceptable behaviour policy for parents, carers and visitors

At Testbourne Community School, we value the relationships we build with parents, carers and visitors in our school community, whose support we are reliant upon in ensuring that we can help all children achieve well and enjoy success in all areas of their school life. Almost all parents, carers and visitors conduct themselves in a professional, courteous and supportive manner. We like to feel that you, as parents and carers, are part of our community and that you play an important and complimentary role in your child's education.

Sadly, occasions where members of staff have been subjected to unacceptable behaviour from parents, carers or visitors are increasing in number. Unacceptable behaviour can take many forms and can occur during in-person contact, telephone contact or in written communication (including email and social media). Examples of such behaviour include:

- shouting
- intimidating or belittling language
- intimidating or belittling physical behaviour such as standing in a member of staff's personal space, using differences in body size to intimidate or refusing to leave a location in the school
- threatening language or physical behaviour
- abusive language or behaviour (e.g. swearing, name calling)
- unwanted physical contact
- actions, words or other behaviours that seek to undermine, or disempower a member of staff
- actions or words that seek to question the integrity of a member of staff
- excessive or argumentative communication in person, on the telephone or in writing
- any other behaviour likely to cause distress
- any other behaviour designed to disempower the member of staff
- libellous or inflammatory comments on social media
- refusal to leave the premises or a location within the premises

The governing body has a responsibility to ensure that all staff are protected from unacceptable behaviour from parents, carers or visitors to the school. To help us with this, we ask that parents, carers and visitors follow our three non-negotiables with regards to positive interactions with our staff.

Non-negotiables

1. **Please come onto school property for one of the following reasons only:**
 - For a **pre-arranged** appointment with a staff member.
 - To attend an official school event.
 - To collect or drop off a child for a reason which requires the parent/carer to escort their child to/from reception (e.g. safeguarding/SEND/illness).
 - To drop off any belongings which your child may need for the school day.
 - To drop off something for a member of staff.
 - To collect items such as confiscations, work or lost items.



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- To perform contracted duties or works.

2. Please respect our school behaviour policies.

These are in place for the safety and wellbeing of our whole school community and will be consistently applied by all members of staff.

- Please support the school in addressing the behaviour of your children.
- Please be mindful of your own behaviours on the school site:
 - i. No smoking or vaping on the school site.
 - ii. No use of illegal substances.
 - iii. Please be mindful of language and behaviour and ensure that both are suitable for children.

3. Please communicate respectfully and courteously with members of staff.

You can find out more details and further guidelines for each of these points in the next section.

Further guidance:

1. Please come onto school property for one of the following reasons only

- Schools are private property; there is no automatic right to enter.
- Parents and carers have an 'implied license' to come on to school premises at certain times for the reasons listed above and are very welcome to do so unless their reason to do so, or their presence, negatively impacts our school community or individual members of staff, students or other parents or carers.
- Persons on the school site for reasons other than those listed above are trespassing.
- Parents and carers should not come onto the school site demanding to see a member of staff with whom they do not have an arranged appointment. Staff cannot be seen without prior notice. Staff have many prior commitments including pre-arranged meetings with parents, external agency meetings, staff meetings, training and teaching, and cannot see people without a prior appointment. They will also likely not have the information to hand that they may need to help you. The only exception to this is where **school staff** assess that there is a **serious** safeguarding concern where a child may be at **immediate** risk of harm. School staff will make this assessment. The best way to ensure that you are not inconvenienced is to make an appointment.
- If parents or carers are late for an arranged appointment, the meeting may have to be postponed or adjourned to ensure that the full time is available for any necessary discussion. Staff are constrained by the arrangements in their timetables and calendars and cannot allow meetings to extend past the originally planned end time.
- If a parent or carer refuses to leave the site when asked to do so, we will inform the police and staff will no longer engage with them.

2. Please respect our school behaviour policies

- Students facing consequences for poor behaviour often take the opportunity to tell their parents or carers their version of events before a member of staff has



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opportunity to share the facts of the situation. In such circumstances, please exercise caution and remember that until you have spoken to a member of school staff, you are in possession of only one version of events.

- Please remember that the views of a professional adult are more likely to be correct than the version of events conveyed by a teenager whose motivation to be economical with the truth is to escape consequence.
- Dealing with behaviour issues causes workload and stress for staff. This is why they do not fabricate behaviours and seek only to deal with what has happened.
- Members of staff who strictly and correctly uphold our policies will have the full support of leaders and the governing body. If you believe, however, that a policy has not been correctly followed, you can raise this with the member of staff involved or their Head of Department or Head of Year. If concerns are not resolved to your satisfaction at this stage, you are entitled to follow the school's complaints policy which can be found on our website.

3. Please communicate respectfully and courteously with members of staff.

- Please remember that staff should not be approached when they are not at work. Parents should always contact staff whilst in school, using the official channels. Staff have been instructed not to comment on complaints or other inquiries that are presented out of school.
- Please remember that all staff share your ambition for your child to be successful in school.
- Every member of staff has a right to conduct their duties without the concern that they will be treated disrespectfully by parents or carers.
- When communicating with staff, even if you disagree with their decisions or actions, please avoid shouting, swearing or abusive, threatening, inflammatory or insulting language. In these situations, staff will behave as professionally as possible, will attempt to diffuse the situation where possible and may seek the involvement, as appropriate of other colleagues. Staff who face situations, either in person or on the telephone, have a licence to end the conversation. They will then refer the incident to their SLT line manager or the Headteacher, who will take appropriate action which may include invoking the provisions of this policy.
- Complaints or concerns should be addressed to the person who was most involved with the incident, unless it is of a very personal nature to do with that staff member, in which case it should be addressed to their curriculum leader or immediate line manager. In line with the complaints policy, the Headteacher should not be involved immediately. The Headteacher should only become involved when the correct procedure has been followed, to allow a suitably neutral review of your concern if this is necessary. It is important that only the most serious concerns are escalated to the Headteacher to maintain capacity and objectivity, and only when the appropriate members of staff have been contacted first. Correspondence to which the Headteacher is copied in will not usually be responded to by the Headteacher. Initial inquiries that come to the Headteacher will usually be delegated to the person in the organisation that is best placed to resolve the issue. To minimise unnecessary email traffic, the Headteacher will not respond individually to such inquiries. If, however, a parent does not receive a response from a member of staff within the time specified on the communication and escalations process, they should escalate the inquiry to



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the next person in the chain. More information can be found on the communication and escalations process document.

- When communicating by email or telephone, please ensure that you avoid words, comments or statements that are inflammatory, offensive or overly emotive. The tone should always be courteous. Please remember that at the time of first inquiry, you will have only one version of the information that has caused your concern and therefore your information is incomplete and further investigation will be needed. Email that does not meet these requirements will be sent to our “quarantine” inbox and will be disregarded.
- Please ensure that each person represents their own views and should not seek to present themselves as the spokesperson for others.
- We take all complaints and inquiries seriously and work hard to resolve them; please do not threaten with complaining to governors, the local authority, DfE, Ofsted or local MPs as this will not fast-track your complaint.
- Any complaints, concerns or communications that do not comply with our expectations will be disregarded until the communication meet the expectations set out in this document.

Testbourne Community School’s approach to dealing with incidents.

Risk assessment

An appropriate leader (governor, headteacher or appropriate senior leader) will carry out a risk assessment to help determine the level of response. In all cases the response will be reasonable and proportionate. It should be noted, however, that unacceptable behaviour of parents, carers or visitors will not be tolerated. The appropriate leader will consider:

- What form did the unacceptable behaviour take?
- Are there previous incidents to take into consideration?
- What has been the effect on staff wellbeing?
- Are there any mitigations?
- What is the likelihood of repetition of the behaviour?

Please note that a risk assessment may not always be a written document but is instead a description of the factors considered by the appropriate leader.

Records of incidents

Witness statements, CCTV or any other information will be kept on file along with subsequent letters and instructions.

The school’s response

Following the completion of the risk assessment, the appropriate leader will decide the level of action to be taken. Actions will include, but are not limited to, those listed below. The following actions do not signify or imply an escalation process. Any action may be taken at any time it is deemed by the appropriate leader to be necessary.

In all cases where parents, carers or visitors behave in a threatening, intimidating or aggressive manner, we will report this to the police.



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The school has extensive CCTV coverage including audio coverage in reception. CCTV evidence will be provided for the police to use in any subsequent investigation.

- *Clarify acceptable parent behaviour in our school.*

In some cases, it may be appropriate to remind and re-assert the expectations of the school so that parents are clear about this going forwards. This may be explained by letter from a senior leader and may contain a warning about further action if there are more incidents. In some cases, if there is no risk to the health and wellbeing of staff, a meeting may be held with the parent to allow for discussion of the situation and how best to work together positively and for the benefit of the children.

- *Invite the parent to an informal meeting to discuss events.*

After a risk assessment is made, if the school believes that there is no risk to staff participating in such a meeting, a meeting may be held to discuss the situation and attempt to diffuse it. A follow up letter summarising the main points of the meeting, including agreed actions, will be sent as soon as practicable.

- *Impose conditions on the parent's contact with the school and its staff.*

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private property and the public has no automatic right of entry. Parents of enrolled students 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.

Depending on type, level and frequency of unacceptable behaviour, the school may consider imposing conditions on the parent's contact with the school. These conditions include, but are not limited to:

- being accompanied to any meeting with a member of school staff by an additional member of staff, usually a senior leader.
- restricting contact by telephone to named members of staff.
- restricting written communications to named members of staff.
- restricting attendance at school events to those where the parent will be accompanied by a senior member of staff.
- any other restriction as deemed reasonable and proportionate by the Governors, Headteacher or their delegate, including a blanket ban from being on the school premises (see below).

In all of these cases, parents will be informed in writing of the conditions being imposed.

The conditions will be reviewed periodically, and within 6 months, to determine if they should be removed or modified.

A parent or carer may ask the Headteacher to review the arrangements at any time.

- *Imposing a bar from the school's premises*

As laid out in the Department for Education's "*Controlling access to school premises*" document, 2018, schools can bar someone from the premises if they feel that their



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aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language is a risk to staff or pupils. It's enough for a member of staff or a pupil to feel threatened.

Where other procedures have been exhausted and unacceptable behaviour continues OR when the unacceptable behaviour is deemed significant enough, the school will consider barring the individual from school premises. This may include barring a parent from accessing school staff by written communication or telephone or may involve appointing a single point of contact.

In these circumstances, the individual will be advised of the ban and the reasons for it in writing.

The bar will be temporary until the individual has had opportunity to present their side. They must do this **in writing** within **10 school days**. After the individual's side has been heard, the school can decide whether to continue with barring them.

The bar will be periodically reviewed, usually within 6 months, to determine if it should be removed or modified.

- *Removal from the school premises.*

Where a parent has been previously barred from the school premises, Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a person who is on school premises without legal permission to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance. In these circumstances, the individual may be removed from the school. This may be carried out by a police officer or a senior member of staff if this can be done safely. Legal proceedings may be brought against the individual in these circumstances.

Complaints arising from incidents of unacceptable behaviour

Any complaint that arises from incidents of unacceptable behaviour, including the school's response to such behaviour, will be dealt with under the complaints policy.