



Lady Boswell's C.E. (Aided) Primary School

*Learning Together, Learning
for Life*

MANAGING CONFLICT AND BUILDING POSITIVE
RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS AND VISITORS
POLICY

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Policy authorised by: Steering Committee

Signature:

Author of Policy: Hannah Pullen

We value every member of our community as a unique child of God and seek to demonstrate His love through our words and actions. We enable every child to achieve their full potential so that they leave us with their heads inspired and their hearts enriched.

As a result, our children will:

Develop a positive sense of self and well-being; confident to make the right choices and keep themselves safe in an ever-changing society

Strive for academic excellence, developing a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning

Become effective communicators, collaborators and leaders

Be resilient, resourceful and courageous

Be curious, creative individuals and confident problem solvers

Grow in spiritual awareness and develop a strong moral compass and a deepening understanding of the Christian faith in a multi-faith British society

Become responsible and tolerant global citizens who value diversity, forgive readily, and have concern for the needs of each other, the school, the wider community, and the planet.

Managing Conflict and Building Positive Relationships with Parents and Visitors

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Complaints Policy, Home-School Agreement, Acceptable Use Policy, Use of Mobile Phones Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

Underpinning Principles

- ✓ Choosing to be part of the Lady Boswell's community involves an **expectation that every member respects the school's Christian values of kindness, respect, love, faith, honesty and forgiveness.** These values will underpin all actions of our school community
- ✓ Working in partnership with parents continues to be at the heart of our school and we strive to maintain positive relationships that benefit our pupils. One of the best resources we can access as teachers is the knowledge, wisdom, and support of our parents/carers. It is important that we work collaboratively so that we can maximise the academic and pastoral outcomes of our children
- ✓ Our school actively seeks engagement with all parents and respects that each family will have different needs at different times.
- ✓ Establishing and maintaining positive working relationships with parents is central to ensuring a child's success. Whilst school reports and parents' evenings provide a great opportunity to engage in dialogue about a child's achievements and attainments, it is always better to tackle issues as they occur throughout the year.
- ✓ Whilst there are formal channels of communication we also embrace an open-door policy, inviting parents to visit, get involved with activities and to provide feedback.
- ✓ The school strives to achieve the highest standards in all areas but we acknowledge that sometimes parents may raise complaints about the school. The school has a clear and

robust complaints policy which sets out how the school will deal with any complaints. The school believes that complaints can be effectively managed without unnecessary conflict.

- ✓ It is expected that all members of the school community seek to resolve complaints and conflict swiftly, positively and in the best interests of all involved.

Building Positive Relationships

The school takes a number of steps to build and maintain positive relationships within the school community. These may include but are not limited to:

- Weekly newsletters
- Members of SLT on gate duty daily
- Regular opportunities for parents to speak with teachers at the end of the day
- Annual parent questionnaire
- Parent / Governor Forums
- Letters to from the Governing Board / Chair of Governors
- The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and their numerous events including the Christmas Fair, Summer Fair
- Open Classrooms
- Parent Evenings
- Interim and End of Year Reports
- Sharing of curriculum information, including Knowledge Organisers
- Opportunities for parents to volunteer in school, including: guided reading (Every class, daily), school trips, Forest School,
- Parents prayer group – Every Friday afternoon during term time
- Parent Social Communication Coffee Morning (1st Friday of the month)
- Information sharing sessions, (for example NELFT, Phonics, Residential information etc)
- Shared worship opportunities (Carol Concert, Nativity, Year Group led worships – Harvest, Lent etc)
- Initiatives such as ‘Surprise Reader’
- SEND Review meetings
- Meet the Teacher information mornings
- Sports events
- The school website

Complaints & Concerns

We welcome any feedback that we receive from parents, pupils and third parties, and we accept that not all of this will be positive. Where concerns are raised the school intends these to be dealt with:

- Fairly
- Openly
- Promptly
- Without Prejudice
- As informally as possible

Our **complaints policy**, available via the school’s website sets out how the school deals with complaints and sets out the difference between complaints and concerns:

- A concern is defined as “an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought”
- A complaint is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action”

The school recognises that expressing complaints can be an emotive issue. However, the school will not tolerate any level of rudeness, aggression, abuse or personal attack throughout the complaints process.

Dealing with Persistent Complaints

The school’s complaints policy sets out how it deals with persistent complaints. It states that:

Our school is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening. The school defines unreasonable complaints as ‘those who, because of the frequency or nature of the complainant’s contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people’s complaints’.

Abusive Behaviour

All members of the school community have a right to expect that their school is a safe place in which to work and learn. Abuse, threatening behaviour or violence against school staff, or other members of the school community is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Any incident will be treated seriously and a disruptive visitor may be banned from entering the school or even prosecuted.

Abuse, threatening behaviour or violence are not considered to be an acceptable part of any job, nor is it part of the duties of any employee to accept such behaviour. Throughout this document where the term ‘visitor’ is used it covers any abusive parent or visitor to the school and is not confined to adults.

The Governing Body of Lady Boswell’s C.E. (Aided) Primary School is committed to reducing the risks of its school staff from acts of violence and aggression by:

- Demonstrating to staff that the potential for violence at work is recognised
- Issuing clear procedures/guidelines, which include preventative and protective measures
- Providing adequate training to staff who may be subject to violence or abuse to develop their ability to anticipate violent incidents and deal with them
- Providing appropriate equipment where applicable
- Clarifying violent incident reporting and monitoring procedures
- Encouraging proper reporting of incidents and near misses and ensuring that school staff do not avoid reporting violent incidents in the belief that an assault may suggest a failure on the part of the member of staff concerned
- Supporting staff who have been subject to violent, threatening or abusive behaviour and offering counselling where appropriate
- Allocating adequate resources to support this Policy
- Reviewing this Policy statement and procedures and guidelines regularly.

Types of Aggression

In identifying types of violence the governing body recognises that staff can be intimidated or threatened by a variety of circumstances, not simply physical assault, which includes:

VERBAL and NON-VERBAL

- Swearing
- Sexual, racial or other harassment
- Bullying
- Intimidation
- Shouting
- Posturing
- Gestures
- Insults
- Innuendo
- Unreasonable demands or blackmail
- Deliberate silence
- Other verbal or non verbal abuse which causes personal offence or distress

WRITTEN

- Abusive telephone calls, letters, faxes, emails, website entries
- Other written abuse which causes personal offence or distress

PHYSICAL

- Kicking
- Biting
- Punching
- Poking or pushing
- Spitting
- Scratching
- Head butting
- Tripping
- Actions that restrict movement
- Unwanted physical contact which results in no injury
- Use of weapons
- Use of missiles
- Damage to personal property
- Other aggressive behaviour

Written Abuse

If a member of staff receives written correspondence, e.g. letter, e-mail or text of a threatening or abusive nature from a parent, carer or member of the public, this shall be reported immediately to a member of the Leadership Team and a copy retained as evidence.

The receiving member of staff will not reply to the correspondence without first agreeing the response with the Senior Leadership Team member or, in preference, the SLT member will respond on their behalf.

Whilst the School will make every effort to resolve any issue raised by the complainant, using the School's complaints procedure, consideration may also be given to involving the police, especially where threats of violence have been made.

Every effort must be made to minimise the likelihood of written abuse through not communicating using personal email or social media direct mail. Only use the secure school email for communicating with parents and other staff (on school related matters).

Online Abuse & Cyber Harassment

Online abuse by parents, students and pupils can happen on any digital communications platform, including social networks such as facebook or Whatsapp.

The school considers the following examples of abuse:

- False or slanderous statements about members of staff or the school shared in a public forum
- Spreading of misinformation designed to undermine the school, its staff or its processes
- The incitement of others to share information publicly
- Repeated attempts to contact members of staff online via their private platforms

The school expects parents to engage with the policies and procedures in school to address any concerns, complaints or grievances as this will enable us to deal with them appropriately. We expect all parties to respect these processes, in line with the school's values.

Dealing with Abusive Behaviour

Where members of the school community are abusive online, the school may:

- Make it clear that this type of abuse is known, inappropriate and must stop
- Gather evidence of the abuse as a record
- Seek legal advice and/or action

Where members of the school community are abusive towards a member of staff during face to face contact, the member of staff may:

- explain that they feel that their behaviour / conduct is inappropriate
- request for the meeting to be paused to enable the person to gain control of their emotions
- request for a colleague or member of SLT to join the meeting
- request that the meeting is adjourned and rearranged for a time where the person agrees to conduct themselves in line with the school's values
- request that the meeting is ended and for the person to leave the school premises
- escalate the complaint straight to the formal stage, in line with the complaints policy
- Seek legal advice and/or action

Where members of the school community are abusive over email, the school may:

- notify the person that their tone or content is inappropriate or offensive
- refuse to forward the email to the individual staff member and send it back to the person, requesting that it is reworded
- make it clear to person that rude or abusive comments will not be responded to
- escalate the complaint straight to the formal stage, in line with the complaints policy
- Seek legal advice and/or action

Members of the school community that behave in an abusive way will be followed up with by a member of the senior leadership team, the Co-Headteachers or the Governing Body, dependent of circumstances. The school may expect the following from parents:

- To meet with a member of the SLT, a Co-Headteacher or a member of the governing board
- A verbal or written apology to the member/s of staff involved
- Reassurance that the behaviour / abuse will not continue or reoccur

Where the school is not satisfied that the parent will cease the abuse, the school may:

- Not permit the parent to meet with members of staff without a member of SLT present
- Impose communication restrictions (for example, parents are not permitted to email the school)
- Remove privileges such as volunteering in school
- Request that the parent is removed by the class rep from the class Whatsapp group
- Ban the parent from the school premises (see below)
- Seek legal advice and/or action

It should always be remembered that:

- The physical safety of employees is more important than the security of buildings or property.
- When violence is threatened it is important that reasonable effort is made to control the situation.
- If a situation is out of control it is better to retreat and get away if possible.
- In controlling an incident, involvement of members of the public should be avoided
- If an implement has been involved in an attack, this should be retained, provided this can be done without any risk.
- Physical intervention or restraint should always be regarded as an absolute last resort.

Action to be taken following an incident

- Seek medical attention, if required.
- Report verbally to your Headteacher/manager as soon as possible. Other staff may be at risk from the same person.
- Complete an Incident Report Form and pass to your Headteacher/manager for investigation, having sought Union advice, if appropriate (Appendix E).
- Take time with your Headteacher/manager to discuss the incident and your feelings.
- Ask for assistance if you need it.
- Consider Police involvement, if they are not already involved.
- Seek advice on your entitlement to claim financial compensation, if appropriate.

In all cases of assault causing actual injury the employee sustaining the injury is advised to make a formal complaint to the Police against the assailant, unless this is considered inappropriate. This decision, although personal, should be discussed with the Headteacher.

Employees have joint responsibility with their employer to review any incidents and identify the need for appropriate training and counselling, and specific strategies to reduce the level of risk.

Where there has been any kind of affray, where an assault* has resulted in actual injury, or where an employee has been seriously threatened, the police should be called.

**An assault occurs when a person suffers, or is put in immediate fear of, personal injury by the deliberate or reckless act of another.*

Any incidents of a less serious or ambiguous nature should still be discussed with the police. In all cases of assault causing actual injury the employee sustaining the injury is advised to make a formal complaint to the police against the assailant, unless this is considered inappropriate. This decision, although personal, should be discussed with the Headteacher. Assault is a criminal offence which may result in prosecution at court.

Contacting the Police

For non-urgent, preventative advice and support the non-emergency number 101. Whenever there is an emergency and urgent support is required, the emergency 999 number should be used.

Follow up

The Headteacher will need to make a judgement as to whether the visitor is likely to become involved in such an incident again, or whether there were unique circumstances in this specific case. If it is likely that the behaviour will be repeated a warning letter should be sent, explaining that the behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated on the school premises. Depending on the circumstances, it may be helpful to discuss the warning letter with the LA Legal Team.

For future visits to the school, advance notice of an intention to visit could be required and an independent witness could be present.

In all cases of assault causing actual injury the employee sustaining the injury should be advised to make a formal complaint to the police against the assailant, unless this is considered inappropriate.

The Headteacher/Governing Body/LA have the power to ban anyone from coming onto school premises for a specified period of time. This decision will be communicated to the person concerned. When the period elapses, the Headteacher/Governing Body/LA will review whether the visitor's ban from the school premises should continue or whether it should be lifted.

If abusive behaviour is repeated, the visitor should be declared unwelcome and they can be ordered off the premises as they then become a trespasser under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. *This power is usually delegated by the Local Authority (community, voluntary controlled and community special schools) to the Headteacher and caretaker.*

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteachers/Managers

People with responsibility for staff management need to be committed to the objective of reducing violence and risks of violence to employees and ensuring that all staff receive appropriate training. It is important to ensure that new members of staff are aware of this policy and procedures as part of their induction to the school and that they have access to appropriate training. Staff should be aware that they can expect support from their Headteacher in managing parent interviews well.

A formal notice should be displayed at the entrance(s) to the school informing visitors of the school's expectations about behaviour and/or that they may face prosecution for violent, threatening and abusive behaviour.

Role of Local Authority

Advice and support is available from the Local Authority through the Legal Team.

Role of Police

If Headteachers have any concerns or fears regarding a potentially violent, threatening or abusive visitor, they should not hesitate to contact the police in advance for help and advice. They will provide advice and support, including being present on the premises when a visit is made, if it is agreed this would be helpful.

Banning a parent/visitor from the school

The school reserves the right to impose a temporary or permanent ban from the school premises on any parent/carer or member of the public who has demonstrated aggressive or abusive behaviour towards any member of staff, student, visitor or volunteer at the school.

This decision shall be made by the Headteacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors and the length of any ban shall be proportionate to the nature and circumstances of the incident.

In the case of a parent/carer, prior to a ban being imposed (except in urgent situations), the Headteacher/Chair of Governors shall write to the individual indicating that a ban from the premises is being considered, stating the reasons for this and the date by which any written representations by the individual should be received by the school before the decision is made.

In urgent situations, the Headteacher may impose an immediate **temporary** ban in writing and provide the parent/carer the opportunity to make written representations prior to formalising any extension to the ban.

Where the decision to impose a ban is made, notification of the ban shall be in writing and shall clearly state:

- The reason for the ban being imposed
- The date of commencement of the ban
- A date by which any written representations by the individual should be received by the School
- A date for review of the ban and how this will be arranged (including any reparation that may be required by the School, e.g. a written apology)
- Provision to be made (if a parent or carer) for access to their child during the school day, e.g. should an emergency occur and the process to be followed should the parent/carer wish to contact the school or need to attend meetings at the School
- What action will be taken to remove the individual from the premises should the ban be breached

The banned individual will be invited to make written representations and to attend a review meeting (accompanied by a friend or relative if required) with the Headteacher and/or a panel of Governors/police representative (this may take place away from the school site if appropriate). The Panel will review the ban and consider whether to lift it, make it permanent or continue it for a specified period.

The Headteacher may remove the ban at any time prior to the review date if appropriate resolution has been achieved.

Any ban imposed will not prevent or affect the outcome of the school's investigation into any complaints raised by the individual concerned. These will be handled as per the school's Complaints Policy/Procedure.

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed by the Co-Headteachers every three years.

All incidences of aggressive or abusive behaviour directed towards staff, students, visitors or volunteers by a Parent/Carer or member of the Public will be recorded and reported to the Governing Body to inform review of this policy.

Written with Advice and Guidance from NAHT Managing Violent and Abusive Visitors to Schools (G104)