Harrietsham Church of England Primary School

Managing Unacceptable Behaviour and Conflict Policy

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Responsibility:	Headteacher
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School Context:

Harrietsham CEP Vision Statement

We are a warm, welcoming, and inclusive school rooted in our rural community. Like the mustard seed we grew from tiny beginnings and our branches are now spread wide –providing support and taking our values beyond the school gates. All those in our community feel safe and nurtured - able to flourish and grow academically, spiritually, emotionally and physically to achieve their full God-given potential.

"Nurtured we flourish"

We are a nurturing school. As such we believe in, and follow, **The Six Principles of Nurture** in all of our practice.

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally.
2. The classroom offers a safe base.
3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing.
4. Language is a vital means of communication.
5. All behaviour is communication.
6. The importance of transition in children's lives.

Our Values

The roots of our vision are in the parable of the Mustard Seed.

'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches'.
Matthew 13 31-32

In order to grow and reach our potential, everything that we do in school is driven by our vision and underpinned by our core Christian values of:

Love, Fellowship and Forgiveness

Statement of principles

This policy has been written with reference to the Department for Education guidance *Controlling Access to School Premises* (2018) and relevant safeguarding guidance including *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* as well as NAHT guidance on dealing with abusive parents/carers.

At Harrietsham Church of England 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 children benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one.

We also strive to make our school a place where, as adults, we model for pupils the behaviour we teach and expect. In general, we place a high importance on good manners, positive communication and mutual respect.

Almost all parents, carers and visitors to Harrietsham Church of England Primary School are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. However, on very rare occasions the behaviour of a small number of parent / carer / visitor falls short of what we expect. This sometimes manifests itself in aggression or abuse towards members of the school community. This can be in written communication (including social media), on the telephone or in face-to-face incidents.

In 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). They should then refer the incident to a senior leader who will take appropriate action or invoke the provisions of this policy.

The overriding principle is, however, that all members of the school community have the right to work or be in school without fear of aggression or abuse from parent / carer / visitor. The board of governors has a requirement to protect staff and students from such aggression.

Actions taken against the parent / carer / visitor will be reasonable and proportionate. The parent / carer / visitor will have the opportunity to put their views forward at every stage. In the case of the imposition of conditions or a ban from school, robust review processes involving the Chair of Governors and then the governing body are in place to ensure fairness.

Where behaviour gives rise to safeguarding concerns regarding a child, the school will follow safeguarding procedures in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education and local safeguarding partnership requirements.

Definition of unacceptable behaviour

We consider that aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language from a parent / carer presents a risk to staff or students. Unacceptable behaviour is such that makes a member of staff or student feel threatened. This can be through face-to-face contact, on the telephone or in written communication (including social media).

The following is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour:

- Any kind of insult as an attempt to demean, embarrass or undermine.
- Any kind of threat or raising of voice so as to be intimidating.
- Physical intimidation, e.g. by standing very close to someone or the use of aggressive hand gestures.
- Use of foul or abusive language.
- Any kind of physical abuse.
- Allegations which turn out to be vexatious or malicious.
- Abusive, threatening or defamatory comments about staff, governors, pupils or the school on social media platforms.
- The sharing of confidential, misleading or malicious information relating to the school community.

The School's approach to dealing with incidents

If a parent / carer / visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the Headteacher or appropriate senior staff, will assess the level of risk before deciding on a future course of action. The course of action will be reasonable and commensurate with the assessed level of risk.

Risk Assessment

The Headteacher will carry out a risk assessment in order to help make a decision about the level of response.

In all cases the response will be reasonable and proportionate.

The Headteacher will consider the following questions:

- 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/pupils feel intimidated by the parent/carer's behaviour?
- Is there evidence of provocation?
- How high is the assessed risk that this will be repeated, or there will be retaliation in response to the school's action? (low, medium, high)

Recording of Incidents

Staff/students subject to abuse, and witnesses, will make written statements about incident(s) which will be kept in a file with subsequent letters by the Headteacher.

Records relating to incidents will be stored securely and processed in accordance with the UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and the school's Data Protection Policy.

The School's response

Following the completion of the risk assessment, the Headteacher will decide the level of action to be taken.

Actions will include the following:

1.Clarify to the parent / carer / visitor what is considered acceptable behaviour by the school.

In some instances, it may be appropriate simply to ensure the parent / carer / visitor is clear about behaviour standards expected by the school. This could be explained by a letter from the Headteacher. This letter may contain a warning about further action if there are further incidents.

The parent / carer / visitor will be invited to write to the Headteacher with his/her version of events within 10 working days. Depending on the parent / carer / visitor's response, a meeting may then be held to discuss the situation and how this can be avoided in future.

2. Invite the parent / carer / visitor to an informal meeting to discuss events.

This could be helpful to discuss and diffuse the situation. The main points of discussion and any agreed actions should be noted, and a follow-up letter or e-mail sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions.

3. Impose conditions on the parent / carer / visitor's contact with the school and its staff.

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Parents / carers / visitors 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. Parents / carers / visitors 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 / visitors contact with the school. These conditions may include (but are not exclusively):

- Being accompanied to any meeting with a member of school staff by a member of SLT.
- 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 senior leadership of the school.
- Any other restriction as deemed reasonable and proportionate by the Headteacher.

The parent / carer / visitor will be informed by letter from the Headteacher the details of the conditions that are being imposed.

The parent / carer / visitor would 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 would then decide whether to confirm or remove the conditions. This would be communicated to the parent / carer / visitor in writing within 10 working days of the date of the parent / carer / visitors letter. If the decision is to confirm the conditions imposed, this decision will be reviewed by the governing body after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate).

4. Impose a ban.

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

In these circumstances, the individual would be advised in writing by the Headteacher that a provisional ban is being imposed. The parent / carer / visitor would 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 would then decide whether to confirm or remove the ban. This would be communicated to the parent / carer / visitor in writing within 10 working days of the receipt of their letter.

If the Chair's decision is to confirm the ban, parent / carer / visitors 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 / visitor will be invited to make written representation to the governors; this and the evidence from the Headteacher will be considered at a meeting of the Governing Board. 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 / carer / visitor 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/carer's co-operation with the school in other respects.

5. 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 person authorised by the governing body. Legal proceedings may be brought against the parent / carer / visitor.

Complaints Policy

Any parental / carer / visitor complaint that arises from incidents of abusive behaviour will be dealt with under the complaints policy.

Nothing in this policy prevents a parent from pursuing a complaint through the school's Complaints Policy. However, complaints must be raised in a manner that is respectful and does not constitute unacceptable behaviour.

Appendices- Model letters

1. Warning

- Model letter 1: this is an initial letter from the Headteacher to ensure the parent is clear about behaviour standards expected by the school. This letter contains a warning about further action if there are other incidents. The letter invites a written response and suggests a meeting. Imposing conditions on the parent's attendance at school events.

- Model letter 2: This is a letter from the Headteacher informing parents of the school's decision to impose conditions on the parent's attendance at school events, pending review by the Chair of Governors.

- Model letter 3: Letter from the Chair of Governors informing parent of her decision to confirm or remove the conditions.

2. Imposing a ban

- Model letter 4: Letter from Headteacher informing parents of the school's intention to impose a ban on their attendance at school premises, pending review by the Chair of Governors.

- Model letter 5: Letter from the Chair of Governors informing parent of her decision to confirm or remove ban. Reviewing the decision to impose conditions or impose a ban.

- Model letter 6: Letter from clerk to governors requesting statement from parents to governing body for review of decision.

- Model letter 7: Letter from clerk to the governors to confirm the outcome of further reviews of decisions where the imposition of conditions / ban has been extended or removed.

Model Letter 1: Warning (sent by Headteacher)

Dear (Name)

I have received a report about your conduct at the school (enter date and time or details). This appears to fall far short of what we would expect of a parent of a student at Harrietsham Church of England Primary School.

(Add factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils and other parents).

I must inform you that the governing body will not tolerate aggression towards members of the school community and will act to protect its staff and students from any form of abuse or intimidation. I should warn you that any future conduct of this nature could result in the school imposing conditions restricting your access to the school or banning you from contacting or attending the school altogether.

I wish to give you an opportunity to give me in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to the report which I have received about your conduct.

Please do so within 10 working days of the date of this letter. These comments may include any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct. There is then an option for us to meet to discuss the situation and how it can be avoided in the future.

Details of our policy on Managing Unacceptable Behaviour and Conflict Policy can be found on our website.

Yours sincerely,

Jackie Chambers
Headteacher
cc. Chair of Governors

Model Letter 2: Imposing conditions on the parent's attendance at school events, pending review (sent by Headteacher)

Dear (Name)

I have received a report from (Name of staff) about your conduct on (Date and time) at (Location).

(Add summary of incident and its effect on staff and pupils).

You will recollect that I have already written to you about a previous incident on (Date) warning you of the consequence of any further insulting or aggressive behaviour on your part.

I must inform you that the governors, in line with our policy, will not tolerate conduct of this nature on the school premises and will act to defend school staff and pupils. I am therefore writing to inform you that I am imposing conditions on the contact you may have with school.

These are as follows: (delete as appropriate)

- You must be accompanied to any meeting with a member of school staff.
- You may not contact by telephone or in writing any member of staff.
- You may contact either myself or (name of another person).
- You may not attend any events for parents except those where you will be accompanied by a member of the SLT of the school.
- Other as are reasonable and proportionate.

The restrictions above are provisional until they have been reviewed by the Chair of Governors. Please consider them to be in force until you receive her confirmation. The Chair of Governors will need to decide whether it is appropriate to confirm or overturn this decision.

You may, if you wish, send her in writing any comments or observations of your own within 10 working days of the date of this letter. These comments may be to challenge or explain the facts of the incident, to express regret and give assurances about your future good conduct. She will then write to you with the outcome of her decision.

If on receipt of your comments, the Chair of Governors considers that my decision should be confirmed, you will be supplied with details of how the conditions will be reviewed by the governing body.

Yours sincerely,

Jackie Chambers
Headteacher
cc. Chair of Governors

Model Letter 3: Letter to confirm or overturn Headteacher's decision to impose conditions (sent by Chair of Governors)

Dear (Name)

The Headteacher wrote to you on (date) to detail concerns about an incident when your behaviour towards (name) fell short of what we would expect as a school.

You will be aware that she has written to you previously about your behaviour towards staff. (delete as appropriate).

I have not received a written response from you / I have received a letter from you dated (date), the contents of which I have considered carefully.

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Headteacher's report and your letter, I have determined that the decision to impose conditions on your contact with school should be confirmed.

The conditions are as follows: (delete as appropriate)

- You must be accompanied to any meeting with a member of school staff.
- You may not contact by telephone or in writing any member of staff. You may contact either myself or (name of another person).
- You may not attend any events for parents except those where you will be accompanied by a member of the SLT of the school.
- Other as are reasonable and proportionate.

This decision will be reviewed by the governing body in approximately six months' time. The Clerk to the Governors will write to you in advance of the meeting to ask you to provide a written statement for their consideration.

When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the application of conditions to attend school premises, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from you; and any evidence of your co-operation with the school in other respects.

OR

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Headteacher's report and your letter, I have determined that the decision to impose conditions on you should be overturned. You may hence attend school events as normal. However, should there be a repeat of inappropriate behaviour towards staff all of the above sanctions may be applied.

Yours sincerely.

Rebecca Emson
Chair of Governors
cc: Headteacher

Model Letter 4: Imposing of a ban on contacting or attending the school, pending review (sent by Headteacher)

Dear (Name)

I have received a report from (name of staff) about your conduct on (date and time) at (location).

(add summary of incident and its effect on staff and pupils).

You will recollect that I have already written to you about a previous incident on (date) warning you of the consequence of any further insulting or aggressive behaviour on your part.

I must inform you that the governors, in line with our policy, will not tolerate conduct of this nature on the school premises and will act to defend school staff and pupils. I am therefore writing to inform you that I am recommending imposing a ban on you attending or contacting the school. This means you may not attend school for any reason whatsoever. You must not make contact with any member of staff by telephone or email.

You do, however, have the right to attend one meeting per year to discuss your child's progress. This meeting will be with me. I will contact you to arrange this at the time of the next Academic Review day.

The restrictions above are provisional until they have been reviewed by the Chair of Governors. Please consider them to be in force until you receive her confirmation. The Chair of Governors will need to decide whether it is appropriate to confirm or overturn this decision.

Please send her, in writing, any comments or observations of your own within 10 working days of the date of this letter. These comments may be to challenge or explain the facts of the incident, to express regret and give assurances about your future good conduct.

If on receipt of your comments, the Chair of Governors considers that my decision should be confirmed, you will be supplied with details of how this ban will be reviewed by the governing body.

Yours sincerely.

Jackie Chambers
Headteacher
cc: Chair of Governors

Model Letter 5: Letter to confirm or overturn Headteacher's decision to impose a ban (sent by Chair of Governors)

Dear (name)

The Headteacher wrote to you on (date) to detail concerns about an incident when your behaviour towards (name) fell far short of what we would expect as a school.

You will be aware that she has written to you previously about your behaviour towards staff.

(delete as appropriate) I have not received a written response from you / I have received a letter from you dated (date), the contents of which I have considered carefully.

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Headteacher's report and your letter, I have determined that the decision to impose a ban on you should be confirmed. This means you may not attend school for any reason whatsoever. You must not make contact with any member of staff by telephone or email.

You do, however, have the right to attend one meeting per year to discuss your child's progress. This meeting will be with the Headteacher or a member of the SLT.

This decision will be reviewed in six months' time by the governing body. The Clerk to the Governors will write to you in advance of the meeting of the governing body to ask you to provide a written statement for their consideration.

When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the application of conditions to attend school premises, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from you and any evidence of your co-operation with the school in other respects.

OR

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Headteacher's report and your letter, I have determined that the decision to impose a ban should be overturned. You may hence attend school events as normal.

However, should there be a repeat of inappropriate behaviour towards staff all of the above sanctions may be applied.

Yours sincerely.

Rebecca Emson
Chair of Governors
cc: Headteacher

Model Letter 6: Letter from Clerk to the governors requesting parents' statement for review by GB (sent by Clerk of Governors)

Dear (name)

The Headteacher wrote to you on (date) to detail concerns about your behaviour towards school staff / students fell short of what we would expect as a school. As a result of this incident, conditions were imposed on you / a ban was imposed.

This decision will be reviewed by the governing body at their next meeting on (date).

I am writing to ask whether you would like to make a written statement to governors for their consideration in making the decision whether to remove the restriction or extend it.

If you should wish to make a written statement, please can you email it to me at (address) by (date – parents should be given 10 days to respond).

Yours sincerely

Debbie Stryzyk
Clerk to Governors
Cc: Headteacher

Model Letter 7: Letter detailing outcome of governing body's review (sent by clerk to governors) date)

Dear (name)

I wrote to you on (date) to request a statement to enable governors to review the school's decision to impose conditions / ban you from attending school premises.

(delete as appropriate) I have not received a written response from you / I have received a letter from you dated (date), the contents of which were considered carefully by the governors at their meeting on (date).

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Headteacher's report (and your letter), governors have determined that the decision to impose conditions / ban you from attending or contacting school attend should be confirmed.

The conditions of your attendance on site are as follows:

- You must be accompanied to any meeting with a member of school staff.
- You may not contact by telephone or in writing any member of staff.
- You may contact the Headteacher only.
- You may not attend any events for parents except those where you will be accompanied by a member of the SLT of the school.
- Any other condition imposed.

OR

- You must not attend any event in school except for an annual meeting about your child's progress. This meeting will be conducted by the Headteacher.
- You may not contact by telephone or in writing any member of staff.

This decision will be reviewed again in six months' time.

When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the application of conditions to attend school premises, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from you; and any evidence of your co-operation with the school in other respects.

OR

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Headteacher's report and your letter, governors have determined that you should once again be allowed to attend parents' events as usual. All conditions have been removed. However, should there be a repeat of inappropriate behaviour towards staff this decision may be revoked.

Yours sincerely,

Debbie Stryzyk
Clerk to Governors
cc: Headteacher