



Academy
Oldbury

Learn today **LEAD TOMORROW!**

National and local guidance in relation to the Covid 19 pandemic may over rule aspects of this policy.

Zero Tolerance Policy

Status:

Approved

Review Date:

September 2023

"The Academy believes that inclusive practice is central to developing quality teaching and learning. As such we endeavour to provide a supportive framework that responds to pupils' needs and overcomes potential barriers for individuals and groups of pupils and to ensure that pupils of all abilities and needs are fully included in the life of the school. The ethos of this statement underpins all Oldbury Academy's policies."

Statement of principles

This policy has been written taking into account the DfE Guidance Controlling access to school premises (November 2019) as well as NAHT guidance on dealing with abusive parents.

At Oldbury Academy, we value the positive relationships forged with parents and visitors to the school. We encourage close links with parents and the community and believe that students 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 students 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 Oldbury Academy are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. However, on very rare occasions the behaviour of a small number of parents 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 parents. The board of Trustees has a requirement to protect staff and students from such aggression.

The progress and well-being of the parent's child(ren) will be fully considered. Actions taken against the parent will be reasonable and proportionate. The parent 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 Headteacher and Chair of Governors are in place.

Definition of unacceptable behaviour

We consider that aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language from a parent 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
- raising of voice so as to be intimidating
- physical intimidation, e.g. by standing very close to him/her 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.

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 head teacher 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 or delegated senior leader will assess the risk in order to help make a decision about the level of response. In all cases the response will be reasonable and proportionate. The Headteacher or senior leader 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/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).

Recording of Incidents

Staff/students subject to abuse, and witnesses, will make written statements about the incident(s) which will be kept in a file with subsequent letters. This file will be kept by the Headteacher. Depending on an assessment of the risk of retaliation to witnesses or individuals, statements made by adults these may be made available to the parent if they request it.

The School's response

After assessing the risk, the Headteacher will decide the level of action to be taken. Actions will include the following:

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

In some instances, it may be appropriate simply to ensure the parent is clear about behaviour standards expected by the school. This could be explained by letter from the Headteacher. This letter may contain a warning about further action if there are further incidents. The parent will be invited to write to the Headteacher with his/her version of events within 10 working days. Depending on the parent's response a meeting may then be held to discuss the situation and how this can be avoided in future.

2. Invite the parent to an informal meeting to discuss events

This could be helpful to discuss and diffuse the situation.

The safety and well-being of those attending such a meeting must 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 a parent who could potentially become aggressive.

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'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 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 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's contact with the school. These conditions may include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- 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 Headteacher will inform the parent by letter of the conditions that are being imposed. The length of time these conditions will be in place will be determined on a case by case basis. Should the parent wish to challenge the conditions or duration they must, within 10 working days of the date of the letter, make written representations about the conditions to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors will then decide whether to confirm or remove the conditions. The Chair's decision will be communicated to the parent in writing, within 10 working days of the date the parent's letter was received by the Chair.

The conditions will be reviewed by the Headteacher, in line with the timescales set out in the original letter. He will then decide if the conditions should be continued, extended or removed and notify the parent of his decision within 10 working days of the review taking place.

When deciding whether it will be necessary to maintain, extend or remove the conditions, the Headteacher will give consideration to the extent of the parent's compliance with the conditions, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from him/her and any evidence of the parent's co-operation with the school in other respects. Again the parent will have the right to challenge this by writing to the Chair of Governors within 10 working days of receiving the Headteacher's decision. The Chair will consider all aspects of the information provided by the Parent and that provided by the Headteacher before determining whether or not to confirm the continuation of the conditions.

4. Imposing a ban

In some circumstances if a member of staff feels extremely threatened or previous procedures have failed to have an impact upon a parent / carer / visitor's behaviour then the school may consider banning the individual from school premises. This could include banning a parent from accessing school staff by written communication or telephone.

In these circumstances, the parent will be advised in writing by the Headteacher that a provisional ban is being imposed and the duration of this. They will be given 10 school 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 decide whether to confirm or remove the ban. The Chair's decision will be communicated to the parent in writing within 10 working days of receipt of their letter.

If the Chair's decision is to confirm the ban, the parent 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 Head Teacher prior to the end of the time period set out in the original letter. The parent will be invited to make written representation to the Headteacher, to be taken into account as part of the review process. The Headteacher may decide to remove the ban, extend it or impose conditions on the parent's access to the school. The decision of the review will be communicated to the parent within 10 days of it taking place.

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

5. Removal from school

Parents 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 Board of Trustees. Trustees will actively seek the maximum penalties available by law.



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Public Notice

We welcome visitors to our school.

We will act to ensure it remains a safe and calm environment for pupils, staff and all other members of our community.

If you have concerns, we will always listen to them and seek to address them.

Please be aware however, that abusive, threatening or violent behaviour will not be tolerated in this school. Visitors behaving in this way are likely to be removed from the premises and prosecuted.