



Visitor Conduct policy

Introduction

At St Neots Learning Partnership, we value the positive relationships forged with parents, carers and visitors to our schools. We encourage close links with parents and the community and believe that pupils 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. As a school we promote respect for all with whom we work and celebrate difference in a positive manner. We place a high importance on good manners, positive communication and mutual respect.

The vast majority of parents, carers and visitors to our schools are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. However on the rare occasions when a negative attitude towards the school is expressed, this can result in aggression, verbal and/or physical abuse towards members of the school community. The Trust Board expects and requires 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.

Nevertheless, all members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse and we expect parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards all members of schools staff.

This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

Expectations

We expect parents, carers and visitors to:

- Respect the caring ethos and values of our school.
- Understand that both teachers and parents need to work together for the benefit of their children.
- Demonstrate that all members of the school community should be treated with respect and therefore set a good example in their own speech and behaviour.
- Ensure that no member of staff, student, parent or other visitor is the victim of abusive behaviour or open to threats from other adults on the school premises
- Set a good example to students at all times, showing them how to get along with all members of the school and the wider community
- Correct their own child's behaviour especially in public where it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive behaviour or unsafe behaviour.
- Approach the school to help resolve any issues of concern. Physical attacks and threatening behaviour, abusive or insulting language verbal or written to staff, governors, parents or carers, children and other users of the school premises will not be tolerated and may result in withdrawal of permission to be on school premises.
- Make appointments at a mutually convenient time for both staff and parent/carer and avoid turning up and demanding to be seen.

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
- Speaking in an aggressive/threatening tone
- Abusive or threatening e-mails or text/voicemail/ phone messages or other written communication
- Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of a classroom, an employee's office, office area or any other area of the school grounds
- Damaging or destroying school property
- Physically intimidating, e.g. standing very close
- Swearing
- The use of aggression or physical threats
- Racist or sexist comments
- Inappropriate posting on social networking sites deemed as bullying
- Using social networking sites to single out individuals or to distribute untruthful or malicious information or comments
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the students/parent/staff, at the school on Facebook or other social sites. (See Appendix 1). Any concerns you may have about the school must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to an appropriate member of staff, Headteacher or the Chair to the Trust, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.
- No Smoking or consumption of alcohol or other drugs whilst on school property.

The school reserves the right to take any necessary actions to ensure that members of the school community are not subjected to abuse. Any of the above could result in a legally approved warning letter by the school and should they persist, would result in the offender having their right to enter the school premises withdrawn. In the case of social networking sites, this would result in a request for comments to be withdrawn and could result in prosecution by the Trust Board.

The legal framework

Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 makes it an offence for any person to be on school premises to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance and allows for the removal and prosecution of any person believed to have committed an offence. A parent of a child attending a school normally has implied permission to be on school premises at certain times and for certain purposes, but if the parent's behaviour is unreasonable, this permission may be withdrawn. This also applies to all other individuals invited into the school for other reasons.

Parents, carers or other visitors exhibiting unacceptable behaviour could have a ban which prevents access to the school premises imposed on them. Should they ignore this ban, they would then become a trespasser on the school site. The Trust Board, in conjunction with the Headteacher, will take the lead in authorising the removal of a person believed to be causing a nuisance or disturbance, and, if necessary, will bring legal proceedings against them.

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 (Appendix 1).

If a parent/carer/visitor has been verbally abusive, either in person or via telephone, a letter will be sent explaining that future calls must be to a named senior leader. If this fails to solve the issue, then the procedure will be the same as with any other threat as follows:

The Headteacher/senior leader must seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. This may include meeting the parent, clarifying the schools expectations and agreeing strategies to manage future incidents.

Where all procedures have been exhausted and aggression or intimidation continues OR where there is an extreme act of violence then further action may be taken including the ban from school premises. The individual would be advised in writing by the Headteacher that following the incident of unacceptable behaviour, a ban is being considered. They would then be given an opportunity to explain their actions, after which a decision would be made about imposing the ban.

In more serious circumstances a parent, carer or visitor may be banned from the school premises by the Chair to the Trust for a specified period of time, subject to review. In this situation the parent/carer/visitor will be given an opportunity to explain their behaviour, after which a decision will be taken to confirm, remove or extend the ban. Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the police will be included.

If after a ban has been imposed and the individual comes on to school premises, then the police would be called immediately. The Trust Board would then decide, in conjunction with the Headteacher, whether to consider taking out a court injunction preventing this from happening again.

Malicious allegations against school staff

All allegations made against school staff will be fully investigated promptly in line with the statutory guidance to schools and colleges 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2016. Malicious allegations made against school staff are considered to be a breach of this policy in the case of an adult or th behaviour policy for students. The term 'malicious allegation' is defined by the Department of Education (Sept 2016) as the situation where there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive. This document goes on to state that: 'if an allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated or malicious, the Headteacher, principal or proprietor should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against pupil who make it; or whether the police should be asked to consider if action might be appropriate against the person responsible, even if he or she was not a pupil' DfE (Sept 2016).

Appendix 1: Inappropriate use of Social Network Site

Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, Headteachers, school staff, and in some cases other parents/students. The Trust Board considers the use of social media websites being used in this way as unacceptable and not in the best interests of students or the whole school community.

Any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to an appropriate member of staff, the Headteacher or the Chair to the Trust, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

In the event that any student or parent/carer of a child/ren being educated in the school is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other 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 content or activity which breaches this. The school will also expect that any parent/carer or student removes such comments immediately.

In serious cases the school 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 a child or parent to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social network entry. We will take and deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying. Thankfully such incidents are extremely rare.

This policy was adopted by the Trust Board on 5 March 2018 and will be reviewed annually.