

## The Reddings Primary & Nursery School



### Managing anti-social behaviours from parents and visitors policy

#### Rationale taken from the DfE

As a general rule, schools are orderly, safe places, where relationships between staff and visitors, especially parents, demonstrate mutual respect and recognition of shared responsibility for pupils' welfare and educational progress. Parental involvement is an important factor in educational success and in dealing with emerging problems at an early stage. However, occasionally the behaviour of a few parents can cause severe disruption or worse, resulting in difficult or dangerous behaviour towards staff.

#### Statement of Intent

The Reddings Primary and Nursery School encourages close links with parents and the community. We believe that pupils benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive (pro-social). We wish to keep the school a happy and safe place for both staff, visitors and children to work and learn.

The very vast majority of parents, carers and other visitors to our school are keen to work with us and are incredibly supportive of the school. However, on the rare occasions when a negative attitude towards the school is expressed, this can result in difficult or dangerous behaviours which may include verbal or physical abuse towards school staff or other members of the school community.

Our school expects and requires its staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to defuse the situation where possible, informing a member of the senior team and seeking the involvement of other colleagues as appropriate.

We expect parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way. If parents are unhappy about any aspect of their child's education they can arrange a meeting in the first instance, with the class teacher, the Senior Leadership Team member responsible for that class and if it is not resolved then the Headteacher.

Anti-Social behaviours (including violence, threatening behaviour and verbal abuse) against school staff or other members of the school community will not be tolerated as everyone has the right to expect that their school is a safe environment in which to work and learn.

The Governing board is responsible for protecting the health and safety of their staff, pupils and visitors; this policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is deemed anti-social

## **Behaviour**

Some examples of anti-social behaviours towards school staff or members of the school community that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated:

**a) Anti-social behaviour and aggressive language:**

- Shouting, either in person or over the telephone
- Physically intimidating e.g. standing very close to her/him
- The use of aggressive hand gestures
- Making threats whether in person or via social media
- Shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- Swearing
- Pushing
- Hitting e.g. slapping, punching and kicking
- Spitting
- Sexist, racist or homophobic comments

**Dangerous behaviours:**

- b) Common Assault - involving the threat of immediate violence or causing minor injury (such as a graze, reddening of the skin or minor bruise)
- c) Actual Bodily Harm - causing an injury which interferes with the health or comfort of the victim (such as multiple bruising, broken tooth or temporary sensory loss)
- d) Grievous Bodily Harm - causing serious injury (such as a broken bone or an injury requiring lengthy treatment). There is also a racially aggravated form of assault, where there is a racial element to the offence, which carries higher maximum penalties.
- e) Harassment - situations can arise where staff find themselves subjected to a pattern of persistent and unreasonable behaviour from individual parents which is not abusive or overtly aggressive but which can be perceived as intimidating and oppressive. In these circumstances, staff may be faced with a barrage of constant demands or criticisms (on an almost daily basis) which, whilst not particularly taxing or serious when viewed in isolation, can have the cumulative effect over time of undermining their confidence, well-being and health. In extreme cases, the behaviour of the parent may constitute an offence under the protection from Harassment Act 1997.

The school has a Home - School agreement where all parties of the school community are required to sign and adhere to the agreement.

Anti-social (difficult and dangerous) behaviours may result in Hertshire County Council and the Police being informed by the school.

## **Procedure**

This policy will detail how our school will deal with anti-social behaviours (difficult and dangerous) by parents/carers of a child.

### **The school's measures to avoid, prevent and minimise incidents include;**

- The Headteacher has the prime responsibility in the school to ensure that the staff feel safe. This responsibility is delegated to the members of the Senior Leadership Team who share in the responsible for safety of staff on a day to day basis. Staff are advised, however, in the event of an incident, to:
  - Speak calmly and without raising the voice
  - Be assertive but not aggressive
  - Be polite but firm
  - Seek assistance
  - Think about an escape route, should the need arise
  - Walk away
  - Concluding a telephone call
  
- In the event of an emergency, staff should request assistance from a member of the Senior Leadership Team, if available, otherwise the nearest member(s) of staff.
- The member of the Leadership team may request that the person demonstrating anti-social behaviours leave the premises should they be unable to communicate professionally with staff members
- Should the person choose not leave the premises then a member of staff will call the police.
- The incident will be reported to the Local Authority.

### **Dealing with anti-social, difficult and dangerous behaviours**

When a parent or member of the public behaves anti-socially towards a member of the school staff, the Head teacher or senior staff member will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If necessary, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. Where all procedures have been exhausted, and negative behaviours continue (difficult and dangerous), a parent or carer may be banned by the Headteacher from the school premises for a period of time, subject to review. A parent of a child attending a school has implied permission to be on the school's premises at certain times and for certain purposes but if the parent's behaviour is anti-social (unreasonable) this permission will be withdrawn and they will become a trespasser.

*Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 makes it an offence for a trespasser 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 the offence. The penalty for a person convicted of the offence is a fine of up to £500.*

**Prior to being banned the following steps will be taken:**

1. The parent/carer will be informed, in writing, that they are banned from the premises, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, e.g. that an injunction application may follow.
2. Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to Hertfordshire County Council and the Police will be included.
3. The Chair of Governors will be informed of the ban.
4. Where appropriate, arrangements for pupils being delivered to, and collected from the school gate will be clarified. It is important for clear and concise detailed records of events to be maintained at every stage.

**Statutory and Non-Statutory Measures:**

**Non-statutory Measures**

Following an incident the following strategies may also be used:

- If appropriate, parents will be invited to speak to their child's class teacher should an issue arise that they wish to discuss, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be present at this meeting and notes of the discussion will be taken. Should anti-social behaviours arise during this meeting the meeting will be closed and rescheduled
- The Headteacher/member of the Senior Leadership Team may request an appointment with the parent to discuss the incident. A second member of staff would be present to take notes
- Any member of staff has the right to call 999 and seek assistance should they be confronted by anti-social behaviours (verbal abuse or the threat of physical assault against them).

**Statutory Measures**

The school's Governing Board would take the lead in giving consent for proceedings against a parent/carer. The School may also decide to use the following legal measures:

- *Section 222 Local Government Act 1972*
- *Anti-Social Behaviour Orders*
- *Protection from Harassment Act 1997*
- *Criminal Damage Act 1971*
- *Section 39 of Criminal Justice Act 1988*
- *Section 47 of the Offences against the Persons Act 1861*
- *Offences against the Public Order Act 1986*
- *Section 31 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998*
- *Criminal Justice Act 1988*

**Support for Employees**

If a member of staff is unfortunate enough to be one of the very small minority subject to anti-social behaviours (physical or serious verbal abuse) there are a variety of support mechanisms available to them. In such circumstances the immediate and ongoing support of colleagues will be invaluable.

In addition to this, staff at The Reddings Primary and Nursery School may be able to obtain confidential specialist support through SAS Insurance and/or support through Hertfordshire County Council. Trade unions are also likely to be a source of assistance.

### **Conclusion**

As a maintained school, Hertfordshire County Council will take action where behaviour is deemed dangerous or there are significant breaches in our home school agreement or health and safety legislation.

In implementing this policy, the school will as appropriate, seek advice from the County's Education, Health and Safety and Legal Departments to ensure fairness and consistency.