



Moreton Church of England Primary School



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Managing Aggressive Behaviour from parents or visitors to the school

Written by: N Batt, Headteacher

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Agreed by Governors (Date):

Signed (CoG):



Policy on managing aggressive behaviour from parents and visitors

Statement of principles

- **We welcome visitors to our school.**
- **We will act to ensure it remains a safe place for pupils, staff and all other members of our community.**
- **If a parent/carer has concerns we will always listen to them and seek to address them.**
- **However, abusive, threatening or violent behaviour will not be tolerated.**
- **Visitors behaving in this way are likely to be removed from the premises and prosecuted.**
- **The Headteacher will consider withdrawing her permission to come onto the premises from any parent, carer or visitor who displays aggressive behaviour to pupils, staff or anyone connected with the school.**

This policy has been written considering the DfE Guidance 'Advice on school security: Access to, and barring individuals from school premises' December 2012 as well as NAHT guidance on dealing with abusive parents. At Moreton 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 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 pupils the behaviour we teach and expect. In general, we place a high importance on good manners, positive communication and mutual respect.

The vast majority of parents, carers and others visiting our school 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 school staff or the wider 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 and to attempt to defuse the situation where possible, 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 member of the SLT 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 without fear of aggression, violence or abuse from parents. The board of governors 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. Any action taken against a 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



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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.

We expect parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards members of school staff. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

Definition of unacceptable behaviour

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

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated:

- any kind of insult as an attempt to demean, embarrass or undermine staff or pupils;
- shouting at members of the school community, either in person or over the telephone;
- physically intimidating a member of staff or pupil, e.g. standing very close to her/him;
- the use of aggressive hand gestures, e.g. shaking or holding a fist towards another person;
- threatening behaviour;
- use of foul or abusive language;
- pushing, hitting or spitting;
- breaching the school's security procedures;
- allegations which turn out to be vexatious or malicious.

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour.

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 seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. 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/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 will record any incidents of unacceptable behaviour. The headteacher/senior staff member will be informed of all incidents of such behaviour. Where necessary the headteacher/senior staff member will investigate reports of unacceptable behaviour and will keep a record of this investigation, Appendix A. Staff/pupils who are subject to abuse and witnesses will make a written statement/s about incident/s which will be kept in a file with subsequent letters. This file is kept in a secure place.

Response by the school

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

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.

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 email sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions.

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 pupils 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 of 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 (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.



In this case the parent will be informed by letter from the Headteacher the details of the conditions that are being imposed. The parent would then be given 10 working days from the date of that letter to make representations in writing about the conditions to the Headteacher. The Headteacher would then decide whether to confirm or remove the conditions. This would be communicated to the parent in writing within 10 working days of the date of the parent's letter. If the decision is to confirm the conditions imposed, this decision will be reviewed after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The parent will be invited to make written representation to the Headteacher.

Imposing a ban

Where aggression or intimidation continue, or where there is an extreme act of aggressive behaviour, a **parent or carer may be banned by the head teacher from the school premises** for a period of time, subject to review.

A parent/carers of a child attending a school has implied permission (limited licence) to be on the school's premises at certain times and for certain purposes but if their behaviour is unreasonable this permission may be withdrawn by the Headteacher and they will become a trespasser.

In imposing a ban the following steps should be considered:

1. The ban should be finite in length, as only the most serious misconduct would justify an indefinite ban.
2. The parent/carers should be informed, in writing, that she/he is banned from the premises, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, e.g. that police involvement and prosecution may follow;
3. Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the Local Authority and the police should be included;
4. Any injury due to an assault should also be reported to the health and safety executive (HSE) under the requirements of RIDDOR;
5. The Chair of Governors should be informed of the ban;
6. Where appropriate, arrangements for pupils being delivered to, and collected from the school gate should be clarified;
7. Every attempt should be made to maintain normal communications with parents/carers during the ban and they retain their right to an annual consultation in relation to the educational progress of their child. However, it may well be arranged off site.

Parents who have been banned from the school premises and continue to cause a nuisance will be deemed to have committed an offence under section 547 of the Education Act (1996). They will be considered as trespassers. The police are authorised to remove someone from school premises and to bring proceedings for an offence under this section.

Parents have the right to appeal against the decision made by the Headteacher in a conditional restriction to the school or for an imposed ban. In these circumstances, the individual needs to make a representation in writing to the Chair of Governors within 10 days of the Headteacher's letter. The Chair of Governors would then decide whether to confirm or remove the restrictions/ban. This will be communicated to the parent in writing within 10 days of the receipt of their letter.



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In implementing this policy, the school will, as appropriate, seek advice from the Local Authority's education, health and safety and legal departments, to ensure fairness and consistency.



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Appendix A

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Aggressive, intimidating, threatening or abusive behaviour

Date of incident:

Time of incident :

Name of person reporting incident:

Date incident reported:

Member of SLT recording incident :

Name(s) of person(s) causing incident :

Status(es):

(Parents/Carers/Visitors/Trespassers/Unknown)

Full description of incident:

(e.g. names of persons involved; location; nature of any injuries; attendance of emergency services)

Name(s) of any witnesses:

Linked incidents:

(If any)

Initial action/outcome:

(e.g. Informal conciliation; police intervention; warning or banning letter issued)

Summary of subsequent actions taken by the school, including risk assessments:

Signed:

(SLT)



Appendix B – Model Letters

The following three letters are exemplar letters which are used as a template. They will be adjusted according to the incident and circumstances relating to each situation.

Dear

I have received a report about your conduct at the school on (enter date and time or details). This appears to fall far short of that we would expect of a parent of a pupil at Moreton 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 Board of Governors 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 dealing with abusive parents can be found on our website.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher
cc: Chair of Governors



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Dear

I have received a report from **the (name of staff)** about your conduct on at **(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 Mrs Smail.
- You may not attend any events for parents except those where you will be accompanied by a member of the senior leadership of the school.
- **Other as are reasonable and proportionate**

The Chair of Governors, Dan Green, will need to decide whether it is appropriate to confirm or overturn this decision. You may, if you wish, send him 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. He 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 Board of Governors.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher
cc: Chair of Governors



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Dear

I have received a report from the (name of staff) about your conduct on at (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 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 e-mail. 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 Parents Evening.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher
cc: Chair of Governors