



# Keelman's Way School

## Managing Violent and Abusive Visitors to School

### Summary

Day to day access to a school is within the control of the Head Teacher. Normally parents/carers (and those with parental responsibility) are granted "limited licence" to visit the grounds and buildings of a school.

We have procedures which set out the acceptable purposes for such visits, the areas of the school that may be entered at particular times, the standard of behaviour expected etc.

Where there is a breach of such procedures the school needs to respond in a measured way, depending on the seriousness of any inappropriate conduct e.g.

- Initiate a meeting/dialogue with the individual
- Write to the visitor, describing their misconduct, explaining its impact on the school and stating its unacceptability
- Vary the person's licence, say, through the addition of conditions
- Warn of the possibility of a ban (i.e. the withdrawal of their licence) if the misconduct is repeated
- Impose a ban with a review after a fixed period
- Impose a ban without review

It is possible for a Head Teacher to initiate any of these actions on their own authority, but it is less likely to lead to personal confrontation if the more serious sanctions are initiated by the governing body or local authority, as appropriate.

### Introduction

As a general rule, schools are orderly, safe places, where relationships between staff and visitors, especially parents/carers, 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, on occasion, the behaviour of a few parents/carers can cause severe disruption or worse, resulting in abusive or aggressive behaviour towards staff, pupils or other member of the school community.

Our policy deals with violence, threatening behaviour or abuse by parents of a pupil in a school, including those cases where the parent has been asked not to come

onto the premises. Some of the remedies listed are also applicable when dealing with other intruders on school premises.

Violence, threatening behaviour and abuse against school staff or other members of the school community must not be tolerated. All members of the school community have a right to expect that their school is a safe place in which to work and learn. There is no place for violence, threatening behaviour or abuse in schools.

At all times the common purpose remains clear; to achieve zero tolerance of violence, threatening behaviour or abuse in schools and to ensure all members of the school community and all visitors to the school can be confident that they are operating within a safe environment.

### **Conducting a risk assessment**

Where necessary an assessment of risk to staff and others from abusive or violent visitors will be conducted. This does not need to be a complicated process, but simply involves raising a number of questions to which you want answers.

A risk assessment will:

- Identify and assess the risks
- Determine appropriate actions
- Implement the actions
- Monitor the results
- Provide feedback

It is good practice to ask staff directly about the extent of problems that they are aware of as part of the process of assessing risk. It is also helpful to consult school health and safety representatives about possible risks.

This should identify what the risks are (e.g. abuse, threatening behaviour, violence and from whom) and who is likely to be at risk (e.g. reception staff, teachers, school keeper). Identifying what the risks are and who is at risk are the crucial initial steps before considering how to manage these risks and how they can be minimised.

In some cases, potential violence can be reduced and even prevented if members of staff have the skills to spot conflict before it leads to aggression and to use techniques to reduce aggression before violence occurs.

It is recommended that members of staff are offered personal safety training, which can help in:

Reducing violent attacks by parents and other

Enabling staff to defuse aggression and prevent situation escalating

Teaching staff to recognise verbal and nonverbal precursors to aggression and use techniques to calm a potential assailant

Improving staff confidence in dealing with aggression and the resulting stress

Minimising the risk of an attack causing injury

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has produced guidance on risk assessments which is on its website.

## **The Banning Process**

The Head Teacher will need to assemble the full facts before proceeding, making sure that all those involved in any incidents, or witnesses to those incidents, make a full written record as soon as possible.

Crucial elements:

- Write to parent/carer/intruder to record in detail the incident and why it is unacceptable
- Explain that the LA/governing body will consider banning the parent, giving the parent a period in which they may respond in writing giving their version and why they should not be banned
- Tell the parent when a decision will be made

## **The length of a ban**

The ban should be finite in length, as only the most serious misconduct would justify an indefinite ban.

The duration needs to be sufficient to convey a clear message about the seriousness of the associated misconduct, but not so long as to be disproportionate. The aim should always be to restore “normal” relations as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Even if a ban is permanent, it should be reviewed periodically, taking account of subsequently demonstrated patterns of behaviour.

## **What does a ban achieve?**

- It confirms to a parent that the school will not tolerate misbehaviour
- Shows the school takes health and safety of its staff, visitors and pupils seriously
- It provides a key element in making it easier to use legal remedies to prevent repeated misconduct, including use of S547 of the 1996 Education Act to enable police removal and possible prosecution of those on school premises without permission
- It may form the basis for an application for an injunction to curtail repeated instances of misbehaviour

## **Parental Rights**

Every attempt should be made to maintain normal communications with parents/carers, including giving them the opportunity to participate in elections for parent governors.

Even where a parent/carer has been banned from the school premises, they retain their right to an annual consultation in relation to the educational progress of their child/ran. However, the school may determine who will be present at the meeting (e.g. a senior member of staff might accompany the class teacher) and its location (e.g. it may well be arranged off site).

The interest of the child should continue to be paramount.

### **Model incident report form**

An incident form is attached

### **Section 547, Education Act 1996**

Section 547 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.

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

A person who nevertheless persists in entering the school premises and displaying unreasonable behaviour may be removed and prosecuted under section 547.

In the case of an academy, an independent school, a foundation school, a voluntary aided school and a foundation special school, the Governing body/board can independently authorise the removal of someone from the premises and may also authorise a person to bring proceedings against that individual. Additionally, in all situations the police are authorised to remove someone from school premises and to bring proceedings for an offence under this section.

It is not set down in law how a person should be authorised. Good practice suggests that this is done in writing. Schools should clarify who has been authorised to remove anyone causing a disturbance and they should ensure they have received appropriate training.

Schools wishing action to be taken against someone they believe has committed an offence under s547 should contact their LA as appropriate. If the police have been involved the school should clarify whether the police intend to summons or charge and whether the Crown Prosecution Service has decided that there is sufficient evidence to prosecute. In most cases it will be in public interest to prosecute if there is sufficient evidence to support a prosecution.

Signed Paula Selby  
Head Teacher

Summer term 2024

Signed.....  
Chair of Governors

Date.....