



Phoenix Infant Academy
Together We Soar

Name of Policy	Managing inappropriate, threatening or abusive behaviours
Scope of Policy	Parents and Visitors
Approved by	Principal
Date of Approval	February 2021
Review period	3 years
Review Date	February 2024

GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER



**THAMES LEARNING
TRUST**

This policy has been written with reference to 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 Phoenix Infant 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 children 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 to the children 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 our school are keen to work with us and are supportive. 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 staff or other parents/carers. 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 of other colleagues where relevant. 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 anyone. The Board of Trustees has a duty of care to its staff and children protecting them from any 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 CEO (or another Trustee in their absence,) are in place to ensure fairness.

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 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 to be intimidating
- physical intimidation, eg 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.

Our approach to dealing with incidents

If a parent/carer/visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the principal 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 Principal 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 Principal 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/pupils subject to abuse and witnesses will make written statements about incident(s), where appropriate. Depending on an assessment of the risk of retaliation to witnesses or individuals, statements made by adults may be made available to the parent if they request it.

School's response

Following the completion of the risk assessment, the Principal will decide the level of action to be taken. Actions may 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 Principal. This letter may contain a warning about further action if there are further incidents. The parent will be invited to write to the Principal 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 (in person or virtually) 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 of the type, level or frequency of the unacceptable behaviour, the school may consider imposing conditions on the offender'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 Strategic Team
- restricting written communications to named members of the Strategic Team
- restricting attendance at school events to those where the parent will be accompanied by a school leader
- any other restriction as deemed reasonable and proportionate by the Principal.

In this case, the parent will be informed by letter from the Principal 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 Principal as per the TLT Complaints Policy. See the Policy for further details.

4. Imposing a ban

Where other procedures have been exhausted and aggression, intimidation, or threatening behaviour continues, or where there is an extreme act of violence/aggression be it verbally or physically, then the school will consider banning the individual from school premises. This will include banning a parent from accessing school staff by written communication or telephone.

Please see the TLT Complaints Policy for further details.

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. Legal proceedings may be brought against the parent.

6. Complaints policy

Any parental complaint that arises from incidents of abusive behaviour will be dealt with under the TLT Complaints Policy.