

Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct for Goffs Oak Primary and Nursery School

1. Statement of Principles

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 Goffs Oak Primary and Nursery School, we value the positive relationships we build with parents and visitors. We believe children thrive when the relationship between home and school is strong and respectful. As adults, we aim to model the behaviour we teach and expect from our pupils. We place high importance on good manners, positive communication and mutual respect. Almost all parents, carers and visitors work with us in a supportive and constructive way. However, on rare occasions, the behaviour of a small number of individuals can fall short of what we expect. This may take the form of aggression or abuse towards members of the school community, whether in person, on the telephone, or in written communication (including social media).

In such situations, staff are expected to behave professionally, attempting to defuse the situation where possible and involving colleagues as appropriate. Staff have the right to end any conversation (face-to-face or by telephone) if they feel unsafe or unable to continue. They should then refer the incident to a senior leader, who will take appropriate action under this policy.

All members of the school community have the right to work or be in school without fear of aggression or abuse. The governing board has a duty to protect staff and children from such behaviour.

The progress and wellbeing of the child(ren) involved will always be considered. Any action taken will be reasonable and proportionate, and parents will have the opportunity to share their views at every stage. Where conditions or a ban from the school site are imposed, robust review processes involving the Chair of Governors and the governing body ensure fairness.

2. Definition of Unacceptable Behaviour

Aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language from a parent or visitor presents a risk to staff and children. Unacceptable behaviour is any behaviour that makes a member of staff, child or visitor feel threatened. This may occur face-to-face, on the telephone or in written communication (including social media).

The following examples illustrate unacceptable behaviour (this list is not exhaustive):

- Disrupting, or threatening to disrupt, school operations (including events and sports fixtures)
- Swearing or using offensive language
- Displaying a temper, or shouting at staff, pupils or other parents
- Threatening another member of the school community
- Sending abusive messages via text, email or social media
- Posting defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments about the school or its community online
- Any aggressive behaviour (verbal or written) towards another child or adult
- Disciplining another person’s child — any concerns should be reported to staff
- Smoking or drinking alcohol on school premises (unless alcohol is permitted at a specific event)

- Possessing or taking drugs (including legal highs)
- Allegations which are found to be vexatious or malicious

3. The School's Approach to Dealing with Incidents

If a parent, carer or visitor behaves in an unacceptable way, the headteacher or a senior member of staff will assess the level of risk before deciding on an appropriate course of action. Any response will be reasonable and proportionate to the assessed level of risk.

Staff are instructed to stop conversations if there is a breach of this policy and to seek support from the senior leadership team. If appropriate, the parent, carer or visitor may be asked to leave the school site to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community.

4. Breaching the Code of Conduct

If the school suspects or becomes aware that a parent has breached this Code of Conduct, the school will gather information from those involved and speak to the parent about the incident. Depending on the nature of the incident, the school may:

- Send a warning letter
- Invite the parent to meet with a senior leader or the headteacher
- Contact the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour)
- Seek advice from the local authority's legal team (in cases of potentially libelous or slanderous conduct)
- Ban the parent from the school site

The school will always respond proportionately. The headteacher makes the final decision on how to respond, and will consult the Chair of Governors before issuing a ban.

5. Risk Assessment

The headteacher will carry out a risk assessment to determine the appropriate response. They will consider:

- What form the abuse took
- What evidence is available
- Witness accounts
- Any previous related incidents
- Whether staff, children or visitors feel intimidated
- Any evidence of provocation
- The likelihood of the behaviour being repeated or escalating (low, medium, high)

6. Complaints Policy

Any complaint from a parent or visitor arising from incidents of abusive behaviour will be managed under the school's Complaints Policy.