



Guidance relating to communication from parents, visitors and staff who are parents

Statement of principles

The Governing Body of Parkfield School encourages close links with parents and the community. It believes that students benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one.

The vast majority of parents and others visiting our school are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. Sometimes things do go wrong and the first port of call in this instance is the school's complaints policy and procedure that can be found on the school's website. We would always encourage parents to use this process to raise their concerns.

On the rare occasions when a negative attitude towards the school is expressed, this can result in aggression, verbal and or physical abuse to include use of intimidating language on line towards members of school staff or the wider school community.

The Governing Body expects and requires its members of staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to defuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues. However, the school expects that all members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence, abuse and intimidation (verbally and in writing) and the right, in an extreme case, of appropriate self-defence. We expect parents and other visitors to behave in a respectful and reasonable way towards members of school staff both face to face and by telephone or in writing. All members of the school community have a right to expect that the school is a safe place in which to work and learn.

Reasonable response to parental communication

When a parent/carer contacts the school by telephone or by email a member of staff will aim to return the telephone call or email at their earliest convenience but within 48 hours. A member of staff may well be out of school or teaching a full timetable on the day a telephone call or email is received. A same day response may well not be possible and should not be expected.

Members of staff will not be able to meet with parents without a pre-arranged appointment. Arriving at reception without an appointment will not result in an immediate meeting.

This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

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

- shouting at members of the school staff, either in person or over the telephone;
- physically intimidating a member of staff, e.g. standing very close to her/him;
- the use of aggressive hand gestures;
- threatening behaviour – in person, over the phone or in writing;
- shaking or holding a fist towards another person;
- swearing at a person over the phone or in writing;
- pushing;

- hitting, e.g. slapping, punching and kicking;
- spitting;
- breaching the school's security procedures;
- use of inappropriate language either face to face or through electronic communication;
- persistent demanding / intimidating email correspondence to a member(s) of staff (persistent being more than twice on the same matter);
- Inappropriate communication about the school or individual named member of staff through social networking sites and/or casual communication.

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

Procedure to be followed

If a parent behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the Principal or an appropriate senior member of staff will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation.

A verbal or written warning will be given by the Principal or appropriate member of senior staff, in the first instance, to a parent whose behaviour continues to be unacceptable.

Where all procedures have been exhausted, and aggression or intimidation continue, or where there is an extreme act of violence, a parent may be banned from the site by the Principal from the school premises for a period of time, subject to review.

If the aggression or intimidation are repeatedly taking place in a written form or verbally on the telephone, the Principal will issue an initial warning and further communication of a similar kind will then result in a restriction over written and telephone communication with the school for a period of time, subject to review.

In imposing a ban/ communication restriction the following steps will be taken:

1. The parent will be informed, in writing, that she/he is banned from the premises or that their written or verbal communication will be restricted, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, e.g. that police involvement or an injunction application may follow.
2. Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the local authority and the police will be included. Where communication breaches harassment legislation the police will be informed.
3. The Chair of Governors will be informed of the ban/restriction.
4. Where appropriate, arrangements for students being delivered to, and collected from the school gate will be clarified. As will arrangements for communicating with parents over any safeguarding or critical educational matters involving their child if they are subject to a communication restriction.

Communication Guidance for staff members who are also parents

Below is an outline of the expectations of the school for those employees who are also parents of children within the school.

Expectation of the Staff-parents

- Staff-parents will keep their roles as staff member and parent separate, and will arrange to speak with their child's class teacher at the appropriate times, such as before and after the school day, arranged in advance, not ad hoc.
- Staff-parents of pupils within the school will not make any special exceptions for their child such as deviation from school policies, including punctuality.
- Staff-parents of pupils within the school must not allow their child to impact on their role within school or distract or disrupt them from their work.
- Staff-parents will avoid discussing their child's progress or behaviour in the staff room or with the class teacher(s).
- Staff-parents who have any concerns about their child's teacher are required to follow the processes outlined in school's Complaints Policy for parents/carers.
- Staff-parents will ensure that their opinions of how another member of staff has dealt with their child, such as discipline, does not affect their work or their professional relationship with that member of staff.
- Staff-parents will treat school matter with the strictest of confidence and will not discuss school business in front of their children or with other parents via social media or other channels.
- Staff-parents must not use informal channels of communication (social media, private emails or WhatsApp texting) to communicate with parents for official school business.
- Staff-parents will not disclose any information to their child which is not intended for their knowledge.

Expectation of other staff members

- Teachers will not contact the staff-parent to discuss incidents that have occurred during the school day. They will use the normal channels of communication the same for any parent.

Conclusion

The Governing Body itself may take action where behaviour is unacceptable or there are serious breaches of our home-school code of conduct or health and safety legislation. In implementing this policy, the school will, as appropriate, seek advice from the school's health and safety and legal departments, to ensure fairness and consistency.

**Parkfield School has a close working relationship with the local police.
Unacceptable behaviour may result in the police being informed of unacceptable behaviour(s).**