

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School



Dealing with Aggressive Parents Policy

Headteacher: Mr John Entwistle

Assistant Heads: Mrs Elaine Goulding and Lindsey Walsh

Family Support Worker: Mrs Lynn Catterall

Agreed by staff: **Spring 2024**

Governors: **Spring 2024**

Review Date: **Spring 2026**

STATEMENT OF INTENT

St Augustine's Primary School encourages close links with parents and the community. We believe that children benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one.

The vast majority of parents, carers and others visiting the school are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. However, a tiny minority of parents have a negative attitude towards the school and sometimes, this can result in aggression, verbal and/or physical abuse towards school staff.

St Augustine's expects its 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, all staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse and the right, in extreme cases, of appropriate self-defence.

St Augustine's expects parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards school staff. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where parents' behaviour is unacceptable.

BEHAVIOUR

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

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of unacceptable behaviour:

- Shouting at school staff, either in person or over the telephone.
- Physically intimidating a member of staff e.g. standing very close to him/her
- The use of aggressive hand gestures e.g. two fingers raised
- Threatening school staff
- Shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- Writing abusive comments about a member of staff e.g. he/she is an idiot
- Swearing at a member of school staff
- Pushing
- Hitting, e.g. slapping, punching or kicking
- Spitting
- Racist or sexist comments
- Breaking the school's security procedures

Unacceptable behaviour will result in Lancashire County Council and the Police being informed of the incident.

PROCEDURE

When a parent or member of the public behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school staff the Headteacher or appropriate senior staff will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If necessary, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. Where all procedures have been exhausted, and aggression or intimidation continue, or where there is an extreme act of violence, a parent or carer may be banned by the Headteacher, in agreement with the Chair of Governors, from the school premises for a period of time, subject to review.

All information concerning any meeting (especially if a member of staff has a concern) is to be inputted onto CPOMS under their child/ren's names.

Protocols for staff meeting with an irate parent:

1. Take the parent into a quiet area – e.g. the meeting room by the school office. Inform the office staff to keep a vigilant watch or listen and to check in occasionally e.g. by phone. If it sounds like there is an issue they are to call another Senior Leader to be on standby outside the room – **there is a bell in the room to call for help if needed**

2. If a parent has a history of physical violence, always have at least one other person with you when you meet them, and if necessary have others outside
3. **Sit with them nearest the door into the entrance and you by the door into the staff corridor**
4. Try to be warm and friendly (possibly offer them a drink) and let them vent. Quite often they just want to get their feelings off their chest
5. Assessing the situation, it might be worth accepting what they say and letting them know you will look into the matter further – talking to staff and children. Agree to feedback to them at a convenient time e.g. at the end of the school day. This will show you are taking the matter seriously and give them chance to calm down
6. Remind them you are here for their child and want the best for them
7. Say at least 2 positive things about their child early in the conversation
8. Show empathy - apologise for something – even if it is for the fact that they are feeling as they are. You do not need to take blame for anything and quite often all they want is an apology

If the parent starts to become aggressive or abusive:

9. Make it clear about not tolerating aggressive/abusive behaviour
10. If you feel threatened, say "I'm sorry, but I'll have to close this meeting and fix it for another time unless we can calm things down"
11. Ask the parent to leave the premises by opening the door into the entrance and showing them out (and off the premises) – **if needed leave the room into the staff corridor and call for help**. If they refuse to leave then threaten to/ call the police
12. Remember that you don't have to put up with aggressive behaviour on site – we can withdraw our permission for a parent to be on site in a formal letter (see below). This is usually very inconvenient for them and usually results in a change of attitude on their part. It is best not to rescind this unless you have a formal meeting with a governor present where the aggressive parent gives undertakings not to repeat the behaviour.

BANNING ORDER FROM SCHOOL

Prior to being banned the following steps will be taken:

- The Headteacher (or member of SLT) will contact legal services at Lancashire County Council for advice and support – **they will send the letter on our behalf**
- The parent will be warned, in writing, that s/he is banned from the premises, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, e.g. that an injunction may follow
- Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to Lancashire County Council and the Police will be included
- Where appropriate, arrangements for their children being brought to, and collected from the school gate will be clarified

CONCLUSION

Pupils learn best when there is a positive partnership between home and school. Whilst every effort will be made to work with parents, this will only be possible where parents behave in an acceptable way. Unfortunately, where a parent's behaviour is either unacceptable or serious it will not be possible to continue working with him/her and, as a final resort, legal action may be taken. The school will take action where behaviour is unacceptable or serious.

We will review this policy on a bi-annual basis.