Heathland Whitefriars Federation

# Policy for Dealing with Problematic Behaviour of Parents

**Approved by Directors: June 2021**
**Review Cycle: Annual**

**Reviewed by Safeguarding and Inclusion Committee: October 2025**
**Next Review Due: October 2027**

**Statement of Principles**

This policy has been written taking into account 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 the Heathland Whitefriars Federation, we value the positive relationships forged with parents and visitors to our schools. We encourage close links with parents and the community and believe that students benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one. We also strive to make our schools a place where as adults we model for students the behaviour we teach and expect. In general, we place a high importance on good manners, positive communication and mutual respect.

The overwhelming majority of parents, carers and visitors to the Heathland Whitefriars Federation are keen to work with us positively and are supportive of our schools. However, on very rare occasions the behaviour of a very small number of parents falls short of what we expect on behalf of the children, staff and whole school community. Unfortunately, this sometimes manifests itself in aggression or abuse towards members of the school community. 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 as appropriate of other colleagues. 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 parents. The board of Trustees has a requirement to protect staff and students from such aggression.**

When seeking a resolution to this type of issue, 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 Chair of Trustees and then the board of trustees 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 students. 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 so as to be intimidating
- physical intimidation, e.g. 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.

**The school's approach to dealing with incidents**

If a parent/carer/visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the Headteacher 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 Headteacher 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 Headteacher will consider the following questions:

- What form did the abuse / unacceptable behaviour 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/students subject to abuse and witnesses will make written statements about incident(s) which will be kept in a file with subsequent letters. This file will be kept by the office staff. 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. This also applies to CCTV where available.

**The School's response**

Following the completion of the risk assessment, the Headteacher will decide the level of action to be taken. Actions will 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 Headteacher. This letter may contain a warning about further action if there are further incidents. The parent will be invited to write to the Headteacher 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, seek a resolution and to agree how similar problems can be avoided in future.

*2. Invite the parent to an informal meeting 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 parent'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
- variations in start / drop off and finish / pick up times
- restricting contact by telephone to named members of the senior leadership team
- restricting written communications to named members of the senior leadership team
- restricting attendance at school events to those where the parent will be accompanied by a member of the senior leadership of the school
- any other restriction as deemed reasonable and proportionate by the Headteacher.

In this case the parent will be informed by letter from the Headteacher 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 Chair of Trustees. The Chair of Trustees would then decide whether to confirm or remove the conditions. This would be communicated to the parent in writing within 10 working days of the date of the parent's letter.

If the decision is to confirm the conditions imposed, this decision will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate), or as advised by the Police / Safer Schools team if they are involved. The parent will be invited to make written representation to the Trustees. This and the evidence from the Headteacher will be considered at a meeting of the full Board of Trustees. Trustees may decide to maintain, extend or remove the conditions. The decision of the review will be communicated to the parent by the clerk to the Trustees within 10 days of the date of the meeting.

When deciding whether it will be necessary to maintain, extend or remove the conditions, Trustees will give consideration to the extent of the parent's compliance with the conditions, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from him/her and any evidence of the parent's co-operation with the school in other respects.

*4. Imposing a ban*

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

In these circumstances, the individual would be advised in writing by the Headteacher that a provisional ban is being imposed. The parent would then be given 10 working days from the date of that letter to make representations about the ban in writing to the Chair of Trustees.

The Chair of Trustees would then decide whether to confirm or remove the ban. This would be communicated to the parent in writing within 10 working days of the receipt of their letter.

If the Chair's decision is to confirm the ban, parents in these circumstances will be offered an annual meeting about their child's progress, usually with a member of senior staff.

A decision to impose a ban will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The parent will be invited to make written representation to the Trustees; this and the evidence from the Headteacher will be considered at a meeting of the full Board of Trustees. Trustees may decide to remove the ban, extend the ban or impose conditions on parent's access to the school. The decision of the review will be communicated to the parent by the clerk to the Trustees within 10 days of the date of the meeting.

In deciding whether to remove or extend the ban or impose conditions, Trustees will give consideration to the extent of the parent's compliance with the ban, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from him/her and any evidence of the parent's co-operation with the school in other respects.

*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 (Education Act 1996) 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 of person authorised by the Board of Trustees. 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 complaints policy.

*7. Monitoring by the board of trustees*

This policy is reviewed annually by the federation board of trustees.

All actions taken under this policy are also monitored by the board of trustees. Details of incidents are reported to the trustees as part of the Safeguarding report to trustee meetings, which take place six times per year. Parents' names and details are not identified to the board.

## Appendices

### Warning

Model letter 1: This is an initial letter from the Headteacher to ensure the parent is clear about behaviour standards expected by the school. This letter contains a warning about further action if there are other incidents. The letter invites a written response and suggests a meeting.

### Imposing conditions on the parent's attendance at school events

Model letter 2: This is a letter from the Headteacher informing parents of the school's decision to impose conditions on the parent's attendance at school events, pending review by the Chair of Trustees

Model letter 3: Letter from the Chair of Trustees informing parent of the decision to confirm or remove the conditions

### Imposing a ban

Model letter 4: Letter from Headteacher informing parents of the school's intention to impose a ban on their attendance at school premises, pending review by the Chair of Trustees

Model letter 5: Letter from the Chair of Trustees informing parent of the decision to confirm or remove ban

### Reviewing the decision to impose conditions or impose a ban

Model Letter 6: Letter from the clerk to Trustees requesting a statement from parents to Board of Trustees for review of decision.

Model letter 7: Letter from the clerk to the Trustees to confirm the outcome of further reviews of decisions where the imposition of conditions/ban has been extended or removed.

**Model Letter 1 Warning (sent by Headteacher) – to be adjusted as necessary**

Dear

I have received a report about your conduct at the school on (enter date and time or details). This appears to fall far short of what we would expect of a parent of a student at the Heathland Whitefriars Federation.

*(Add factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils, and other parents.)*

I must inform you that the Board of Trustees will not tolerate aggression towards members of the school community and will act to protect its staff and students from any form of abuse or intimidation. I should warn you that any future conduct of this nature could result in the school imposing conditions restricting your access to the school or banning you from contacting or attending the school altogether.

I wish to give you an opportunity to give me in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to the report which I have received about your conduct. Please do so within 10 working days of the date of this letter. These comments may include any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct. There is then an option for us to meet to discuss the situation and how it can be avoided in the future.

Details of our policy on dealing with problematic behaviour of parents / abusive parents can be found on our website.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

cc: Chair of Trustees

**Model Letter: 2 Imposing conditions on the parent's attendance at school events, pending review (sent by Headteacher) – to be adjusted as necessary**

Recorded delivery

Dear

I have received a report from *(name of staff member)* about your conduct on …… at ……

*(add summary of incident and its effect on staff and pupils)*

(You will recollect that I have already written to you about a previous incident on (date) warning you of the consequence of any further unacceptable / insulting or aggressive behaviour on your part)

I must inform you that the Trustees, in line with our policy, will not tolerate conduct of this nature on the school premises and will act to defend school staff and pupils.

I am therefore writing to inform you that I am imposing conditions on the contact you may have with school. These are as follows: *(delete as appropriate)*

- You must be accompanied to any meeting with a member of school staff
- You must drop off / pick up your child/ren at ……. (time / location)
- You may not contact by telephone or in writing any member of staff. You may contact either myself or (deputy headteacher)
- You may not attend any events for parents except those where you will be accompanied by a member of the senior leadership of the school.
- Other as are reasonable and proportionate

The restrictions above are provisional until they have been reviewed by the Chair of Trustees. Please consider them to be in force until you receive their confirmation.

The Chair of Trustees, will need to decide whether it is appropriate to confirm or overturn this decision. You may, if you wish, send to the Chair in writing any comments or observations of your own within 10 working days of the date of this letter. These comments may be to challenge or explain the facts of the incident, to express regret and give assurances about your future good conduct. The Chair will then write to you with the outcome of their decision.

If on receipt of your comments, the Chair of Trustees considers that my decision should be confirmed, you will be supplied with details of how the conditions will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

cc: Chair of Trustees

**Model Letter 3: Letter to confirm or overturn Headteacher's decision to impose conditions (sent by chair of Trustees) – to amend as necessary**

Recorded delivery

Dear

…… wrote to you on *(date)* to detail concerns about an incident when your behaviour towards (name) fell short of what we would expect on behalf of the children, staff and the school community. You will be aware that s/he has written to you previously about your behaviour towards staff/ others.

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated ……, the contents of which I have considered carefully.

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Headteacher's report and your letter, I have determined that the decision to impose conditions on your contact with school should be confirmed. The conditions are as follows:

- (Copy conditions from HT's letter)

This decision will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees in approximately six months' time. The Clerk to the Trustees will write to you in advance of the meeting to ask you to provide a written statement for their consideration. When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the application of conditions to attend school premises, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from you; and any evidence of your co-operation with the school in other respects.

OR

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Headteacher's report and your letter, I have determined that the decision to impose conditions on you should be overturned. You may hence attend school events as normal. However, should there be a repeat of inappropriate behaviour towards staff / others all of the above sanctions may be applied.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Trustees

cc: Headteacher

**Model Letter 4: Imposition of a ban on contacting or attending the school, pending review (sent by Headteacher) – to amend as necessary**

Recorded delivery

Dear

I have received a report from the *(name of staff member)* about your conduct on …… at …….

(add summary of incident and its effect on staff and pupils)

You will recollect that I have already written to you about a previous incident on (date) warning you of the consequence of any further unacceptable/ insulting or aggressive behaviour on your part.

I must inform you that the Trustees, in line with our policy, will not tolerate conduct of this nature on the school premises and will act to defend school staff and pupils.

I am therefore writing to inform you that I am recommending imposing a ban on you attending or contacting the school. This means you may not attend school for any reason whatsoever. You must not make contact with any member of staff by telephone or e-mail. You do, however, have the right to attend one meeting per year to discuss your child's progress. This meeting will be with me or the Deputy Headteacher. I will contact you to arrange this at the time of the next Parents' Evening.

The restrictions above are provisional until they have been reviewed by the Chair of Trustees. Please consider them to be in force until you receive their confirmation.

The Chair of Trustees, will need to decide whether it is appropriate to confirm or overturn this decision. Please send to the Chair, in writing, any comments or observations of your own within 10 working days of the date of this letter. These comments may be to challenge or explain the facts of the incident, to express regret and give assurances about your future good conduct.

If on receipt of your comments, the Chair of Trustees considers that my decision should be confirmed, you will be supplied with details of how this ban will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

cc: Chair of Trustees

**Model Letter 5: Letter to confirm or overturn Headteacher's decision to impose a ban (sent by chair of Trustees) – to be amended as necessary**

Recorded delivery

Dear

……. wrote to you on *(date)* to detail concerns about an incident when your behaviour towards *(name)* fell far short of what we would expect as a school. You will be aware that s/he has written to you previously about your behaviour towards staff.

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated ……, the contents of which I have considered carefully.

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Headteacher's report and your letter, I have determined that the decision to impose a ban on you should be confirmed. This means you may not attend school for any reason whatsoever. You must not make contact with any member of staff by telephone or e-mail. You do, however, have the right to attend one meeting per year to discuss your child's progress. This meeting will be with the Deputy Headteacher or a member of the senior team.

This decision will be reviewed in six months' time by the Board of Trustees. The Clerk to the Trustees will write to you in advance of the meeting of the Board of Trustees to ask you to provide a written statement for their consideration. When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the application of conditions to attend school premises, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from you and any evidence of your cooperation with the school in other respects.

OR

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Headteacher's report and your letter, I have determined that the decision to impose a ban should be overturned. You may hence attend school events as normal. However, should there be a repeat of inappropriate behaviour towards staff all of the above sanctions may be applied.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Trustees

cc: Headteacher

**Model Letter 6: Letter from clerk to the Trustees requesting parents' statement for review by Board of Trustees (sent by clerk to Trustees) – to be amended as necessary**

Recorded delivery

Dear

…….. wrote to you on *(date)* to detail concerns about your behaviour towards school staff/students fell short of what we would expect as a school. As a result of this incident, conditions were imposed on you/a ban was imposed.

This decision will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees at their next meeting on *(date)*.

I am writing to ask whether you would like to make a written statement to Trustees for their consideration in making the decision whether to remove the restriction or extend it.

If you should wish to make a written statement, please can you e-mail it to me at *(address)* by *(date – parents should be given 10 days to respond)*.

Yours sincerely

Clerk to Trustees

cc: Headteacher

**Model Letter 7: Letter detailing outcome of Board of Trustees review (sent by Clerk to Trustees) – to be amended as necessary**

Dear

I wrote to you on *(date)* to request a statement to enable Trustees to review the school's decision to impose conditions/ban you from attending school premises.

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated ……, the contents of which were considered carefully by the Trustees at their meeting on (date).

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Headteacher's report (and your letter), Trustees have determined that the decision to impose conditions/ban you from attending or contacting school attend should be confirmed. The conditions of your attendance on site are as follows:

- You must be accompanied to any meeting with a member of school staff
- You may not contact by telephone or in writing any member of staff.
- You may contact either ……... or ……. *(named contacts)*
- You may not attend any events for parents except those where you will be accompanied by a member of the senior leadership of the school.
- Any other condition imposed

OR

- You must not attend any event in school except for an annual meeting about your child's progress. This meeting will be conducted by the Deputy Headteacher.
- You may not contact by telephone or in writing any member of staff.

This decision will be reviewed again in six months' time. When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the application of conditions to attend school premises, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from you; and any evidence of your cooperation with the school in other respects.

OR

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Headteacher's report and your letter, Trustees have determined that you should once again be allowed to attend parents' events as usual. All conditions have been removed. However, should there be a repeat of inappropriate behaviour towards staff this decision may be revoked.

Yours sincerely

Clerk to Trustees

cc: Headteacher