



Brunswick House
Primary School



Managing Difficult/Abusive Parents or Visitors Policy

Reviewed: March 2024

Next review due: March 2026

1. Rationale

As a general rule, our school is a safe, welcoming place, where relationships between staff, visitors parents and carers, demonstrate mutual respect and recognition of shared responsibility for pupils' welfare and educational progress. We actively welcome parents and carers into our school. Parental involvement is an important factor in educational success and in dealing with emerging problems at an early stage.

However, on occasion, abusive or aggressive behaviour towards staff, pupils, or other members of our school community. can cause severe upset or disruption.,

Violence, threatening behaviour and abuse against school staff or other members of our school community will not be tolerated. All members of our school community have the right to expect that their school is a safe place in which to work and learn.

This document outlines guidance for dealing with violence, threatening behaviour and/or abuse by parents/visitors in our school, including those cases where the person has been asked not to come onto the premises. Some of the remedies listed are also applicable when dealing with other intruders/visitors on school premises.

There is no place for violence, threatening behaviour or abuse in schools.

2. Statement of Principles

The governing body of Brunswick House encourages close links with parents and the community. It believes that pupils benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one. The vast majority of parents, carers and others visiting our school are keen to work with us and are supportive of our school. However, on the rare occasions when a negative attitude towards the school or situation is expressed, this can result in aggression, verbal and/or physical abuse towards members of school staff or the wider school community.

Brunswick House Primary School expects and requires its own members of staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and to attempt to defuse challenging situations wherever possible, seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues. However, all members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse.

We expect parents/carers and other visitors to also behave in a reasonable way towards members of school staff. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken on the rare occasions where behaviour is unacceptable.

3. Unacceptable Behaviour

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

- shouting at members of school staff, either in person or over the telephone;
- continually taking up and wasting staff time;
- physically intimidating a member of staff, e.g. standing very close to her/him;
- the use of aggressive hand gestures;
- threatening behaviour;
- shaking or holding a fist towards another person;
- swearing;
- pushing;
- hitting, e.g. slapping, punching and kicking;
- spitting;
- breaching the school's security procedures.

This is not an exhaustive list, but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviours. Unacceptable behaviour may result in the police being informed of the incident.

4. Procedure to be followed

If a person behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the Headteacher or appropriate senior leader will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If necessary, the school's complaints procedures should be followed.

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

In imposing a ban the following steps will be taken:

1. The person will be informed, in writing, that she/he is banned from the premises, 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 police will be included.
3. The Chair of the Governing Body will be informed of the ban.
4. Where appropriate, arrangements for children being delivered to, and collected from the school gate will be clarified.

5. The Banning Process

The Headteacher will assemble the full facts before proceeding, making sure that all those involved in any incidents, or witnesses to those incidents, make a full written record as soon as possible.

Crucial elements:

- write to the person to record in detail the incident and why it is unacceptable;
- explain that the Governing Body will consider banning the person, giving them a period in which they may respond in writing giving their version and why they should not be banned;
- tell the person when a decision will be made.

The length of the ban

The ban should be finite in length, as only the most serious misconduct would justify an indefinite ban.

The duration needs to be sufficient to convey a clear message about the seriousness of the incident.

The aim should always be to restore “normal” relations as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Even if a ban is permanent, it should be reviewed periodically, taking account of subsequently demonstrated patterns of behaviour.

What does a ban achieve?

- it confirms to the person that the school will not tolerate abusive behaviour;
- it shows that the school takes the health, safety and emotional well-being of its staff, pupils and other members of its school community seriously.
- it provides a key element in making it easier to use legal remedies to prevent repeated misconduct, including use of S547 of the 1996 Education Act to enable police removal and possible prosecution of those on the school premises without permission;
- it may form the basis for an application for an injunction to curtail repeated instances of misbehaviour.

6. Parent/Carer Rights

Every attempt should be made to maintain communications with parents/carers. Even where a parent/carer has been banned from the school premises, they retain their right to an annual consultation in relation to the educational progress of their child/ren. However, the school may determine who will be present at the meeting (e.g. a senior member of staff might accompany the class teacher) and its location (e.g. it may be arranged off site).

The interests of the child should continue to be paramount.

7. Recording the Incident

Appendix 1, assists with the recording of any incidents of abuse, threatening behaviour or violence against any members of the school community. A record of an incident will help in the collection of evidence where necessary, such as when proceedings are being brought against an alleged assailant.

Photographic evidence of any injuries or damage, or relevant CCTV footage, will also be recorded on this form. Recording details of incidents will also help in reviewing the school’s policy, and may inform future risk assessments.

If there is an injury to staff from an assault, the school may need to report this to the

health and safety executive (HSE) under the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR), as amended in 2012.

8. Section 547, Education Act 1996

Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 makes it an offence for a trespasser on school premises to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance, and allows for the removal and prosecution of any person believed to have committed the offence. The penalty for a person convicted of the offence is a fine of up to £500.

A parent/carer of a child attending a school normally has implied permission (limited licence) to be on the school's premises at certain times and for certain purposes, but if their behaviour is unreasonable this permission may be withdrawn and they will become a trespasser.

A person who nevertheless persists in entering the school premises and displaying unreasonable behaviour may be removed and prosecuted under section 547.

In the case of our school, the Governing Body can independently authorise the removal of someone from the premises and may also authorise a person to bring proceedings against that individual. Additionally, in all situations the police are authorised to remove someone from school premises and to bring proceedings for an offence under this section.

School Action

A Headteacher has the right to decide who can come onto school premises but any communications should be sent by the Governing Body, on behalf of the Headteacher.

Using powers under section 547 allows for action which the local authority or Governing Body can take on behalf of a school and which can be straightforward, quick and effective in removing violent, aggressive or abusive people from school premises. In practice, it is amongst the most widely used remedies.

Section 547 will not be the most appropriate remedy in every circumstance. Serious violence, repeated harassment or racially aggravated behaviour for example, may warrant stronger criminal sanctions.

9. Steps taken in Brunswick House Primary School to reduce the risk of abuse from parents/visitors

The types of behaviours discussed in this policy are thankfully rare. We more commonly see the lower level of this spectrum, with parents/carers/visitors shouting or swearing when annoyed.

To prevent or deter abuse in Brunswick House Primary School:

- Have a welcoming ethos, which reinforces mutual respect

- Brunswick House employees model calm, professional courtesy when dealing with parents/carers/visitors in person or through written communication
- Brunswick House employees know they can politely terminate a phone call or meeting if a parent/carer/member of the public becomes abusive, threatening or swears
- Brunswick House employees alert senior leaders if their dealings with a particular person are becoming unpleasant/threatening
- Ensure that meetings which may become heated have two members of staff present
- Have the facility to make an audio recording of a meeting, if considered necessary

10. Conclusion

The school may take action where behaviour is unacceptable or there are serious breaches of the Home-school agreement or health and safety legislation. In implementing this policy, the school will, as appropriate, seek advice from the Local Authority's education, health and safety and legal departments, to ensure fairness and consistency.

Appendix 1

Incident Report Form

Relevant incidents include trespass, nuisance or disturbance on school premises, verbal abuse, sexual or racial abuse, threats, aggression, physical violence and intentional damage to property.

Where possible, the form should be completed before any discussion between witnesses is possible, as this might lead to allegations of collusion.

This form should be completed as fully as possible please, using a continuation sheet, if necessary. For any incident involving or witnessed by a student or parent/carer/visitor, a member of staff should complete the form on their behalf.

The completed form should be passed to the Headteacher, for appropriate action and recording.	
Date of incident:	
Time of incident:	
Name of person reporting incident:	
Date incident reported:	
Member of staff recording incident:	
Date incident recorded:	

