

# CONDUCT POLICY FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND VISITORS

<b>Statutory or non-statutory</b>	Non-statutory
<b>Reviewed by full Governing Body or committee</b>	Headteacher
<b>Policy review date</b>	June 2022
<b>Date of next review</b>	June 2025

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## 1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

The school encourages close links with parents/carer and the community. We believe that pupils benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one.

We welcome visitors to our school. We will act to ensure it remains a safe place for pupils, staff and all other members of our community. If a parent/carer has concerns, we will always listen to them and seek to address them.

However, abusive, threatening or violent behaviour will not be tolerated. Our expectations are clearly displayed in school (see appendix A). If such behaviour occurs, we will follow the procedures outlined in the London Borough of Havering's guidance – 'Keeping Schools Safe' and within this policy.

The vast majority of parents, carers and others involved in the school are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. The purpose of this policy is to provide a reminder to parents/carers and visitors to our school about expected conduct so that we can work together to ensure a safe and positive school environment for our children and staff, and to explain the measures that will be taken when issues arrive.

In this policy, the definition in the Education Act 1996 of the word parent is somewhat extended and includes an individual who has care of the child whether or not they are the natural parent or have parental responsibility for the child and includes step parents. Where an individual does not fall within this broad definition, the principles of this policy should still be applied (but the wording of the model letters should be amended accordingly).

## 2. EXPECTATIONS

We expect parents, carers and visitors to:

- Respect the caring ethos of our school and the learning environment (both in school and off site)
- Demonstrate that **all** members of the school community should be treated with respect and therefore set a good example in their own speech and behaviour
- Park with consideration and respect for others when delivering and collecting children from school
- Work together with teachers for the benefit of children; this includes approaching the school to resolve any issues of concern and to discuss and clarify specific events in order to reach a positive resolution
- Seek to clarify a child's version of events with the school's view in order to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue

In order to support a peaceful and safe school environment, the school does not tolerate:

- Disruptive behaviour which interferes, or threatens to interfere, with the operation of a classroom, an employee's office, office area or any other area of the school grounds, including at team matches
- Using loud or offensive language, swearing, cursing, using profane language or displaying temper
- Threatening harm or the use of physical aggression towards another adult or child; this includes approaching someone else's child in order to discuss an issue or chastise them and physical punishment against your own child on school premises (some actions may constitute an assault with legal consequences)
- Damaging or destroying school property
- Defamatory, abusive, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the pupils/parents/staff at the school on Facebook or any social media sites (see Appendix 1); any concerns you may have about the school must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and efficiently for all concerned, following our Complaints Policy.

## **Behaviour towards staff**

We expect parents/carers and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards members of school staff. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is inappropriate. Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated may include:

- Shouting at school staff, either in person or over the telephone.
- Verbally or physically intimidating a member of staff.
- The use of aggressive hand gestures e.g. two fingers raised.
- Threatening school staff, either in person or over the telephone.
- 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.

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

Should **any** of the above behaviour occur on school premises the school may feel it necessary to contact the appropriate authorities (including the Police) and, if necessary, even ban the offending adult from entering the school grounds.

We trust that parents and carers will assist our school with the implementation of this policy, and we thank you for your continuing support of the school.

### **3. RISK ASSESSMENT**

In the event of a parent, carer or visitor behaving in an inappropriate way, each situation will be considered individually by the Headteacher or a designated member of school staff. The following factors will be taken into account as a risk assessment, before deciding on the most appropriate course of action:

- Has the parent been verbally aggressive / threatening / intimidating?
- Has the parent been physically aggressive / threatening / intimidating?
- Has the parent aggressive / threatening / intimidating online?
- What evidence is there? What do witnesses say happened?
- Does the parent have a known previous history of aggression / violence? (Information can only be sought from the police when an official complaint has been made).
- Do members of the school staff / community feel intimidated by the parent's behaviour?
- Have pupils witnessed aggressive / threatening / intimidating behaviour from the parent?
- Have pupils been approached inappropriately by the parent?
- Has the parent been abusive to school staff, pupils or visitors?

- Has the parent been persistently abusive to school staff, pupils or visitors?
- Was the parent provoked in **any** way prior to their behaviour and/or does the parent claim to have been provoked?
- Is there evidence of provocation?
- How frequently have the behaviours occurred?
- Is there a risk (low, medium or high) that the behaviour may be repeated?

#### **4. OPTIONS FOR THE HEADTEACHER**

After evaluating all available information, and any other relevant factors, there are several actions the Headteacher may wish to take. These can include:

##### **Inviting the parent to a meeting to discuss events**

This could be helpful where a planned and structured meeting has either not been held before or has previously been productive. Skilled facilitators may need to be used. A full restorative meeting may be considered, but if it is not safe to bring all the parties together at a meeting, a restorative process can still take place through the exchange of information. The safety and well-being of those attending such a meeting must be carefully considered. It is strongly recommended that members of school staff 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 a parent who could potentially become aggressive cannot block exits. The meeting must be minuted, and a follow-up letter sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions. No meeting at the school may be electronically recorded without the express permission of all parties; information obtained without such permission will not be admissible in any potential proceedings.

##### **Clarifying 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 at a meeting, or by letter, however, any verbal explanation should be followed by a written confirmation of the discussion and the standards of behaviour outlined.

##### **Forming strategies to manage future situations of potential conflict**

It is sometimes possible to identify situations of potential conflict and to plan for these in a way that minimises potential risks. For example, where a parent persistently engages in arguments with staff in corridors at the beginning or end of the school day, the parent could be informed that any discussions with school staff must be held by prior appointment. Alternatively, the parent may be asked not to approach the class teacher, but should instead arrange to meet the Headteacher (or other member of the senior leadership team), who will deal with their concerns. In cases that are more serious a further option may be to advise the parent that in future their concerns should be dealt with by written communication. Any such arrangements should be confirmed in writing to the parent.

##### **Withdrawing permission for the parent to enter the school site and / or buildings**

In more serious cases of actual or threatened aggression/violence, or persistent abuse/intimidation, the Headteacher may need to consider whether it is safe for the parent to continue to come onto the school site or enter the buildings. In such circumstances, it is strongly recommended that the Headteacher first consult with the Governing Body.

Cases of actual assault should be reported to the Local Authority by completing the relevant forms, which are available via the LBH Health and Safety guidance.

A legal case in 1999, involving Wandsworth London Borough Council, established:

- That the parent of a child has a license to enter the child's school premises.
- That the license may be terminated, but that public law requires that the parent must first be given an opportunity to make representations about this.
- That failure to afford an opportunity to make representations would provide a defence against any subsequent proceedings for trespass (if the ban is breached).

This means that the Headteacher must ensure that he/she follows the correct procedures before taking the decision to withdraw permission for a parent to enter the school premises, who must be given ample opportunity to represent themselves.

Model letters are attached as Appendix B to this document.

### **Calling for police assistance**

In an emergency, police assistance should be sought. In cases where a ban is in place but is ignored and the person comes onto the school site, the police should be notified immediately. Staff will need to be aware of the ban and have agreed procedures in place should the person come onto the school site.

In situations where there is no immediate threat to staff, pupils, other members of the school community or the school's property, the Headteacher may still wish to make the local community police officer (e.g. safer neighbourhood team) aware of the situation.

The police could consider warning the offender of formal action, which may include legal proceedings.

## **5. LEGAL PROCEEDINGS**

Where individuals persist in coming onto the school site even when permission to do so has been withdrawn, it is possible for legal proceedings to be pursued. The options include:

### **Prosecution under section 547 of the Education Act 1996**

This requires substantial evidence to be gathered and presented by the police and/or local authority. Clearly it is not a quick process, and whilst in most cases the threat may prove to be a sufficient deterrent, prosecution can only be seen as the last resort as a punitive measure.

### **Appropriate/Acceptable behaviour contracts**

These are voluntary agreements made between people involved in anti-social behaviour, and the school concerned. They are flexible in terms of content and format, and can be an effective means of encouraging young adults, children and parents to take responsibility for unacceptable behaviour. The person named does not always agree with the contract, but it can be used as evidence at a later stage for an application for an anti-social behaviour order. Conditions can be put on the contract, e.g. not to enter school grounds.

### **Community Protection Notice (CPN)**

A CPN is a quick response tool, used to tackle a range of behaviours, ranging from low-level nuisance to serious acts of anti-social behaviour. Breaching the order is a Criminal Offence, which can lead to a fine or other legal remedial actions, such as seizure or forfeiture orders.

## **Civil Injunction**

These are sought in the same manner as the old ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR INJUNCTIONS or ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ORDERS however, the legal burden of proof is much lower than previously expected by the Courts. A Civil Injunction can be sought against anyone from the age of 10 upwards. The Order can include both prohibitive and positive measures as a means to control Anti-Social Behaviour. Breaching a Civil Injunction is not a criminal offence but can lead to stronger legal measures being considered.

## **Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO's)**

A Criminal Behaviour Order must be sought at Court via the Crown Prosecution Service. As such, it is a power mainly used by the Police. Additionally the CBO can contain conditions and prohibitions that do not relate to the offence which resulted in Court action (i.e. the perpetrator might have been arrested for robbery in the Town Centre but his/her CBO can relate not loud music in his home). CBO application must be lodged before sentencing at Court. As with a Civil Injunction, the Criminal Behaviour Order can include both prohibitive and positive measures as a way of controlling Anti-Social Behaviour. Breach of the order is a criminal offence.

## **Restraining orders (Protection from Harassment Act 1997)**

Section 2 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 provides for criminal or civil prosecution, for cases where someone causes alarm or distress to another person on more than two occasions. Section four provides for criminal or civil prosecution where people have been put in fear of violence on at least two occasions. In each case the sanctions include both criminal penalties (fines, imprisonment or community sentences) and a restraining order. These orders are generally quicker and easier to obtain, but are part of a criminal conviction.

## **Prosecution for criminal damage/assault**

Prosecutions for causing deliberate damage or injury may occasionally be the most appropriate course of action. If the police are called, the option to make criminal allegations is readily available, and they may arrest suspected offenders there and then. Official allegations should only be made if there is no intention of later withdrawing the complaint. Criminal proceedings can be initiated at a later date. All possible steps should be taken to prevent the loss of evidence. In particular, witnesses should be asked to make a record of exactly what they saw and heard at the earliest opportunity.

## **Seeking further advice**

Legal advice is available for schools via the Havering Legal Services, and individual cases should always be discussed with Legal Services to decide the most appropriate response.

Whilst the emphasis will usually be on ensuring safety and security of persons and property the injunction route is likely to be the most effective deterrent legal action, however, it does not necessarily guarantee against the behaviour of the more persistent offender.

## **6. RECORD KEEPING**

There should be clear and detailed records of all events, which must be kept up to date. Any witness statements (where appropriate) and contemporaneous notes of any subsequent meetings held to discuss the events should be retained. Notes should be signed and dated. There is often a tendency to use generic language eg "he was threatening and abusive." Reporting must be precise e.g. "he pointed his finger at my face from a distance of two feet and shouted that he was "going to f...ing kill me." Words used and body actions/demeanor/voice volume and pitch should all be included

If there is recorded information, such as CCTV, this should be retained, and witnesses should be asked to make a record of exactly what they saw and heard at the earliest opportunity.

It is also advisable to ensure that in every case, even where a formal letter is not required, parents receive a written confirmation of the events and the Headteacher's response.

If the police are asked to deal with an incident as a criminal investigation, there are a number of actions that may hinder this process. Witness details should not be made known to suspected offenders or their families. Groups of witnesses or suspects should not be left together, or allowed to discuss what happened, before the police interview them. If in doubt always seek the advice of the police officer first.

A template incident recording form is attached as **Appendix C** to this document.

Any incident should also be reported to the Local Authority using the on-line Accident Incident Reporting (AIR) form, available by following the link below; [https://online.havering.gov.uk/officeforms/accident\\_report1.ofml](https://online.havering.gov.uk/officeforms/accident_report1.ofml)

### **Support for employees**

If a member of staff is unfortunate enough to be subject to serious physical and/or verbal abuse, there are a variety of sources of potential support available to them.

In such circumstances, the immediate and ongoing support of colleagues will be invaluable.

Where schools subscribe to an employee assistance programme, staff can obtain confidential specialist support by calling the Employee Assistance Helpline 08000 856 158 (the service is provided by a company called Education Support Partnership). The helpline is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and can be called as often as needed.

The staff associations/trade unions are also likely to be a source of assistance.



**We welcome visitors to our school.**

**We will act to ensure it remains a safe place for pupils, staff and all other members of our community.**

**If you have concerns we will always listen to them and seek to address them.**

**Please be aware that abusive, threatening or violent behaviour will not be tolerated in this school.**

**Visitors behaving in this way are likely to be removed from the premises and prosecuted.**





## APPENDIX B – MODEL LETTERS

Models letters are provided in appendices B(a)-B(f)

### **Model letter 1:**

This is an initial warning letter which can be sent by the Headteacher when it is felt that further serious incidents will warrant a ban.

### **Model letter 2:**

It is suggested that this letter is sent by the Chair of Governors when, after full consideration, it is felt a ban is necessary.

Normally this would follow from a warning (letter 1), **though there may be occasions where it is appropriate to move directly to a ban.**

At this point consideration should also be given to any practical issues, in particular to ensure that the pupil(s) concerned can be properly accompanied to and collected from school, and to ensure there can be an effective exchange of necessary information between the school and parent.

At this stage, the ban takes effect immediately, but as the letter indicates, the parent must be enabled to make representations. A period of a week is recommended to allow for this, at the end of which the Chair of Governors should consider any representations made before making a decision to either confirm the ban or discontinue it (see model letters 3a and 3b).

### **Model letters 3a/b:**

These letters confirm the outcome of the review of the ban by the Chair of Governors. In the event that the decision is made to confirm the ban, a date should be included for a further review. This should be for a reasonable period, possibly extending up to three months, but preferably not longer than six months.

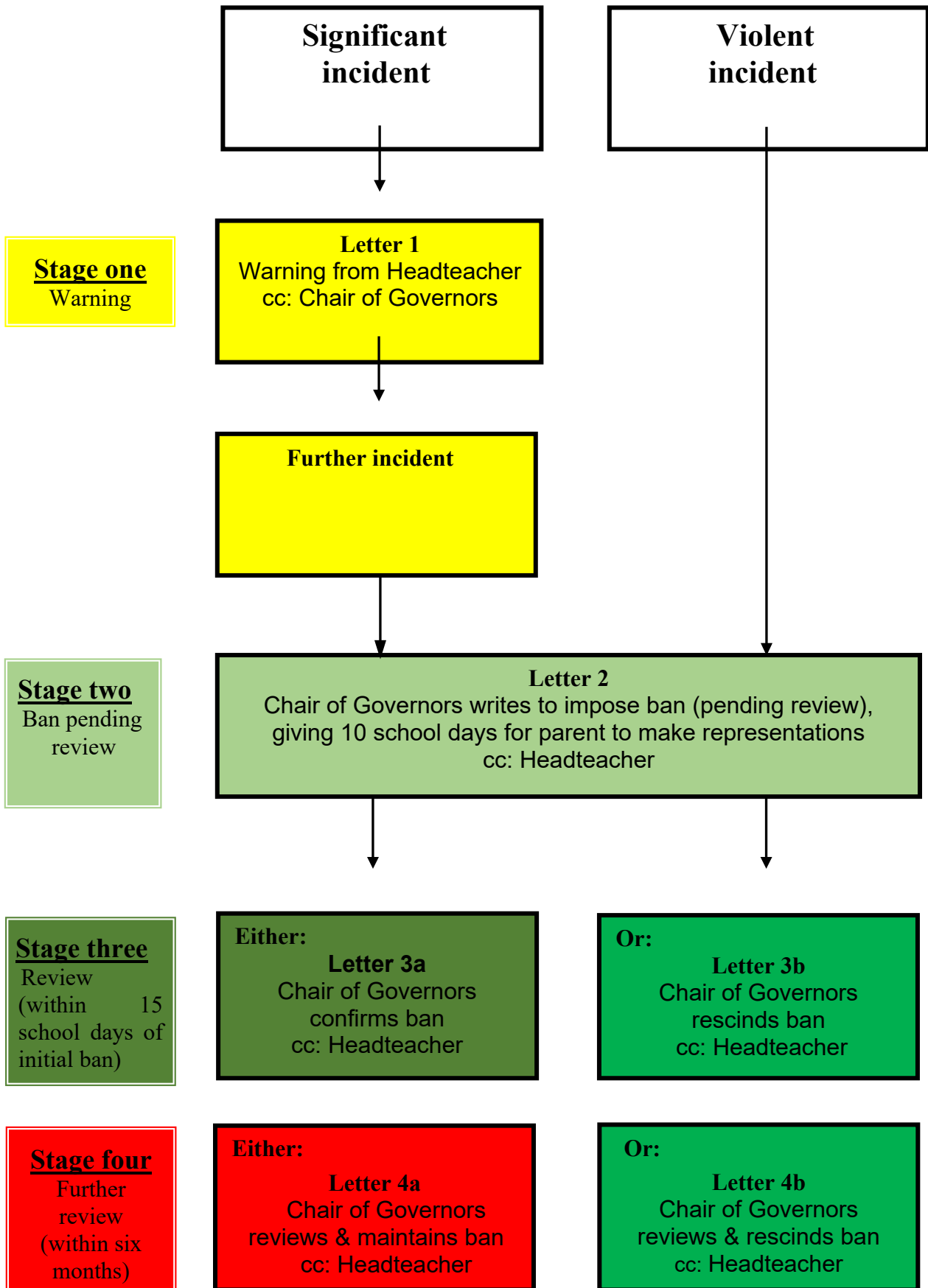
If the parent is dissatisfied with this decision, it is suggested in the model letter that the matter is then appropriately considered by a panel of school governors.

### **Model letter 4a/b:**

These letters can be used to confirm the outcome of further reviews of decisions where the ban has been extended. When a review is due to take place it is advisable to notify the parent in advance and invite them to make any representations.

A flowchart showing the process to be followed for a ban is shown overleaf.

Flowchart for process to ban a parent from the school premises



Appendix B(a) - **Letter 1 Warning (sent by Headteacher)**

Dear .....

In line with expectations of adult visitors to the school, as outlined in our policy, I am writing to advise you formally that your behaviour towards ..... on ..... was totally unacceptable and I have taken advice on how to proceed.

**Or**

I am very concerned about the unsatisfactory nature of our meeting/telephone conversation on ..... and I have taken advice on how to proceed.

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

I have now been able to investigate the incident further and I understand that .....

**Or**

As I witnessed your behaviour myself there is no need for me to investigate the incident further.

**Optional** I am not prepared to continue to accept such behaviour. If parents are unhappy about any aspect of their child's education or school they can arrange to have a meeting at an appropriate place and time.

**Optional** In the circumstances I must ask you not to approach any of my staff directly until further notice, though you will still be able to make contact through me.

For the future I must inform you that any repetition of such behaviour towards any of the school staff, pupils or others connected with the school will be followed by an immediate withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of Governors. Should you wish to discuss the contents of this letter please make an appointment to see me via the school office.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

cc: Chair of Governors

Appendix B(b) - Letter 2 **Withdraw permission pending review (sent by Chair of Governors)**

Dear

I have received a report from the Headteacher of Branfil Primary School about your conduct on ..... at .....

**(add details of incident and its effect on staff and pupils)**  
**(optional reference to first letter from Headteacher)**

I must inform you that the governors, 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. On the advice of the Headteacher, I am therefore instructing you that until I have reviewed this incident, you are not to reappear on the school premises. If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises. If you cause a nuisance or disturbance on the premises you may be prosecuted under section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of £500.

Until this decision is reviewed if you cannot arrange for another parent/carer to bring/collect your child(ren) you may bring your child(ren) to school and collect them at the end of the school day, but you must not go beyond the school gate.

**For primary children** – arrangements have been made for your child(ren) to be collected and returned to you at the school gate by a member of the school staff.

Special arrangements can be made for you and a representative/friend to meet with the Headteacher, if necessary, but this may only be with the written permission of the governors.

The withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises takes effect immediately and will be in place for 15 school days in the first instance. I still need to decide whether it is appropriate to confirm this decision. Before I do so, I wish to give you an opportunity to give me in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to the report that I have received from the Headteacher. These comments may be to challenge or explain the facts of the incident, to express regret and give assurances about your future good conduct. To enable me to take a decision on this matter, please send me any written comments you wish to make by **(date 10 school days from date of letter)**.

If on receipt of your comments, I consider that my decision should be confirmed, you will be supplied with details of how to pursue a review of your case.

I am copying this letter to the Headteacher.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors  
cc: Headteacher

Appendix B(c) - Letter 3a Withdrawal of permission confirmed (sent by Chair of Governors)

Dear

On ..... I wrote to inform you that on the advice of the Headteacher I had withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of Branfil Primary School. To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by ..... .

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

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Headteacher's report, I have determined that the decision to withdraw permission for you to come onto school premises should be confirmed. I am therefore instructing that, until further notice, you are not to come onto the premises of the school without the prior knowledge and approval of the Headteacher.

If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises of the school. If you cause a nuisance or disturbance on the premises, you may be prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

Even though we have taken this decision, the Headteacher and staff at Branfil Primary School remain committed to the education of your child(ren), who must continue to attend school as normal (**if Primary add**) and under the arrangements set out in my previous letter.

This decision will be reviewed again ..... (**insert review date which should be within a reasonable period and no longer than six months**). When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the withdrawal of permission to come onto the 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.

If you wish to pursue the matter further you have a right to complain to a panel of school governors who have not been involved previously and who will consider the circumstances of the decision to withdraw permission for you to come on to the school site. You can make your complaint by writing to the Clerk to the Governors, c/o Branfil Primary School.

**(Where the incident has arisen in the context of a parental complaint against the school, the following may be inserted)** Finally, I would advise you that I have asked the Headteacher to ensure that your complaint that..... is considered under the appropriate stage of the school's parental complaints procedure. The school will contact you about this in due course.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors (cc: Headteacher)

Appendix B(d) - **Letter 3b Restore permission after review by Chair of Governors (sent by Chair of Governors)**

Dear

On ..... I wrote to inform you that on the advice of the Headteacher I had temporarily withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of Branfil Primary School. To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by .....

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

In the circumstances, and after consulting further with the Headteacher, I have decided that it is not necessary to confirm the decision and I am therefore restoring to you permission to come onto the school premises, with immediate effect.

**(Optional)** I must warn you, however, that if it should become necessary in the future I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the school premises once again.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors  
cc: Headteacher

Appendix B(e) - Letter 4a Continue ban after second review (sent by Chair of Governors)

Dear

I wrote to you on ..... confirming that permission for you to come onto the premises of Branfil Primary School had been withdrawn until further notice. I also advised you I would take steps to review this decision by .....

I have now completed the review. However, after consultation with the Headteacher, I have determined that it is not yet appropriate for me to withdraw my decision. **(Add brief summary of reasons).**

I therefore advise that you are not to come onto the premises of Branfil Primary School without the prior knowledge and approval of the Headteacher. This instruction remains in place until further notice. If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises and you may be prosecuted under section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

I shall undertake a further review of this decision by ..... **(insert review date which should be within a reasonable period and no longer than six months).**

In the meantime you can write to me with a statement of your views, which I will consider.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors  
cc: Headteacher

**Appendix B(f)** - Letter 4b Restore permission after later review (sent by Chair of Governors)

Dear

I wrote to you on ..... confirming that permission for you to come onto the premises of Branfil Primary School had been withdrawn until further notice. I also advised you I would take steps to review this decision by .....

I have now completed the review. After consultation with the Headteacher I have decided that it is now appropriate to restore permission for you to come onto the school premises with immediate effect.

I trust that you will now work together with the school and there will be no further difficulties of the kind which made it necessary to restrict your access to the school premises.

**(Optional)** I must warn you, however, that if it should become necessary in the future I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the school premises once again.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors  
cc: Headteacher





<b>Date and time of incident</b>	
<b>Details of person(s) assaulted/ verbally abused</b>	
Name	
Address and telephone number	
Role	
<b>Details of perpetrator</b>	
Name	
Address and telephone number	
Relationship to the school	
<b>Details of witnesses</b>	
Witness 1: Name, contact details and relationship to the school	
Witness 2: Name, contact details and relationship to the school	
Witness 3: Name, contact details and relationship to the school	

<p><b>Description of the incident</b></p> <p>(include relevant events leading up to the incident, details of those present, whether weapons were involved etc)</p> <p>There is often a tendency to use generic language eg “he was threatening and abusive.” Be precise eg “ he pointed his finger at my face from a distance of two feet and shouted that he was “going to f...ing kill me.” Words used and body actions/demeanor/voice volume and pitch should all be included</p>	
<p><b>Location of incident</b></p> <p>(attach sketch if appropriate)</p>	
<p><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>(were police called, what happened after the incident)</p>	

**Other information to be recorded as appropriate**

<b>Any possible contributory factors</b>	
<b>Is the perpetrator known to have been involved in any previous incidents?</b>  (if yes, give details)	
<b>Were measures in place to try to prevent an incident of this type occurring? Could these be improved?</b>  If no measures were in place, could action be taken now to prevent reoccurrences?	
<b>Name and contact details of police officer(s) involved.</b>  Incident number/ crime reference number	
<b>Any other relevant information</b>	
Form completed by (name and role)	
Date form completed	

## Appendix D – Dealing with abusive telephone calls

Sometimes staff may have to deal with challenging, abusive, aggressive or threatening telephone calls. It is unacceptable for any member of staff to be subjected to such abuse but staff may not know how to handle such a telephone call. This guidance has been produced to assist staff if they are faced with such a situation.

To reduce the likelihood of callers becoming abusive staff should conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner and make every attempt to meet the needs of the caller. Staff should also have the confidence that it is acceptable to end an abusive telephone call.

Always:

- remain calm and polite
- stay in control of the situation
- actively listen – repeat information back to the caller to test understanding of the issue and gain their agreement
- inform the caller they are trying to help them
- be positive and say what you can do
- be clear and avoid using jargon
- if necessary, apologise for any error and take action to put it right
- if you have to go and get some information, let the caller know why you are putting them on hold and do not leave them on hold for a long time. Update them as necessary
- make notes of the conversation
- follow the procedure below if appropriate
- refer the caller to the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher etc.

Never:

- respond in the same manner as an abusive caller
- take it personally
- allow yourself to be bullied
- slam the phone down.

**Script for abusive telephone calls:**

**When the caller starts to raise their voice/be abusive:**

Mr/Mrs/Ms...please don't raise your voice/swear at me, I am not raising my voice/being rude to you. If you continue to raise your voice/be rude to me then I will be forced to terminate the call.

**When the caller continues to raise their voice/be abusive:**

Mr/Mrs/Ms..... I understand you are upset/frustrated however I am not prepared to continue to be shouted/sworn at so you can either call back when you have calmed down or if you prefer you can put your concerns in writing.

**If, despite the two warnings above, the caller continues to raise their voice/be abusive:**

Mr/Mrs/Ms.... I advised you earlier about raising your voice/swearing and you have continued to do this, so I am afraid I am going to have to terminate this call. **Hang up.**

**Further actions:** Make a written note of the telephone call or use the incident report form (Appendix C) and report the incident to your Headteacher.

## **Appendix E – Online Abuse / bullying**

Staff in schools may become targets of online abuse/bullying and, like other forms of bullying, it can have a significant impact on their health, well-being and self-confidence. Protecting staff from abuse is best done within a prevention framework, including whole school policies and appropriate practices.

Online abuse/bullying may consist of threats, harassment, embarrassment, humiliation, defamation or impersonation. It may take the form of general insults, or prejudice based abuse, e.g. homophobic, sexist, racist or other forms of discrimination. It may involve social networking sites, email, chat rooms, websites, , mobile and fixed-point phones, digital cameras, games and virtual world sites.

Online Abuse can occur at any time and incidents can intrude into the victim's private life. The audience for such messages can be very large and can be reached rapidly. The content of shared and forwarded messages is hard to control and the worry of content resurfacing can make it difficult for the victim to move on.

The London Borough of Havering endorses the decision of any school to operate a zero tolerance policy towards direct or indirect harassment or assault against any member of staff, volunteers and governors. This includes the use of social media and other forms of electronic communications to facilitate the act.

### **Online Bullying and the law**

While there is not a specific criminal offence called online bullying, activities can be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including those identified in the Legal Proceedings section

It is the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees. Incidents that are related to employment, even those taking place outside the hours or place of work may fall under the responsibility of the employer.

### **Responding to incidents**

- Staff should never retaliate i.e. personally engage with online bullying incidents.
- Keep any records of abuse – texts, emails, voice mails, or instant messages. Take screen shots of messages or web pages. Record the time, date and address of the site.
- Inform the appropriate person e.g. Headteacher, or designated safeguarding lead at the earliest opportunity.
- Where the perpetrator is known to be a current pupil or co-worker, this should be dealt with through the school's own behaviour management / disciplinary procedures.
- A designated member of the leadership team should contact the police where it appears that a law has been broken – for example, where death threats, assault, or racially

motivated criminal offences are involved. Where a potential criminal offence has been identified, the school should ensure that any internal investigation does not interfere with police inquiries. School staff are able to report incidents directly to the police.

- If a potential criminal offence has been committed and the school is not able to identify the perpetrator, the police may issue a Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) request to a service provider, enabling them to disclose the data about a message or the person sending it.
- The London Borough of Havering Legal Services team is available to offer support and advice via currently Stephen Doye.

### **Getting offensive content taken down**

Where online content is upsetting / inappropriate and the person(s) responsible for posting is known, the quickest way to get material taken down is likely to be to ensure that the person who posted it understands why the material is unacceptable and to request that they remove it.

If the person responsible has not been identified, or will not take the material down, the school will need to contact the host (i.e. the social networking site) to make a request to get the content taken down. The material posted may breach the service provider's terms and conditions of use and can then be removed.

Help and advice is available from the POSH. Very often the content that the school wishes to remove does not breach terms and conditions. The POSH can help with removal of content that would be a risk to an adult or a child.

### **POSH helpline**

*UK Safer Internet Centre - Professionals Online Safety Helpline*

- [helpline@saferinternet.org.uk](mailto:helpline@saferinternet.org.uk)
- 0844 381 4772 Open 10am - 4pm Monday to Friday
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/professionals-online-safety-helpline>

POSH support all professionals working with children and young people - teachers, social workers, doctors, police, coaches, foster carers, youth workers and so on.

The team can help with any online safety issues - privacy, online reputation, gaming, grooming, cyberbullying, sexting, inappropriate behaviour on social media and so on. As the only helpline in the UK solely dedicated to supporting the children's workforce, POSH are unique in their relationships within industry- having direct channels to escalate concerns to social media companies and many websites.

It is important to be clear about where the content is – for example by taking a screen capture of the material that includes the URL or web address. If the request is that they take down material that is not illegal, be clear how it contravenes the site's terms and conditions.

In cases of actual/suspected illegal content, the school should contact the police.

