



## **Managing Aggressive Behaviour from Parents and Visitors**

**Tees Valley Education Trust**

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Tees Valley Education (the Trust) and its academies value the positive relationships forged with parents and visitors. We encourage close links with everyone in the community and believe that pupils benefit when the relationship between home and the academy is a positive one. As a Trust, we strive to make our academies a place where as adults, we act as role models for the children, by exhibiting the behaviour we teach and expect.

As a Trust, we promote respect for all with whom we work, we celebrate difference in a positive manner; we place a high of degree of importance on good manners, positive communication and mutual respect.

The vast majority of parents, carers and visitors to our academies are keen to work with us and are supportive of the work we do. However, on the rare occasions, when a negative attitude towards the Trust or an academy is expressed; this can result in aggression, verbal and/or physical abuse towards members of the academy community.

Members of the Trust Board (hereafter referred to as the Board) expect and require 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, all members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse. As such, we expect parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable and respectful way towards members of staff.

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

## **2 DEFINITION OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

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

- shouting at members of the academy community, either in person or over the telephone;
- physically intimidating another person, e.g. by standing very close to her/him;
- the use of aggressive hand gestures including pointing;
- threatening behaviour;
- shaking or holding a fist towards another person;
- swearing;
- pushing;
- hitting, e.g. slapping, punching and kicking;
- spitting;
- breaching the academy's security procedures.

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

## **3 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 makes it an offence for any person to be on school [academy] premises to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance and allows for the removal and prosecution of any person believed to have committed an offence.

A parent of a child attending a school [academy] normally has implied permission to be on school [academy] premises at certain times and for certain purposes, but if the parent's behaviour is unreasonable, this permission may be withdrawn. This also applies to all other individuals invited into the school [academy] for other reasons.

Parents, carers or other visitors exhibiting unacceptable behaviour could be issued with a ban which prevents access to the academy premises/site. Should they ignore this ban, they would then become a trespasser on the academy site.

The Heads of Academy (HoA), will take the lead in authorising the removal of a person believed to be causing a nuisance or disturbance, and, if necessary, will bring legal proceedings against them. This information will be copied to the Chair of the Board.

Unacceptable behaviour by parents, carers or visitors may result in police involvement.

#### **4 DEALING WITH INCIDENTS**

If a parent/carer/visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the academy community, HoA will assess the level of risk before deciding on a future course of action (Appendix 1 - REFMAB0001)

Senior Leaders may seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. This may include meeting the parent/carer/visitor, clarifying the Trust's expectations and agreeing strategies to manage future incidents (Appendix 2).

If necessary, the Trust's Complaints Procedures will be followed.

Where all procedures have been exhausted and unacceptable behaviour continues (OR where there is a serious incident) then further action may be taken, including banning the individual from the academy site/premises and reporting the matter to the police (Appendix 3).

Following a first incident of unacceptable behaviour, the incident should be recorded on an Incident Record Form (REFMAB0002). An academy senior leader will write to the individual outlining the nature of the unacceptable behaviour (REFMAB0003). This letter reminds the individual of acceptable behaviour and warns them that a repeat of such behaviours may lead to a ban.

In the event that a first offence is serious e.g. a physical assault, then an immediate ban will be imposed without warning (fixed term or permanent) (REFMAB0004). He/she would then be given an opportunity to explain his/her actions in writing, after which a decision would be made about the term of the ban (fixed term or permanent). Evidence from all parties would be considered and the ban reviewed. Once a decision has been made, there is no right of appeal.

Where at least one incident of unacceptable behaviour has previously been recorded, a ban will immediately be imposed. In this situation the parent/carer/visitor will be given an opportunity to explain their behaviour in writing, after which a decision will be taken to confirm, remove or extend the ban.

If after a ban has been imposed, and the individual comes on to academy premises, the police will be called immediately (Appendix 3). The Co-CEO would then decide, in conjunction with the Chair of the Board, whether to consider taking out a Court Injunction to prevent this from happening again.

Throughout this process thorough record keeping is critical (Appendix 4).

## **5 BANNING PROCEDURES**

In imposing a ban the following steps will be taken:

- The parent/carer/visitor will be informed, in writing, that she/he is banned from the premises (fixed term and subject to review, or permanent) and of the consequences if the ban is breached.
- Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the police will be included.
- The Chair of the Trustboard will be informed of the ban.
- Where appropriate, arrangements for pupils being delivered to, and collected from the academy gate will be clarified.
- A review date for consideration of the ban (fixed term only) will be decided upon and communicated to the parent/carer/visitor.
- Following the review, the outcome will also be communicated to the parent/carer/visitor.

(Model letters and forms are available from Tees Valley Education Head Office).

### **Conclusion**

The Trustboard may also take action where behaviour is unacceptable or there are serious breaches of our home-academy agreement or health and safety legislation.

In implementing this policy, the academy will, as appropriate, seek advice from the Trust's health and safety provider and legal departments, to ensure fairness and consistency.

**APPENDIX 1: RISK ASSESSMENT**

**MANAGING AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR FROM PARENT/VISITORS AND VISITORS  
RISK ASSESSMENT**



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In the event of a parent/visitor behaving in an inappropriate way, each situation will need to be considered individually by the Executive Principal or senior leader. The following factors should be taken into account as a risk assessment, before deciding on the most appropriate course of action:

|  | YES                | NO |
|--|--------------------|----|
| Has the parent/visitor been verbally aggressive/threatening/ intimidating?   |                    |    |
| Has the parent/visitor been physically aggressive/threatening/ intimidating?   |                    |    |
| What evidence is there? What do witnesses say happened?  | Attach information |    |
| Do members of the academy staff/community feel intimidated by the individual's behaviour?  |                    |    |
| Does the parent/visitor have a known previous history of aggression/violence? (Information can only be sought from the police when an official complaint has been made)? |                    |    |
| Have pupils witnessed aggressive/threatening/intimidating behaviour from the individual?   |                    |    |
| Have children been approached inappropriately by the individual?   |                    |    |
| Has the individual been abusive to academy staff, pupils or visitors on more than occasion?  |                    |    |
| Was the parent/visitor provoked in any way prior to their behaviour and/or parent/visitor claim to be provoked?  |                    |    |
| Is there any evidence of provocation?  |                    |    |
| How frequently have the behaviours occurred?   | Attach information |    |
| Is there a risk (low, medium or high) that the behaviour may be repeated?  |                    |    |
| Date of Incident:  | Time of Incident:  |    |
| Name of person completing the form:  | Signed:            |    |

## **APPENDIX 2: OPTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION**

Inviting the individual 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. 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 the academy staff should 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 an individual who could potentially become aggressive.

The main points of discussion and any agreed actions should be noted, and a follow-up letter sent to confirm the academy's expectations and any agreed actions. Some individuals may covertly record meetings and then seek to use the information obtained to support their case; therefore, the staff member holding the meeting should state explicitly that information obtained without permission will not be permissible.

Protocols for behaviour during the meeting should also be established at the outset: Only one person speaking at a time, listening to each other, no shouting etc.

The purpose of the meeting is to try and avoid repeated incidents of unacceptable behaviour. This may include:

- 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 an individual persistently engages in arguments with staff in corridors at the beginning or end of the academy day, the parent could be informed that any discussions with academy staff must be held by prior appointment.
- Alternatively, the individual may be asked not to approach the teacher, but should instead arrange to meet with a senior leader, who will deal with their concerns.
- In more serious cases a further option may be to advise the individual that in future their concerns should be dealt with by written communication. Any such arrangements should be confirmed in writing.
- Withdrawing permission for the individual to enter the academy site and/or buildings (a ban).
- In more serious cases of actual or threatened aggression/violence, or persistent abuse/intimidation, senior leaders, in discussion with the EP, may need to consider whether it is safe for the individual to continue to come onto the academy site or enter the buildings.

At the end of the meeting, the individual should be reminded what is considered acceptable behaviour by the academy. However, any verbal explanation should always be followed by a written confirmation of the discussion and the standards of behaviour outlined.

### **APPENDIX 3: 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 academy 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 academy site).

In situations where there is no immediate threat to staff, pupils, other members of the academy community or the academy's property, senior leaders may still wish to make their local community police officer aware of the situation.

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



#### **APPENDIX 4: 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 notes of any subsequent meetings held to discuss the events should also be retained. Notes should be signed and dated.


Any physical evidence should be bagged and labelled, 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 senior leader's response.

If the police are asked to deal with an incident as a criminal investigation, there are a number of actions that may thwart 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 from the police officer in the first instance.
- An incident recording form is attached below.

**APPENDIX 5: INCIDENT RECORDING FORM**

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR BY PARENT/CARER/VISITOR</b></p> <p><b>INCIDENT RECORD</b></p> |  |  <p><b>TEES VALLEY</b><br/>EDUCATION<br/><a href="http://www.teesvalleyeducation.co.uk">www.teesvalleyeducation.co.uk</a></p> |
| INCIDENT RECORDING FORM  |  |  |
| Date & time of incident  |  |  |
| Date form completed  |  |  |
| Form completed by  |  |  |
| <p>Brief outline of incident</p> <p>Who? When? Where?</p> <p>What?</p>                     |  |  |
| <p>Why did it happen? Any contributing factors?</p>  |  |  |
| <p>Names of any witnesses</p> <p>Attach any witness statements</p>                         |  |  |
| <p>Is the individual known to have been involved in any previous</p>                       |  |  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| incidents? (if yes, give details)   |  |
| <p>Were measures in place to try to prevent an incident of this type occurring?</p> <p>Could these be improved?</p> <p>If no measures were in place, could action be taken now?</p> <p>Name and contact detail.</p> |  |
| <p>Name and contact details of police officer(s) involved.</p> <p>Incident number/ crime reference number</p> <p>Any other</p>  |  |
| Any other relevant information?   |  |
| Actions/Outcome   |  |

## **APPENDIX 6: MODEL LETTERS**

### **REFMAB0003: Warning no ban (senior leader on academy header)**

This is an initial warning letter following an incident of unacceptable behaviour which can be sent by a senior leader when it is felt that further incidents may lead to a ban.

### **REFMAB0004: Ban with review (HoA on Trust header)**

This letter is sent by the HOA and would follow a warning (model letter 1) in the event of a further incident, regardless of the timescale.

At this stage, the ban takes effect immediately, but as the letter indicates, the parent is able to make written representation. A period of a five academy days is recommended to allow for this, at the end of which the HoA will consider any information available. A decision will then be made to either confirm the ban (**REFMAB0006**) or discontinue it (**REFMAB0007**).

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 the academy, and to ensure there can be an effective exchange of necessary information between the academy and parent/carer/visitor.

### **REFMAB0005: Serious Incident – immediate ban with review (HoA on Trust Header)**

Immediate ban following a serious incident. The parent/carer/visitor is able to make written representation. A period of a five school days is recommended to allow for this, at the end of which the Executive Principal will consider any information available. A decision will then be made to either confirm the ban (**REFMAB0006**) or discontinue it (**REFMAB0007**).

### **REFMAB0006: Letter following review – withdrawal of permission confirmed (HoA on Trust Header)**

These letters confirm the outcome of the review by the EP. If the ban is confirmed then the date of the next review should be included. This should be for a reasonable period, expressed in school terms e.g half a term, a term etc.

### **REFMAB0007: Letter following review – permission restored (HoA on Trust Header)**

This letter confirms that the information has been reviewed and that permission to be on academy premises has been restored.

### **REFMAB0008: Letter following further review period – permission restored (HoA on Trust Header)**

This letter can be used where a ban has been continued following a review. The individual has complied with the request and there have been no further concerns regarding their conduct. The letter informs the individual that their licence to enter the academy site has been reinstated and reminds them of the importance of appropriate conduct.

### **REFMAB0009: Permanent Ban**

The decision to permanently ban an individual from an academy site can only be made by a Co-CEO. Whilst the Co-CEO may wish to consider any information provided by an individual in making a decision. The decision is final and there is no right of appeal.

In all cases where parents/carers are banned from site, 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 the academy, and to ensure there can be an effective exchange of necessary information between the academy and parent/carer/visitor.

## FLOW CHART

This flow chart aims to replicate the process that may occur when an individual chooses to behave in an unacceptable manner. It cannot replicate what may occur exactly. The model letters should always be reviewed to ensure that they accurately reflect circumstances.

