

Appendix One

OTTER VALLEY FEDERATION: Policy for Managing Unreasonable Behaviour

Policy on acceptable parent/carer behaviour: (this policy can be applied to any person engaging with one of the Otter Valley Federation schools)

The following policy can be used whether the unreasonable behaviour is as a result on an ongoing concern or complaint which the parent has expressed about the school, or not.

The schools in the Otter Valley Federation recognise that parents and carers are the single biggest influence on their children and their achievements. Therefore, the Federation and its schools are committed to building positive and responsive relationships with parents and carers so that together they can ensure that young people get the most out of their time with in the school.

The schools in the Federation encourage partnerships with parents and carers, and work hard to maintain mutual respect and recognition of shared responsibility for the children. However, in a very small minority of cases, the behaviour of a few parents or carers can cause disruption, resulting in abusive or aggressive behaviour towards staff, and this will not be tolerated. All members of the school community have a right to expect that their school is a safe place.

Schools are not public places and although parents and carers have rights to attend and enter school premises for legitimate proper purposes, The Education Act of 1996 states that it is an offence for a trespasser on school premises to cause a nuisance or disturbance. The school is entitled to withdraw the implied right a parent or carer has to enter the school, if that parent or carer is violent or aggressive. If the parent or carer then enters the premises, they are in breach of the law, and they can be prosecuted in the criminal courts.

This policy applies to all those that engage with the school and not just to parents.

Behaviours which can lead to a ban include:

1. physical or verbal threats towards staff, pupils, or other parents;
2. actual violence;
3. damage to property;
4. refusal to leave when asked;
5. disruption of the running of the school;
6. general abusiveness.

The head of school will decide whether the situation has been reached for proposing an actual ban. In extreme circumstances, i.e. if the incident is considered to be very serious, then s/he can issue a short-term temporary ban immediately, if required.

If the issue presents a less immediate threat then the head of school will consider issuing a warning letter which says that repeats of such behaviour will likely result in a ban. Events may occur in a number of stages and it may be that upon consideration by the head of school a warning letter should be issued.

The school will write to the parent/carer setting out:

- what has happened and why it is unacceptable;
- that the school will consider banning the parent/carer from the school premises;
- a clear explanation of why the ban is proposed;
- a deadline for the parent/carer of 5 working days to respond in writing, giving their own version of events;
- the length of the proposed ban and a proposed review date.

Following receipt of the written response (if one is received):

- the head of school will decide whether or not to ban the parent/carer;
- the parent/carer will be informed in writing within 3 working days of the decision taken;
- the terms of any ban will be clear, with explicit paths of communication between the school and the parent;
- pick up and drop off of children will be taken into consideration;
- a date for the review will be given, which will take into account what has happened in the interim period;
- if no further concerns have arisen regarding the parent's/carer's behaviour, a meeting date will be set which will seek to re-establish a productive working relationship between the school and the parent/carer.

In some cases the unacceptable behaviour is so extreme (for example, an assault on a member of staff) that the head of school may feel that there is no alternative but to impose a lengthy or permanent ban. In criminal cases the head of school will inform the police and contact their legal advisors (DCC Solicitors in maintained schools).

If a parent/carer wishes to appeal against a ban, they may do so in writing (following the complaints procedure). The first stage of this appeal will be undertaken by an appointed governor who would invite the head of school to review the matter with a view to lifting the ban. If the outcome of this stage is that the ban remains in place, then the parent may appeal further to a panel of governors according to the usual complaints process.

Following the appeal panel meeting the complaints procedure is complete. If the parent/carer is still unhappy with the way the school has managed the complaint, the parent/carer can submit a complaint to the Department for Education online at www.gov.uk/complain-about-school .

Or write to:

School Complaints Unit
Department of Education
2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate
Manchester M1 2WD