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Lanesend Primary School

Anti-Violence and Aggression Policy 2023 School Health and Safety Policy

Signed: **Date:** 29th March 2023
(Headteacher)

Signed: **Date:** 29th March 2023
(Chair of Trustees)

Review Date: March 2025 (Every 2 Years)
Reviewed By: Headteacher and Child-Centred Group

Lanesend Primary School Anti-Violence and Aggression Policy 2023

At Lanesend Primary School, the safety of all involved with our School: our children, our families, our visitors and our staff, is our number one priority. Staff are entitled to carry out their work without threat of verbal abuse or physical violence. We believe children, families and staff are entitled to a safe and protective environment in which to learn and work. Behaviour that will cause harassment, alarm or distress to users of the premises is contrary to the aim of the school, which is that all members of the school community treat each other with respect. Any displays of aggression to our staff by a family member or visitor will be taken seriously and will be investigated fully, to establish the appropriate action to take. Violence or abuse of any description will not be accepted.

We expect:

- That adults set a good example to children and each other at all times, showing them how to get along with all members of the school and the wider community
- That no children, family member or member of staff are the victims of abusive behaviour or open to threats from other adults on the school premises
- Physical attacks and threatening behaviour, abusive or insulting language verbal or written, to staff, Trustees, family members, children and other users of the school premises will not be accepted and may result in withdrawal of permission to be on school premises

Persons Causing Nuisance / Disturbance on School Premises **Section 547 of the Education Act 1996**

School premises are private property and family members have been granted permission from the school to be on school premises. However, in case of abuse or threats to staff, children or other family members, the school may ban family members from entering school.

It is also an offence under section 547 of the Education Act 1996 for any person (including a family member) to cause a nuisance or disturbance on school premises. The police may be called to assist in removing the person concerned.

School is not responsible for organising arrangements for children in the above circumstances. Families will need to provide alternative arrangements for bringing children into school.

Any family member who is asked to leave the school premises will have the right to appeal the decision by writing to the Chair of Trustees.

Guidelines:

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated towards any member of the school community:

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

- Shouting, either in person or over the telephone
- Inappropriate posting on Social Networking sites, including private Groups or Pages, which could bring the school into disrepute or be deemed as bullying
- Persistent emails that are unreasonable, vexatious or when concerns have already previously been dealt with
- Speaking in an aggressive/threatening tone
- Physically intimidating, e.g. standing very close
- The use of aggressive hand gestures/exaggerated movements
- Physical threats
- Shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- Swearing
- Pushing
- Hitting e.g. slapping, punching or kicking
- Spitting
- Racist or sexist comments including sexual innuendo

Inappropriate use of Social Networking Sites:

Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, Headteachers, school staff, and in some cases, other families or children. Lanesend Primary School considers the use of social media websites in this way as unacceptable and not in the best interests of the children or the whole school community.

Any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels and using our organogram to contact the appropriate member of staff, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

In the event that any child or family member of a child/ren is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other social network sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. All social network sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted on the site and they provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity which breaches this. The school will also expect that any family member or child removes such comments immediately.

Regardless of the circumstance, it is important to recognise that this is treated as unacceptable behaviour and will not be accepted. It is important that any staff member who suffers harassment of this nature keeps a timeline of incidents as this will form a key component of any future action taken.

In serious cases, the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly is the issue of cyber bullying and the use by one child or a family member to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social network entry. We will take and deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying.

Unacceptable behaviour may result in the Police being informed.

The school reserves the right to take any necessary actions to ensure that members of the school community are not subjected to abuse.

Procedure to address inappropriate behaviour on the school site

If an act of aggression or violence occurs the following steps may be taken:

Families or Visitors to Staff

- Staff remain calm and non-confrontational.
- Staff to call on a colleague to try to help calm the situation or to request the presence of the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.
- If the situation worsens staff must give the family member or visitor time to calm down or the option to revisit the concern at a later time.
- If they refuse to leave, staff will remind them that it is a School and as such they cannot allow the children or other staff to witness any aggressive behaviour.
- If they do not leave, and you feel the situation warrants it, ask another member of staff who is away from the situation to call the police, 999.
- The incident will be recorded, as soon as possible and within 24 hours, and an investigation will follow to decide on the course of action to take.
- Verbal or non-verbal abuse could lead to families being requested not to enter the school site. If this occurs, arrangements will be made to collect the child from the entrance of the school.
- If a member of staff is physically hurt then the incident will be referred to the Police for prosecution.
- If a member of staff experiences either violent or aggressive behaviour they will be supported by members of staff and offered advice or counselling.

Staff to Families or Visitors

If families should experience a member of staff displaying any type of aggressive behaviour they should bring it to the immediate attention of the school Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead and follow our complaints policy and procedure.

Family Member to Children

On the rare occasions when a family member is threatening and inappropriate to another family's child because of an incident that has occurred between children, this will not be tolerated. A full investigation will take place and the family member may have permission to enter the school site withdrawn.

Family Members to Family Members

When a family member is violent, threatening or aggressive to a member of another family, the incident will be investigated and appropriate actions will be taken, which may include the removal of permission to enter the site, under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996.

Children to Staff

When children are violent or aggressive towards staff, then please refer to our Behaviour Policy.

Dealing with Inappropriate Behaviour

The following actions should be taken when inappropriate behaviour is displayed:

Written Correspondence, including all electronic communication

Written correspondence includes, but is not limited to, written letters, emails, Dojo messages, Tapestry, Facebook messages.

When Lanesend Primary School receives a written communication that contains inappropriate content, a written response will be sent to the author by the recipient or their line manager, stating that a reply will not be sent until the correspondence is re-written removing the inappropriate content. If an appropriate response is thereafter received Lanesend Primary School will then respond. If no appropriate response is received, we will not give a substantive reply. If the written correspondence includes specific and credible threats then the details may be passed to the Police.

Telephone Calls

When dealing with a telephone call, where a caller uses inappropriate language, the caller will be warned that the call will be terminated unless the caller is prepared to desist from the use of inappropriate language. If the caller continues to use inappropriate language following the warning then the call may be terminated and the caller be asked to call back when they are prepared to use appropriate language. If the telephone call includes specific threats then refer it to the police and if it includes bomb threats then refer to the bomb threat policy.

Face to Face

When communicating face to face, and inappropriate language or behaviour is used, the appropriate response will depend on the specifics of the situation. It may be appropriate for staff to ask to desist from the use of inappropriate language or behaviour. However staff should note that they must not place themselves or others in danger to do so.

If inappropriate language or behaviour continues following the warning then, they may be asked to leave the school site and advised that we will write to inform them how their issues will now be addressed which may vary according to circumstances and the severity of the behaviour. Staff should seek guidance from their line manager.

If a family member attends Lanesend Primary School premises after the school has withdrawn permission to do so and they refuse to leave, the Headteacher, or as a last resort the police, may be called to remove them from the site.

In the event that a family member persistently exhibits inappropriate behaviour or language, it will be at the discretion of the Headteacher to decide whether to discontinue all future face to face contact for a specified period or if additional conditions on contact will be put in place. These can include attending by appointment only or at an agreed third party location, full withdrawal of permission to enter Lanesend Primary School site, or restrictions on communication. Such decisions will be notified to the family member in writing.

Other Types of Unacceptable Behaviour

Whilst one instance of some types of behaviour can be deemed unacceptable, such as threats of or actual physical violence, other types of behaviour may become unreasonable when it has occurred on a number of occasions, such as repeated requests for the same information or an inappropriate volume of correspondence.

Lanesend Primary School has a responsibility to ensure that its resources are used in a proportionate and reasonable way. It recognises that people often feel under pressure, distressed or that they have to be determined to pursue their concerns. They may also feel angry about their situation. It is important for staff to be able to distinguish between distress, frustration, determination, and behaviour which is unacceptable.

Examples of unreasonable behaviour may include but is not limited to one or more of the following:

- presenting the same issues repeatedly (exactly or with minor differences) but never accepting the explanations & outcomes.
- disproportionately, frequent, lengthy, complicated or stressful communication
- seeking unrealistic outcomes and persisting until it is reached,
- pursuing a complaint where Lanesend Primary School's complaints process has been fully and properly implemented and exhausted
- insisting that an issue is dealt with in a way that is not consistent with the school's policy
- electronically recording meetings and conversations without prior knowledge and consent of the other parties involved
- refusing to accept that certain issues are outside of the school's responsibility and control
- changing the fundamental basis of a complaint as the investigation proceeds
- submitting falsified documents
- making groundless complaints about employees
- attempting to use the complaints procedure to pursue a personal vendetta against a staff member, professionally or personally,
- raising large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions and insisting they are fully answered,

- making and breaking contact with Lanesend Primary School on an ongoing basis without proper justification,
- repeated approaches to different staff members about the same issue,
- demands which impose a significant burden on resources of Lanesend Primary School and where the contact:
 - Clear does not have any serious purpose or value
 - Is designed to cause disruption or annoyance;
 - Has the effect of harassing the public authority;
 - making personal or derogatory comments on social media directly or indirectly at individual staff members in relation to their job or the way it is carried out

Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour

Where it is identified that the behaviour of a family member(s) has become or is becoming unacceptable, the Headteacher will attempt to deal with the matter by communication with the family. This communication may take any format but must be confirmed in writing. The communication will explain the concerns of the school regarding the family member's behaviour and suggest a way forward to manage the issue. This may include a single point of contact (SPOC), agreement for weekly/fortnightly specified contact or any communication style deemed appropriate and proportionate in the circumstances of each individual case. The behaviour of the family member(s) should then be monitored for a set period. Log sheets (or electronic alternative) should be kept for this period.

If the Headteacher believes that, despite attempts at resolution, the family member continues in their behaviour the matter should be referred to the Chair of Trustees.

The Headteacher should include details of the behaviour, attempts at resolution and evidence of the behaviour (including any log sheets kept). The Chair of Trustees will consider the referral, in consultation with Legal Services, if necessary, based on the available evidence. The Chair of Trustees will instigate any further enquiries deemed necessary. Any restrictions imposed will be appropriate and proportionate. The options most likely to be considered are:

- Contact with the school only be accepted in a particular form (i.e., letter only)
- Contact will only take place with a named member of staff (or deputy in their absence)
- Restricting telephone calls to specified days and times
- Notifying the family member(s) that only significant and serious queries will be addressed by the school
- Notifying the family member(s) that only new issues will be dealt with and any issues (that have been previously dealt with) will not be acknowledged or actioned
- Banning the family member(s) from the school site
- Extreme cases may lead to the blocking of telephone calls and electronic contact with the school

The Chair of Trustees will write to the family member to explain what action is being

taken and why. The letter will also advise on the duration of the action and give details of how to appeal against the decision.

Review

Any restrictions imposed will be reviewed on a yearly basis by the Chair of Trustees and the Headteacher.

Where necessary the review period will be adjusted given the personal circumstances of the family member(s), the circumstances giving rise to the behaviour, or the level of risk identified to the student by the restrictions applied.

The aim of the review(s) is to remove any restrictions as soon as possible, where it can be shown that the behaviour giving rise to the school's action has subsided and there is no likely hood of a reoccurrence.

If further unacceptable behaviour has been exhibited during the review period, the Chair of Trustees and Headteacher may choose to extend the restrictions (or impose new restrictions) for a further period. Should this occur, the family member(s) will be informed of the reasons for the extension and be invited to comment on the proposal to extend the restrictions. This may involve a period of consultation between the Chair of Trustees and Headteacher and the family member(s) to alter restrictions, to make it easier for the family member(s) to comply.

Should the Chair of Trustees and Headteacher decide that the original restrictions remain imposed or new restrictions be imposed, then the family member(s) will be informed, in writing, what action is being taken and why. The letter will also advise on the duration of the action and give details of how to appeal against the decision.

Where it is believed that communication with a family member(s) is no longer deemed unacceptable after a review, then this will be communicated to the family member(s). The decision will be taken by the Chair of Trustees in consultation with the Headteacher and Legal Services (if necessary) and the reasons for it will be recorded.

Information Retention

Any documents used in the decision-making process of this policy, regarding an unreasonably persistent or vexatious family member will be retained by the Clerk to the Trustees for the duration of any restrictions, plus one year. The file will then be stored and subsequently destroyed in line with the school's retention policy.

Appeal

Appeals are determined by the Governing Body's Appeal Panel, who will confirm, amend, or remove the decision to restrict access. In all cases the school will write to the family member(s) to tell them of the results of the review and say what changes (if any) have been made to the decision to restrict access.