

Protecting Children, Staff and Visitors Policy



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For approval by the Finance and Resources Committee	Summer 2024
For Review	Summer 2027

Signed _____ (Chair of Finance & Resources Committee)

Dated _____

Protecting Children Staff and Visitors Policy

Trust Mission Statement

‘Working together to create better futures’

Overview

The ethos of the Alexandra Academy Trust encourages close links with parents* and the community. The Staff, Trustees and Governors believe that children benefit when the relationship between home and school/nursery is a positive one.

The Alexandra Academy Trust recognises that, in their responsibilities for providing for children, staff and visitors, they must endeavour to ensure that the environment is safe, secure, and free from threat in our Academies/Nurseries. The Trust is committed to proactively minimising any risk of violence within our Academies/Nurseries and will work in shared responsibility along with all staff for maintaining a safe and secure place for the benefit of everybody. Trustees and Governors also strive to make sure that schools and nurseries are places where adults act as role models for the behaviour expected of its pupils. There is a high level of importance placed on good manners, positive communication and general respect across our Trust and schools.

**For the purpose of this policy, the term ‘parent’ refers to anyone with parental responsibility, or who provides day to day care for a child in school or nursery.*

Right of Access

Parents/ visitors do not have an automatic right of access to the Academies buildings or grounds. The Trust, however, welcomes the partnership between parents and the Academies and Nurseries. Regular and reasonable access to staff is important, but this must be balanced against the need to generally protect everyone, particularly the children.

Behaviour

The vast majority of parents and others visiting our Academies/Nurseries are supportive of the Trust’s Academies and Nurseries. However, on rare occasions, the behaviour of a small number of parents falls short of what we expect. This sometimes manifests itself in aggression or abuse towards members of the school community. This can be in written communication (including social media), on the telephone, or in face-to face incidents.

In these circumstances, the Board of Trustees expect members of staff to remain professional, attempting to defuse the situation where possible, and seek the involvement of another colleague as appropriate. Staff who face these situations have the right to end any conversation. They should then refer the incident to a member of the Senior Leadership Team who will take appropriate action or invoke the provisions of this procedure.

All members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse. The Trust expects parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards members of Alexandra Academy Trust's staff. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

The Trustees are aware that problems between children in the school and nursery can sometimes continue after the working day. Similarly, arguments or disputes originating from outside of the school and nursery can cause difficulties in the working day.

Parents/carers/guardians are asked to bring such cases to the attention of the Principal, immediately. Parents **MUST NOT** take matters into their own hands by direct action in or around the Trust's buildings or grounds.

The Trust consider that aggressive, abusive, or insulting behaviour/language from a parent presents a risk to staff or pupils. Unacceptable behaviour is such that makes a member of staff or pupil feel threatened. This can be through face-to face contact, on the telephone or in writing (including social media).

Definition of Unacceptable Behaviour

The following is not an exhaustive list, but illustrates what is deemed to be unacceptable behaviour:

- The raising of voice so as to be intimidating either in person or over the telephone
- Using abusive or offensive language
- Any kind of insult as an attempt to demean, embarrass or undermine
- Physically intimidating a member of staff, parents or child e.g. standing very close to them, use of aggressive hand gestures, shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- Any kind of physical abuse; hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, pushing, spitting
- Threatening behaviour
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or transgender comments

- Allegations which turn out to be vexatious or malicious
- Repeated and excessive communication with or questioning of the school and expecting an instant response from staff
- Breaching the Trust's security procedures

Unacceptable behaviour may result in the Local Authority and the police being informed of the incident.

Protecting Children, Staff, Parents and Visitors Using the Law

1. All serious cases of assault will result in police involvement
2. Trespassers will be dealt with under section 547 of the Education Act 1996

"any person present without lawful authority on school premises, and who causes or permits nuisance or disturbance of such premises, commits an offence."

3. Incidents which are below the level of physical assault, but which use intentional or unintentional harm or distress will be dealt with under Sections 4 and 5 of the Public Order Act 1986.
4. Harassment of the pupils, parents, visitors or staff will be dealt with under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

Parents are encouraged to manage difficult matters through the Principal and/or Chair of Governors. This will avoid the need to refer to the law when situations become out of control.

2. Procedure to be followed

If a parent or visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the Principal or appropriate senior staff will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If the unacceptable behaviour continues, the meeting will be terminated the visitor will be asked to leave the premises.

Incident Reporting Procedures

All staff will be encouraged to report violent incidents to the Principal in order to prevent further occurrences.

Details of all incidents and actions taken will be recorded on a Violent Incident Form (Appendix 1) and reported to the Governors/Trustees.

All such incidents will be logged on PRIME by the Principal or a delegated member of the office team.

The CEO, Principal, or appropriate senior member of staff, will assess the level of risk before deciding on a future course of action. The course of action will be reasonable and commensurate with the assessed level of risk.

Risk Assessment

The CEO, Principal, or appropriate senior member of staff, will carry out a risk assessment in order to help make a decision about the level of response. In all cases, the response will be reasonable and proportionate. The CEO, Principal, or appropriate senior member of staff, carrying out the risk assessment will consider the following questions:

- What form of abuse was reported?
- What evidence is there?
- What do witnesses say happened?
- Are there previous incidents to take into account?
- Do members of staff or pupils feel intimidated by the parent's behaviour?
- Is there any evidence of provocation?
- How high is the risk of repetition or there will be retaliation at the school's action? (low, medium, high)

The Principal's Responsibilities

The Principal is responsible for assessing the risks to employees within each Academy and Nursery. Situations which may expose staff to potential risks will be identified and measures put into place to protect staff. Staff will be supported where situations arise and provided with advice and protection. These measures will be monitored for their effectiveness and any issues arising addressed.

Reviewing the Risk

- In assessing the risk, staff will bear in mind the support systems provided within each Academy and Nursery
- Staff will alert the Principal and staff to any potential risks they are aware of
- Previous incidents will be recorded and reviewed to identify potential problems

- High levels of site security will be maintained to provide a secure and safe environment whilst maintaining the functionality of each Academy and Nursery

Assessing those People at Risk

- Strict security systems will be maintained throughout the periods when the Academies/ Nurseries are closed to children, so as to monitor and control access to the building. On the rare occasion staff are working with children who may demonstrate challenging behaviour they will be closely supervised.
- Records will be maintained to identify patterns of violent incidents in order that situations can be minimised and controlled.

Evaluating the Risk and Taking Appropriate Precautions

Where a risk has been identified actions and precautions will be made to avoid the risk e.g.

- Risk of physical injury - Avoid lone working where possible.
- Risk of psychological injury - Ensure effective support strategies to avoid work related stress developing.

Advice will be made available to staff in dealing with violence and aggression or challenging behaviour from children or other adults/parents. A verbal warning will be issued to those demonstrating violent intent. They will be advised that their conduct must be remedied or they may face being asked to leave the building.

Assailants will be notified that legal action may be taken as a consequence of persistent actions. The Alexandra Academy Trust will seek legal advice in all such cases.

Recording Of Incidents

Staff or pupils that are subject to abuse and witnesses will make written statements about the incident(s) which will be kept and recorded by the school/Trust. Depending on an assessment of risk of retaliation to witnesses or individuals, statements made by adults may be made available to the parent if they request it.

Where a risk of violence is recognised the Principal/HR Officer will record the information on the PRIME system, including any actions taken to reduce the risk.

The Trust's/School's Response

Following the completion of the risk assessment, the CEO, Principal, or member of the school's senior leadership team in their absence, will decide the level of action to be taken.

Actions will include the following:

1. Clarify to the parent what is considered acceptable behaviour by the Trust/School

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate simply to ensure that the parent is clear about behaviour standards expected by the trust / school. This could be explained by letter from the CEO or Principal. This letter may contain a warning about future action if there are further incidents. The parent(s) will be invited to write to the CEO/Principal with their version of events within 10 working days. Depending on the parent's response, a meeting may then be held to discuss the situation and how this can be avoided in the future.

2. Invite the parent(s) to an informal meeting to discuss events

This could be helpful to discuss and defuse the situation. The safety and wellbeing of those attending such a meeting must be carefully considered. Members of the school staff will always 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 a parent who could potentially become aggressive. The main points of discussion and any agreed actions should be noted and a follow-up letter or email sent to confirm the Trust's/school's expectations and any agreed actions.

3. Impose conditions on the parent's contact with the Trust/School and its staff

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Parents of enrolled pupils have an 'implied licence' to come onto school premises at certain stated times. It is for schools to define and set out the extent of such access. Parents exceeding this would be trespassing.

Depending on the type, level or frequency of the unacceptable behaviour, the Trust/School may consider imposing conditions on the parent's contact with the Trust/School.

These conditions may include (but are not exclusively):

- Being accompanied to any meeting by a member of the school's senior leadership team
- Restricting contact by telephone to named members of the senior leadership team
- Restricting attendance at school events to those where the parent will be accompanied by a member of the senior leadership team
- Any other restriction as deemed reasonable and proportionate by the CEO/Principal

In this case the parent(s) will be informed, by letter from the CEO/Principal, details of the conditions that are being imposed. The parent would then be given 10 working days from the date of the letter to make representations, in writing, to the Chair of the Local Governing Board, about the conditions being imposed. The Chair of the Local Governing Board (or Vice-Chair in their absence) will then decide whether to confirm or remove the conditions. This would be communicated to the parent in writing within 10 working days of the date the letter from the parent was received.

In this case the parent(s) will be informed, by letter from the CEO/Principal, details of the conditions that are being imposed. The parent would then be given **10 working days** from the date of the letter to make representations, in writing, to the Chair of the Local Governing Board, about the conditions being imposed. The Chair of the Local Governing Board (or Vice-Chair in their absence) will then decide whether to confirm or remove the conditions. This will be reviewed by the Local Governing Board after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The parent will be invited to make written representation to the governors.

This, and the evidence from the school, will be considered at a meeting of the Local Governing Body. Governors may decide to maintain, extend or remove the conditions. The decision of the review will be communicated to the parent by the Clerk to Governors within **10 working days** of the date of the meeting.

When deciding whether it will be necessary to maintain, extend or remove the conditions, governors will give consideration to the extent of the parent's compliance with the conditions, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance or future good conduct received from them, plus any evidence of the parent's co-operation with the Trust/School in other respects.

Imposing a Ban

Where all procedures have been exhausted, and aggression or intimidation continues, or where there is an extreme act of violence, the school may consider banning the individual from school premises. parent for a period of time, subject to review as defined in section 547 of the Education Act. (1996)

This will include banning a parent from accessing or contacting school staff through any means.

The individual will be informed, in writing, by the CEO/ Principal that a provision ban is being imposed. When it was subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, e.g. that police involvement or an injunction application may follow. Appropriate, arrangements for pupils being delivered to, and collected from the school gate will be clarified in writing.

Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the local authority and the police will be included.

The Chair of the Local Governing Board and the Trustees Board will be informed.

The parent would then be given **10 working days** from the date of that letter to make representations, in writing to the Chair of Governors, about the ban. The Chair of Governors (or Vice Chair in their absence) would then decide whether to confirm or remove the ban. This would be communicated to the parent, in writing, within 10 working days of the receipt of their letter.

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If the Chair of Governor's decision is to confirm the conditions imposed,

If the Chair of Governors (or Vice Chair in their absence) decides to confirm the ban, then the school will offer these parents an annual meeting to discuss their child's progress. This meeting would usually be with a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team.

A decision to impose a ban will be reviewed by the Local Governing Board after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The parent will be invited to make written representation to the governors. This, and the evidence from the school, will be considered at a meeting of the Local Governing Body. Governors may decide to maintain, extend or remove the conditions.

The decision of the review will be communicated to the parent by the Clerk to Governors within **10 working days** of the date of the meeting.

When deciding whether it will be necessary to maintain, extend or remove the ban (with or without conditions), governors will give consideration to the extent of the parent's compliance with the ban, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance or future good conduct received from them, plus any evidence of the parent's cooperation with the school in other respects.

Removal From School

Parents who have been banned from the school premises and continue to cause a nuisance, will be deemed to have committed a Section 547 offence. They will be considered as trespassers. In these circumstances, the parent may be removed from the school grounds. This may be carried out by a police officer or person authorised by the Local Governing Board. Legal proceedings may be brought against the parent in this situation.

Monitoring

Each Principal will monitor trends in violence and aggression on the school and nursery premises. Where a pattern occurs then an action plan, designed to reduce or prevent the incidents of violence, will be devised to address concerns.

Review

All risk assessments will be reviewed regularly to ensure that actions are effective and that staff are adequately supported both physically and psychologically.

Conclusion

If a parent/visitor is intimidating, threatening or aggressive towards any member of the Alexandra Academy Trust community, any interaction will be terminated immediately and the person will be instructed to leave the premises. Further action may be taken by the Trust.

This policy will promote the excellent ethos of the Alexandra Academy Trust. It will ensure that children and staff feel safe and secure. It will promote the high standards and expectations set out in the Trust's Aims and Mission Statement.

In implementing this policy, the Trust will, as appropriate, seek advice from the Local Authority, legal advice to ensure fairness and consistency.

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Acceptable Use Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Administration of Medication Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Cared for Children Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Complaints Policy
- DfE guidance 'Advice on School Security: Access to, and barring individuals from school premises' (December 2012)
- DfE 'Behaviour in Schools' (September 2022)
- DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
- DfE Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2023
- Educational Visits and Overnight Stays Policy
- Equality Policy
- Evacuation and Lockdown Policy
- First Aid Policy
- GDPR Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Individual Curriculum Policies
- Intimate Care Policy
- Missing Child Policy
- No Smoking Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Positive Handling Policy
- Prevention of Extremism and Radicalisation Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

- Supporting Children with Medical Needs Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Trust Staff Handbook (which includes Staff Code of Conduct)
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Appendix 1



VIOLENT INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Date of Incident: _____

Employee Involved _____

School/Nursery Location _____

Type of Incident: Physical ☐ Verbal ☐ Other ☐

Action taken by the Principal:

Details of injuries sustained, property damaged or verbal/media comments:

Signed (Principal) Date

Signed (Employee) Date