

Dealing with Abusive Adults Policy



Review Date

January 2024

Ratified

January 2024

Next Review Date

January 2025

Responsible Directorate

[Education]

Our Trust

*These four critical questions make it clear who we are and what we do.
We ask ourselves these questions to guide our work and our improvement.*

Why do we exist?

To **transform life chances** by achieving the highest possible standards and preparing all our students to lead successful lives.

How do we behave?

- **Hard work**
We are determined to see things through to the end and are resilient when faced with challenges.
- **Integrity**
We do the right thing because it is the right thing to do.
- **Teamwork**
We work together to help everyone succeed.

What do we do?

- We educate, safeguard and champion all our learners.
- We set high standards for ourselves and our learners.
- We build the powerful knowledge and cultural capital which stimulate social mobility and lifelong learning.

How will we succeed?

1. Aligned autonomy
2. Keeping it simple
3. Talent development

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1 | Statement of Intent

- 1.1 This policy has been written considering the DfE guidance on school security: Access to, and barring individuals from school premises, November 2018, as well as NAHT guidance on dealing with abusive adults.
- 1.2 At Academy Transformation Trust we value the positive relationships forged with parents, carers and visitors to the academy. We encourage close links with parents and the community and believe that students benefit when the relationship between home and the academy is a positive one.
- 1.3 We also strive to make our academies a place where, as adults, we model for students the behaviour we teach and expect. In general, we place a high importance on good manners, positive communication, and mutual respect.
- 1.4 Almost all parents, carers and visitors to our academies are keen to work with us and are supportive of the academy. However, on very rare occasions the behaviour of a small number of adults falls short of what we expect. This sometimes manifests itself in aggression or abuse towards members of the academy community. This can be in written communication (including social media), on the telephone, or in face-to-face incidents.
- 1.5 In these situations, we expect members of staff to behave professionally, attempting to defuse the situation where possible and seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues. Staff who face these situations have licence to end any conversation (face to face or on the telephone). They should then refer the incident to a senior manager who will take appropriate action or invoke the provisions of this policy.
- 1.6 The overriding principle is that all members of the academy community have the right to work or be in the academy without fear of aggression or abuse from adults. The Trust has an obligation to protect staff and students from such aggression.
- 1.7 Actions taken against the adult will be reasonable and proportionate. The adult will have the opportunity to put their views forward at every stage. In the case of the imposition of conditions or a ban from school, robust review processes involving the Chair of Governors and then the Local Governing Body are in place to ensure fairness.

2 | Definition of Unacceptable Behaviour

- 2.1 We consider that aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language from an adult presents a risk to staff or students. Unacceptable behaviour is such that makes a member of staff or student feel threatened. This can be through face-to-face contact, on the telephone or in written communication (including social media). The following is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour:

- Any kind of insult as an attempt to demean, embarrass or undermine
- Any kind of threat or raising of voice to be intimidating
- Physical intimidation, e.g. by standing very close or the use of aggressive hand gestures
- Use of foul or abusive language
- Any kind of physical abuse
- Allegations which turn out to be vexatious or malicious

2.2 The academy's approach to dealing with incidents if a parent/carer/visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the academy community is for the Principal or appropriate senior leader to 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.

3 | Risk Assessment

3.1 The Principal will carry out a risk assessment to help determine the level of response. In all cases the response will be reasonable and proportionate. The Principal will consider the following issues:

- What form did the abuse take?
- What evidence is there?
- What do witnesses say happened?
- Are there previous incidents to take into consideration?
- Do members of staff/students feel intimidated by the adult's behaviour?
- Is there any evidence of provocation?
- How high is the assessed risk that this will be repeated, or will there be retaliation at the academy's action? (low, medium, high)?

4 | Recording of Incidents

- Staff or students subject to abuse and witnesses will make written statements about the incident(s) which will be kept in a file with subsequent letters.
- Depending on an assessment of the risk of retaliation to witnesses or individuals, statements made by adults may be made available to the parent if they request it.
- Following the completion of the risk assessment, the Principal will decide the level of action to be taken.

4.1 Actions will include the following:

Clarify to the adult what is considered acceptable behaviour by the academy

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

Invite the adult to an informal meeting to discuss the event(s)

- This could be helpful to discuss and diffuse the situation.
- The safety and well-being of those attending such a meeting must be carefully considered. Members of academy 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 an adult who could potentially become aggressive.
- The main points of discussion and any agreed actions should be noted, and a follow-up letter or e-mail sent to confirm the academy's expectations and any agreed actions

Impose conditions on the adult's contact with the academy and its staff

- Although fulfilling a public function, academies are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Parents of enrolled students have an implied licence to come onto academy premises at certain stated times, but it is for academies to define and set out the extent of such access. Adults exceeding this would be trespassing.
- Depending on the type, level or frequency of the unacceptable behaviour, the academy may consider imposing conditions on the adult's contact with the academy. These conditions may include (but are not exclusively):
 - Being accompanied to any meeting with a member of academy staff by a member of senior leadership team.
 - Restricting contact by telephone to named members of the senior leadership team
 - Restricting written communications to named members of the senior leadership team
 - Restricting attendance at academy events to those where the adult will be accompanied by a member of the senior leadership team of the academy
 - Any other restriction as deemed reasonable and proportionate by the Principal.

In this case the adult will be informed by letter from the Principal of the details of the conditions that are being imposed. The adult would then be given 10 working days from the date of that letter to make representations in writing about the conditions to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors would then decide whether to confirm or remove the conditions. This would be communicated to the adult in writing within 10 working days of the date of the parent's letter.

- If the decision is to confirm the conditions imposed, this decision will be reviewed by the Local Governing Body (LGB) after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The adult will be invited to make written representation to the governors. This and the evidence from the Principal will be considered at a meeting of the LGB. 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 the governors within 10 days of the date of the meeting.

- When deciding whether it will be necessary to maintain, extend or remove the conditions, governors will consider the extent of the adult's compliance with the conditions, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from him/her, and any evidence of the adult's cooperation with the academy in other respects

5 | Imposing a Ban

- 5.1 Where other procedures have been exhausted and aggression or intimidation continues OR where there is an extreme act of violence, the academy may consider banning the individual from the academy premises. This will include banning an adult from accessing academy staff by written communication or telephone. In these circumstances, the individual would be advised in writing by the Principal that a provisional ban is being imposed. The parent would then be given 10 working days from the date of that letter to make representations about the ban in writing to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors 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. If the Chair's decision is to confirm the ban, adults in these circumstances will be offered an annual meeting about their child's progress, usually with a member of senior staff.
- 5.2 A decision to impose a ban will be reviewed by the LGB after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The adult will be invited to make written representation to the governors; this and the evidence from the Principal will be considered at a meeting of the LGB. Governors may decide to remove the ban, extend the ban or impose conditions on parent's access to the academy. The decision of the review will be communicated to the parent by the clerk to the governors within 10 days of the date of the meeting.
- 5.3 In deciding whether to remove or extend the ban or impose conditions, governors will consider the extent of the adult's compliance with the ban, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from him/her and any evidence of the parent's co-operation with the academy in other respects.

6 | Removal from the Academy

- 6.1 Adults who have been banned from the academy premises and continue to cause a nuisance will be deemed to have committed a criminal offence under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996, i.e. for a person who is on school premises without lawful authority to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance. They will be considered as trespassers. In these circumstances the offender may be removed from the academy site. This may be carried out by a police officer or person authorised by the LGB. Legal proceedings may be brought against the parent.

7 | Complaints Procedure

- 7.1 Any parental complaint that arises from incidents of abusive behaviour will be dealt with under the Complaints Procedure

8 | Appendices

Appendix 1: Reception message

Appendix 2: Phone message

Appendix 3: Website message

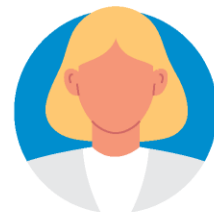
Appendix 4: Model letter 1: This is an initial letter from the Principal to ensure the adult is clear about behaviour standards expected by the academy. This letter contains a warning about further action if there are other incidents. The letter invites a written response and suggests a meeting.

Appendix 5: Model letter 2: This is a letter from the principal informing parents of the academy's decision to impose conditions on the adult's attendance at academy events, pending review by the Chair of Governors.

Appendix 6: Model letter 3: Letter from the Chair of Governors informing parent of his/her decision to confirm or remove the conditions

Appendix 7: Model Letter 4: Letter from clerk to the governors requesting adults' statement prior to a review by the LGB

Appendix 1 – Reception Message



**No Excuse
For Abuse**

**Our staff are here to help you.
Please treat them with respect.**

Verbal abuse, threats, and violence towards our staff members and volunteers will never be tolerated.

Appendix 2 – Academy Phone Message Script

Hello and welcome to our Academy/or Welcome to XXXX Academy.

We encourage our students and staff to treat others with dignity and respect and we would ask you to do the same during your interactions with our staff today. Our staff will deal with your request/ call professionally and promptly. So that we can filter your call to the right department please choose from the following options.....

Options for pressing xxxxxxxxxxxx

Calls may be recorded for quality assurance purposes or used as a record when staff are not treated with dignity and respect.

Appendix 3 – Website Message

We suggest that this message on the website is then followed by details of the policy

To create a welcoming and safe learning environment, we have put together in this document a specifically designed set of expectations and commitments regarding behaviour and conduct which parents/ adults are expected to act in accordance with.

All staff members have the right to work without fear of violence or abuse; therefore, physical attacks, threatening behaviour, and abusive or insulting language towards staff members, governors, visitors, students or other parents may result in individuals having conditions imposed about their interactions with the academy or being removed from the premises.

This document outlines the manner in which parents are expected to act as well as detailing the consequences of behaviours that will not be tolerated.

Appendix 4 – Model Letter 1

Warning (sent by Principal)

(To be sent via recorded delivery)

Dear [insert adult's name]

I have received a report about your conduct at the academy on [enter date and time or details]. This appears to fall far short of that we would expect of a parent/ carer of a student/ adult at [insert] Academy.

[Add factual summary of the incident and its effect on staff, students, and other parents].

I must inform you that the Local Governing Body and trust will not tolerate aggression towards members of the academy community and will act to protect its staff and students from any form of abuse or intimidation. I should warn you that any future conduct of this nature could result in the academy imposing conditions restricting your access to the academy or banning you from contacting or attending the academy altogether.

I wish to give you an opportunity to give me in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to the report which I have received about your conduct. Please do so within 10 working days of the date of this letter. These comments may include any assurances that you are prepared to give about your future conduct towards our staff/students.

There is then an option for us to meet to discuss the situation and how it can be avoided in the future.

Details of our policy on dealing with abusive adults can be found on our website.

Yours sincerely, Principal

cc: Chair of Governors

Appendix 5 – Model Letter 2

Imposing conditions on the adult's attendance at academy events, pending review (sent by Principal)

(To be sent via recorded delivery)

Dear [insert adult's name]

I have received a report from the (name of staff) about your conduct on [insert date and time] at [insert] Academy.

(add summary of incident and its effect on staff and students)

You will recollect that I have already written to you about a previous incident on (insert date) warning you of the consequence of any further insulting or aggressive behaviour on your part. I must reiterate to you that the governors, in line with our trust policy, will not tolerate conduct of this nature directed towards out staff/ on the academy premises and will act to protect academy staff and students.

I am therefore writing to inform you that I am imposing conditions on the contact you may have with the academy going forward from this date of this letter. These are as follows: (delete as appropriate)

- You must be accompanied to any meeting with a member of academy staff
- You may not contact by telephone or in writing any member of staff. You may contact either myself or (insert another SLT name) through email/ phone only
- You may not attend any events for parents except those where you will be accompanied by a member of the senior leadership of the academy
- You may not visit the academy site and are banned from being allowed on the premises
- Others, that are reasonable and proportionate

The restrictions above are provisional until they have been reviewed by the Chair of Governors.

Please consider them to be in force until you receive their confirmation.

The Chair of Governors will need to decide whether it is appropriate to confirm or overturn this decision. You may, if you wish, send them in writing any comments or observations of your own within 10 working days of the date of this letter. There contact details are: [insert details]

These comments may be to challenge or explain the facts of the incident, to express regret and give assurances about your future good conduct.

The Chair of Governors will then write to you with the outcome of their decision. If on receipt of your comments, the Chair of Governors considers that my decision should be confirmed, you will be supplied with details of how the conditions will be reviewed by the Local Governing Body.

Yours sincerely, Principal

cc: Chair of Governors

Appendix 6 – Model Letter 3

Letter to confirm or overturn Principal’s decision to impose conditions (sent by Chair of Governors)

(To be sent via recorded delivery)

Dear [insert adults name]

On the [insert date] the Principal wrote to you to share concerns about an incident when your behaviour towards (inset name) fell short of what we would expect as an academy. You will be aware that he has written to you previously about your behaviour towards staff in a warning letter.

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated [insert date] the contents of which I have considered carefully. [delete as appropriate]

Either:

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Principal's report and your letter, I have determined that the decision to impose conditions on your contact with the academy should be confirmed.

The conditions are as follows:

[Copy conditions from Principal’s letter]

This decision will be reviewed by the Local Governing Body in approximately six months' time. The clerk to the governors will write to you in advance of the meeting to ask you to provide a written statement for their consideration. When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the application of conditions to attend academy premises, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with the original decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from you; and any evidence of your co-operation with the academy in other respects.

Or:

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Principal's report and your letter, I have determined that the decision to impose conditions on you should be overturned. You may from the date of this letter attend academy events as normal. However, should there be a repeat of inappropriate behaviour towards staff, the original sanctions may be applied.

Yours sincerely, Chair of Governors

cc: Principal

Appendix 7 – Model Letter 4

Letter from Clerk to the governors requesting adults' statement prior to a review by the LGB (sent by clerk to Governors)

(Sent via recorded delivery)

Dear (insert adults name),

[Insert Chair of Governors name] wrote to you on [insert date] to detail concerns about your behaviour towards academy staff/students fell short of what we would expect as an academy. As a result of this incident, conditions were imposed on you/a ban was imposed.

This decision will be reviewed by the Local Governing Body at their next meeting on [insert date]. I am writing to ask whether you would like to make a written statement to governors for their consideration in making the decision about whether to remove the restriction or extend it. If you should wish to make a written statement; please can you e-mail it to me at [insert address] by [insert date] (adults should be given 10 days to respond).

Yours sincerely, Clerk to Governors

cc: Principal