



LOCATION: SCHOOL HANDBOOK, SECTION I, DOCUMENT 42

MANAGING VIOLENT AND ABUSIVE VISITORS TO SCHOOLS

Date policy first adopted: November 2015

Date reviewed: November 2025

Reviewed By: Vicky Aspin

Date ratified by Governing Body: November 2025

Date of next review: Autumn 2027

I. Statement of Principles

The governing body of Abbey Court School encourages close links with parents and carers and the community at all times. It believes students benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one.

As partners, our parents/carers will understand the importance of a good working relationship to equip children with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons, we continue to welcome and encourage parents and carers to participate fully in the life of our school.

It is important that discussions between parents/carers and staff are conducted in a calm and respectful manner. In the vast majority of such situations, this is what happens, but on very rare occasions, aggression and verbal and/or physical abuse can be directed towards members of school staff or members of the wider school community.

Our parents/carers (and those with parental responsibility) are granted a “limited licence” to visit the grounds and buildings of a school. Day-to-day access to a school is within the control of the Headteacher.

The Governing Body expects and requires its 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. All members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse, and the right, in an extreme case, of appropriate self-defence. Staff who might face these situations have a licence to end any conversation (face to face or on the telephone).

We expect parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards members of school staff at all times.

The purpose of this document is to provide a reminder to all parents, carers and visitors to our schools about expected conduct. This is so we can continue to develop and grow in an atmosphere of understanding.

2. Definition of unacceptable behaviour

We consider that aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language from a parent, carer or visitor presents a risk to staff or pupils.

Unacceptable behaviour is such that it makes a member of staff or pupil feel threatened.

This can be through face-to-face contact, on the telephone or in written communication (including social media).

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and which will not be tolerated in relation to members of staff, and other members of our school community are:

- using a raised voice, creating an intimidating atmosphere, for example, refusing to take part in two-way dialogue and consistently talking/shouting over responses from staff
- filming/recording conversations using mobile phones or other technology – danger of safeguarding issues regarding recording other people’s children, and not taking due consideration of the wishes of the staff involved
- inappropriate use of social media, e.g. posting defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the pupils, parents or staff at the school on Facebook or other social sites (see further information about the inappropriate use of social media below)
- shouting, either in person or over the telephone
- swearing, either in person or over the telephone/email
- constant emails and/or phone calls that amount to harassment and intimidation, despite the school’s best efforts to address the situation
- inappropriate electronic activity, including publishing abusive or inappropriate content with regard to the school, teachers or pupils on social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter or in email communication
- any kind of insult as an attempt to demean, embarrass or undermine
- any kind of threat
- damage to school property
- physical intimidation, e.g. standing unnecessarily close to another person
- the use of rude or aggressive hand gestures, including shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- spitting
- use of foul or abusive language
- any kind of physical abuse
- allegations which turn out to be vexatious or malicious
- racist, sexist, homophobic or transgender comments
- breaching the school’s security procedures

This is not an exhaustive list, but illustrates the range of such behaviour.

Unacceptable behaviour may also result in the School informing the Local Authority, and the Police being informed of the incident.

3. Inappropriate use of Social Media

Social media platforms are increasingly used to share opinions and information. However, using these platforms to fuel campaigns, complaints, or share inappropriate content about the school is unacceptable and not in the best interests of pupils or the school community.

Examples of Inappropriate Use

- Naming pupils involved in incidents.
- Sharing confidential school information.
- Making allegations or accusations.
- Posting false or misleading news.
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How to Raise Concerns

If you have concerns, please use the appropriate channels:

- Speak to the class teacher
 - Contact the key stage leader or a member of the leadership team
 - Arrange a meeting with the Headteacher
- This ensures issues are handled fairly, appropriately, and efficiently.

Consequences of Misuse

- Libellous or defamatory comments posted on social media will be reported to the platform's "report abuse" section.
- Parents, carers, or pupils will be expected to remove the comments immediately.
- In serious cases, the school may pursue legal options.

Cyberbullying

Using social media to publicly humiliate another child or parent is considered serious bullying and will be dealt with under the school's anti-bullying policy.

Whilst such incidents are rare. We ask parents to ensure that anyone collecting children is aware of the policy.

4. Parental/Visitor Access to School premises

Schools are private property, and people do not have an automatic right to enter. However, parents, carers (and those with parental responsibility), including visitors, have an 'implied licence' to come onto school premises at certain times, for instance:

- for appointments
- to attend a school event
- to drop off or collect their children

At all times, should situations deemed to be dangerous or illegal arise on the school premises, any member of staff, regardless of their job role, is empowered to call the police, requesting the police intervention to help maintain public order.

In all other cases where there are serious concerns regarding the conduct of a parent, carer or visitor, and possible staff/pupil safety, the following steps will be followed:

- Member of staff reports the incident to the Headteacher
- The headteacher will initiate a meeting/dialogue with the individual(s) concerned.
- If it is appropriate, the school's complaints/risk assessment procedures will be followed using the school's electronic safeguarding system CPOMS.
- The Headteacher will consider the incident and decide on the most appropriate response.
- The Headteacher may invite the parent/visitor in for an informal meeting and will consider the well-being of those attending and ensure any staff members attending are accompanied by another colleague. The Headteacher will also consider the venue and seating arrangements of such a meeting.
- Where the Headteacher decides to write to the visitor, the letter will record in detail the incident and why it is unacceptable. The Headteacher will explain their decision, which may:
 - 'Vary' the visitor's 'licence' to visit through the addition of conditions;

- warn of the possibility of a ban if the misconduct is repeated;
- impose a ban with a review after a fixed period or
- impose a ban without review.
- Where the Headteacher is unable to make an immediate decision, they will notify the visitor of the date by which the decision will be made.
- If the decision is to confirm that conditions are imposed, this decision will be reviewed by the Governing Body. The parent/visitor will be invited to make written representations to the Governing Body. The Governors may decide to maintain, extend or remove the conditions. This will be communicated to the parent/visitor via the Clerk to Governors.
- 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 of future good conduct received from them and any evidence of the offender's co-operation with the school in other respects.
- In all cases, the response will be reasonable and proportionate.
- The Headteacher has the discretion to share information with all parties as deemed appropriate.
- Any complaint that arises from incidents of unacceptable, violent or abusive behaviour will be dealt with through the School's Complaints Policy.

5. Conclusion

The school will, where appropriate, seek advice from health and safety professionals or legal counsel to ensure that all actions taken are fair, consistent, and in accordance with statutory requirements.

Every effort will be made to maintain normal communication with parents and carers, including providing opportunities for participation in activities such as parent governor elections. Even in cases where a parent, carer, or visitor has been prohibited from entering school premises, the school will continue to prioritise the interests of the child and maintain essential communication.

Parents and carers will retain the right to attend Annual Review meetings regarding their child's educational progress. However, the school reserves the right to implement reasonable adjustments to these meetings, which may include the presence of a senior member of staff or conducting the meeting virtually via platforms such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom.

In certain circumstances, the Local Authority (LA) may take the lead in initiating action on behalf of the school, with the school's support. In other cases, the school may initiate action and expect the LA to provide guidance and assistance. Where powers rest with the LA, they should assume responsibility for initiating action; where powers do not lie with the LA (e.g., under criminal law), the school expects the LA to offer support and reduce the administrative burden on the school.

The overarching aim remains clear: to uphold a zero-tolerance approach to violence, threatening behaviour, or abuse within schools, ensuring that all members of the school community and visitors can operate in a safe and respectful environment.

The school will consult the LA regarding the appropriateness of available remedies and will seek their involvement wherever possible. This policy will be reviewed every two years or following any incident that necessitates its application.