



St Joseph's Roman
Catholic High School

Parents and Visitors Abusive Behaviour Policy

Jesus Christ is our family role model

Opening our hearts and minds to dream the impossible
and achieve beyond our wildest imagination

Everybody is valued and respected

Young and old will journey together to build God's
Kingdom.

Striving for academic excellence and celebrating success
in all we do

Approved by Headteacher

Review

Date

Date July 2023

St Joseph's Abusive Visitor Policy

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Statement of Principles

For the purposes of this policy, a 'parent' is any adult including parents, carers, visitors supporting parents or any others adult who makes contact with the school or its staff members regarding school matters.

This policy is written taking into account DfE Guidance 'Advice on school security: Access to and barring individuals from school premises' December 2021 as well as ASCL guidance on dealing with abusive parents.

At Joseph's RC High School we value the positive relationships we build with parents and visitors to our school as we believe working in partnership will ensure we help our young people achieve their potential. We encourage close links with parents and the wider community we serve and strive to build positive relationships. We also recognise that we as adults must model the behaviour we expect from our young people, we must teach them how we expect them to behave – with respect for everyone, with kindness and a willingness to value all.

Almost all parents, carers and visitors to our school are keen to work with us and are very supportive of the work we do. However, on very rare occasions the behaviour of a small number of parents does not meet the expectations we would expect. This sometimes appears as aggression or abuse towards members of our school community. This can be in written communication (including social media), on the telephone or in face-to-face incidents.

In these situations, we expect members of staff to behave professionally, attempting to defuse the situation where possible and it may be appropriate for them to seek the involvement of other colleagues. Staff who find themselves in these situations have licence to end any conversations (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.

The overriding principle is, however, that all members of staff at St Joseph's RC High have a right to work or be in school without fear of aggression or abuse from parents or visitors. The Governing Body has a duty to protect staff and students from such aggression.

The progress and well-being of the parent's child(ren) will be fully considered. Actions taken against the parent will be reasonable and proportionate. The parent will have the opportunity to put forward their views 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 Governing Body are in place to ensure fairness.

Definition of Unacceptable Behaviour

We at St Joseph's RC High School consider that aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language from a parent 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 is used for illustrative purposes only:

- any kind of insult as an attempt to demean, embarrass, belittle or undermine
- any kind of threat
- raising of the voice so as to be intimidating
- physical intimidation e.g. standing very close or 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

St Joseph's RC High's approach to dealing with incidents

If a parent/visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of our school community, the Headteacher or appropriate senior staff will assess the level of risk before deciding on a future course of action. The course of action will be reasonable and in keeping with assessed level of risk. It will also ensure the dignity of all parties involved is maintained.

Risk assessment

The Headteacher will risk assess in order to make a decision about the most appropriate level of response. In all cases the response will be reasonable and proportionate. The Headteacher will consider the following questions:

- 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 parent's behaviour?
- Is there evidence of provocation?
- How high is the risk that the behaviour will be repeated or there will be retaliation at the school's action? (low, medium, high)

Recording of Incidents

Staff/students subject to abuse and witnesses will make written statements about incident(s) which will be kept in a file with the Headteacher's PA. A note will be made on SIMS 'file with PA' to alert members of staff.

St Joseph's RC High's Response

Following the completion of the risk assessment, the Headteacher 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 school

In some instances it may be appropriate to ensure the parent is clear about behaviour expected by the school. This could be explained by letter from the Headteacher. This letter may contain a warning about further action if there are further incidents. Depending on the parent's response a meeting may then be had to discuss the situation and how this could be avoided in future.

2. Invite the parent to an informal meeting to discuss events

This could be helpful to discuss and diffuse the situation.

The safety and well-being of all those attending the meeting must be carefully considered. Members of school staff should always be accompanied by at least one other colleague. Consideration should be given to seating arrangements and care taken to ensure exits cannot be blocked should the parent become aggressive. A strategy should be in place should there be a need to end the meeting.

The main points of the meeting and actions should be agreed with a time frame for these to be completed. These should be confirmed in writing by letter or email.

3. Impose conditions on the parent's contact with school and its staff

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Parents of enrolled students 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, St Joseph's RC High may consider imposing conditions on a parent's contact with the school. These conditions may include (but are not exclusively):

- being accompanied to any meeting with a member of school staff by a member of SLT;
- restricting contact by telephone to named members of the Senior Leadership Team;
- restricting written communication 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;
- restricting communication from the parent (e.g. blocking emails to certain addresses);
- restricting access to the school site by parent;
- any other restriction deemed reasonable and proportionate by the Headteacher.

In this case the parent will be informed by letter from the Headteacher the 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 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 parent 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 Governing Body after approximately 6 months (and every 6 months after that if appropriate). The parent will be invited to make written representation to the Governors. This and the evidence from the Headteacher will be considered at a meeting of the full Governing Body. Governors may decide to maintain, extend or remove conditions. The decision of the review will be communicated to the parent by the clerk to the Governors within 10 days 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 of future good conduct received. Governors will also take into account any evidence of the parent's co-operation with the school in other respects.

4. Imposing a ban

Where other procedures have been exhausted and abuse, aggression or intimidation continues OR where there is an extreme act of violence then the school may consider banning the individual from our school premises. This will include banning a parent from accessing school staff by written communication or telephone.

In these circumstances, the individual would be advised in writing by the Headteacher 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 in writing within 10 working days of the receipt of their letter. If the Chair's decision is to confirm the ban, parents in these circumstances will be offered an annual meeting about their child's progress, usually with a member of senior staff.

If the decision is to confirm the conditions imposed, this decision will be reviewed by the Governing Body after approximately 6 months (and every 6 months after that if appropriate). The parent will be invited to make written representation to the Governors. This and the evidence from the Headteacher will be considered at a meeting of the full Governing Body. Governors may decide to maintain, extend or remove conditions. The decision of the review will be communicated to the parent by the clerk to the Governors within 10 days 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 of future good conduct received. Governors will also take into account any evidence of the parent's co-operation with the school in other respects.

Removal from school premises

Parents who have been banned from school premises and continue to cause a nuisance will be deemed to have committed a section 547 offence. They will be considered trespassers and St Joseph's RC High School may report them to the Police for them to take action.

Complaints Policy

Any parental complaint that arises from incidents of abusive behaviour will be dealt with under the complaints policy.