



Policy Directive, Procedures and Guidelines

MANAGING ABUSIVE AND AGGRESSIVE VISITORS

| | | | |
|---|--|-----------------|------------|
| Publication Date: | June 2018 | Version Date: | 2018.06.12 |
| Review Date: | March 2020 | Version Number: | V1.0 |
| Contact: | Director of Education | | |
|  : | educationsportandculture@gov.gg | | |
|  : | Sir Charles Frossard House La Charroterie St Peter Port GY1 1FH | | |
|  : | +44 (0)1481 733000 www.gov.gg/education | | |
| <p>Document Status</p> <p><i>This is a controlled document. Whilst this document may be printed, the electronic version posted on the ConnectED Intranet is the controlled copy. As a controlled document, it should not be saved onto local or network drives but should be accessed from the ConnectED Intranet.</i></p> | | | |

Contents

1.0 Introduction 3

 1.1. Policy Statement 3

 1.2 Policy Objectives 3

 1.3 Policy Application 3

2.0 Overview 3

3.0 School Procedures for Dealing with Incidents 4

4.0 Conducting a Risk Assessment 5

5.0 The ‘Barring Visitors’ Process 5

 5.1 What does a ban achieve? 6

6.0 Working with Parents/Carers while they are Barred 6

7.0 Action Following Incidents 7

 7.1 Statutory Remedies 7

 7.2 Non Statutory Remedies 7

Appendix 1: Example School Behaviour Procedure for Parents/Carers 9

1.0 Introduction

1.1. Policy Statement

Education Services believe staff, parents and children are entitled to a safe and protective environment in which to work. Behaviour that will cause harassment, alarm or distress to users of the premises is contrary to the aims of the service. Schools and Services will be supported in taking appropriate action as outlined within this document and in line with their procedures.

This policy has been adapted from NAHT’s publication “Managing violent and abusive visitors” September 2017

1.2 Policy Objectives

The purpose of this policy and procedures is to clearly set out how incidents of abusive or aggressive behavior by visitors to schools will be managed.

1.3 Policy Application

Throughout this guidance, Headteacher refers to Heads of Service and the College of Further Education Principal, school refers to any educational establishment, including commissioned services

2.0 Overview

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Parents and carers of enrolled pupils have an ‘implied licence’ to come onto the school’s premises at certain stated times, and it is for schools to define and establish a protocol that will set out the extent of such access (including the acceptable purposes, the areas of the school that may be entered at particular times and the standard of expected behaviour). Day-to-day access to a school’s premises is within the control of the headteacher.

Usually access to the school’s premises will be by appointment or invitation to a school’s event. Parents/carers of younger pupils will commonly be allowed into the playground, or part of the playground, at the beginning and end of the school day. Schools should have an agreed approach on access and make it known to parents/carers.

Where there is a breach of such a protocol, the school needs to respond in a measured way, depending on the nature of the breach. In the event of a breach, the school will typically respond in one of the following ways:

- Initiate a meeting or dialogue with the visitor
- Write to the visitor, describe their misconduct and its impact on the school
- Adjust the person’s ‘licence’, say, through the imposition of visiting conditions
- Warn of the possibility of a ban from the school if the misconduct is repeated
- Impose a ban with a review after a fixed period or impose a permanent ban

It is possible for a headteacher to initiate any of the above actions on their own authority; however, personal confrontation is less likely if the more serious sanctions are initiated by Education Services. This particular guidance document is mainly about dealing with violence, threatening behaviour or abuse by parents/carers of a pupil in a school, including those cases where the parent/carer has been asked not to come onto the premises.

Violence, threatening behaviour and abuse against school staff (including caretakers and support staff), other parents/carers or members of the school community must not be tolerated. All members of the school community have a right to expect that their school is a safe place in which to work and learn. There is no place for violence, threatening behaviour or abuse in schools. Where such behaviour does occur, schools must know that its employing body will play a proactive role in taking all possible action to deal with it effectively.

In certain circumstances, this will mean Education Services taking the lead in initiating action on the school's behalf with the school's input and support, and in other circumstances, Education Services will support the school in action that the school initiates.

At all times, the common purpose remains clear: to achieve zero tolerance of violence, threatening behaviour or abuse in schools and to ensure all members of the school community and all visitors to the school can be confident they are operating in a safe environment.

The school should, in the first instance, ask Education Services for advice on the appropriateness of the remedies available.

3.0 School Procedures for Dealing with Incidents

All schools should have procedures covering incidents involving abusive, threatening or violent adult visitors. Such procedures should be adopted following consultation with staff and parents/carers.

A school policy can provide a readily available set of procedures on the following:

- What to do when an incident arises (e.g. ask the person to leave or invite them into a room away from other people)
- Who to contact in an emergency (i.e. at the school, employing body and police)
- How to record incidents and who to report the incident to
- What follow-up action is possible (i.e. any legal action to be taken; if a parent/carer, whether they should be refused entry to the premises)
- What support is available from the employer (e.g. counselling, occupational health or legal support)
- Liaison with the police where necessary

The policy can be publicised by displaying suitable posters in areas of the school that may be entered and therefore seen by visitors.

4.0 Conducting a Risk Assessment

Whether you draw up a policy or not, you should prepare an assessment of risk to staff and others from abusive or aggressive visitors. This doesn't need to be a complicated process.

A risk assessment should do the following:

- Identify and assess the risks
- Determine appropriate actions and control measures
- Implement the actions and control measures
- Monitor the results
- Provide feedback

It's good practice to ask staff directly about the extent of problems that they are aware of as part of the process of assessing risk. It is also helpful to consult school health and safety representatives about possible risks. This should identify what the risks are (e.g. abuse, threatening behaviour, violence, and from whom) and who is likely to be at risk (e.g. reception staff or teachers). Identifying the risks and who is at risk are the first important steps before considering how to manage these risks and how they can be mitigated.

In some cases, potential violence can be reduced and even prevented if members of staff have the skills to spot conflict before it leads to aggression and use techniques to reduce aggression before violence occurs.

It may be appropriate for members of staff to be offered personal safety training, which can help in the following ways:

- Reducing violent attacks by parents/carers and others
- Enabling staff to defuse aggression and prevent situations escalating
- Training staff to recognise verbal and non-verbal precursors to aggression and use techniques to calm a potential assailant
- Improving staff confidence in dealing with aggression and the resulting stress
- Minimising the risk of an attack causing injury

The Health and Safety Executive has produced guidance on risk assessments, which is available on its website <https://www.gov.gg/article/155622/Risk-management-HSE-guidance>.

5.0 The 'Barring Visitors' Process

Straightforward trespassing is a civil offence and action can be taken through the courts to stop persistent trespassers. Schools may write to advise persistent trespassers of the potential offence.

A school may consider, however, that aggressive, abusive, or insulting behaviour or language from a parent or carer presents a risk to staff or pupils. It is enough for a member of staff or pupil to 'feel' threatened. In these circumstances, schools have the power to bar the parent or carer from the school's premises.

The headteacher will need to assemble the full facts before proceeding with the barring of a visitor/s and make sure all those involved in any incidents, or witnesses to those incidents, supply a full written record as soon as possible.

Typically, the elements of the banning process would include the following actions:

- Write to the parent/carers to record in detail the incident and state why it is unacceptable
- Explain the employing body will consider the ban and give the parent/carers a period in which they may respond, in writing, to provide their version of events and why they should not be banned
- Tell the parent/carers when a decision will be made

The ban should be finite in length because only the most serious misconduct would justify an indefinite ban. The duration needs to be sufficient to convey a clear message about the seriousness of the associated misconduct but not so long as to be disproportionate. The aim should always be to restore normal relations as soon as is reasonably practicable. Even if a ban is permanent, it should be reviewed periodically and take account of subsequent behaviour. The decision to bar a parent/carers, if immediate, should be provisional until they have been given the opportunity to make formal representations. The bar can then be confirmed or removed. Alternatively, the school can serve notice of intent, invite the parent/carers to make representations within a certain deadline and then decide whether or not to bar.

5.1 What does a ban achieve?

- It confirms to a parent/carers that the school will not tolerate certain conduct
- It demonstrates that the school takes the health and safety of its staff, visitors and pupils seriously
- It may form the basis for an application for an injunction to curtail repeated instances of misconduct

6.0 Working with Parents/Carers while they are Barred

Every reasonable effort should be made to keep communications with parents and carers open. For example, parents/carers should still be given the opportunity to participate in elections for parent/carers governors, and they should still be consulted in relation to the

educational progress of their child/children, but the school may set conditions for such a meeting.

7.0 Action Following Incidents

Inappropriate, violent and/or aggressive threatening behaviour should be reported to the police.

Abuse and violence can be particularly harrowing to witnesses and those experiencing such behaviour. When such events have concluded, the employing body has a responsibility to ensure anyone at the school affected receives full and proper support after the events (including front- desk staff, those who were at the direct receiving end of the abuse and/or violence and the pupils who may have been directly affected by the events at the school). It is also appropriate to provide support when staff believe there are consequent safeguarding issues that need subsequent attention.

School leaders along with the employer (where appropriate) will evaluate the circumstances of all of those who were directly or indirectly affected by the recent events where abuse and/or violence may have occurred or, in fact, did occur. In some circumstances staff referral to Occupational Health for support and counseling may be appropriate course of action

Referrals to multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH) may be appropriate on behalf of the children and counselling services may be appropriate for staff. The duty of care should prevail until the employing body and the school leader are satisfied their duty of care has been fully discharged.

Following incidents risk assessments and control measures should be reviewed and revised accordingly

7.1 Statutory Remedies

A number of statutory remedies are available under laws such as the Public Order (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law, 2006 however advice should sought from Education Services.

7.2 Non Statutory Remedies

Aside from the legal remedies, there are other strategies that can help in preventing conflicts with parents/carers or stopping them escalating. These include mediation and conflict resolution.

Schools might also be able to develop non-statutory Acceptable Behaviour Contracts for some parents/carers similar to those that have been developed by the Metropolitan Police mainly in respect of pupils. These require the agreement of the person to an acceptable level of behaviour.

Further support is available to members of the NAHT through their advice centre on 0300 30 30 333 (option 1) or email specialistadvice@naht.org.uk.

Appendix 1: Example School Behaviour Procedure for Parents/Carers

Rationale:

We believe staff, parents and children are entitled to a safe and protective environment in which to work. Behaviour that will cause harassment, alarm or distress to users of the premises is contrary to the aims of the school.

Aims

- That positive relationships are modelled and forged by all members of school community, parents, carers, staff and students alike
- That all members of the school community treat each other with respect

Expectation

- That adults set a good example to children at all times, showing them how to get along with all members of the school/college/service and the wider community
- That no members of staff, parents/carers or learners are the victims of abusive behaviour or open to threats from other adults on the premises.
- Physical attacks and threatening behaviour, abusive or insulting language verbal or written, to staff, parents and carers, learners and other users of the premises will not be tolerated and will result in withdrawal of permission to be on the premises and the incident will be reported to the Police.
- Any parent/carers who is asked to leave the premises will have the right to appeal the decision by writing to Education Services

Please note that incidents of rudeness will be logged within the school/college/service

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and their senior management team to monitor and review this policy.

Signed

Date

Reviewed

Guidelines

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated towards any member of the school community (including all staff, other parents/carers, learners and visitors to the school)

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 media sites deemed as bullying or libel (defamation)
- 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
- Any inappropriate/targeted comment in relation to age, sex, race, religion, disability, sexuality or gender
- Deliberately ignoring our protocols e.g entering the school without permission

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.

Education premises are private property and parents have been granted permission to be on the premises. However, in case of abuse or threats to staff, pupils or other parents, we may ban parents/carers from entering.

Should any person cause a nuisance or disturbance on education premises the police may be called to assist in removing the person concerned. The school is not responsible for organising arrangements for children in the above circumstances. Parents/carers will need to provide alternative arrangements for bringing children into school.

Parents/carers have the right of appeal by writing to the Director of Education within ten days of permission to enter the premises being withdrawn.