



Bethersden Primary School

Dedicated to Excellence

DIGNITY AT WORK

March 2018

1. Working in partnership

At Bethersden Primary School we recognise that educating children is a partnership between families, class teachers and the school community. As a partnership, our families 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 families to participate fully in the life of our school.

The majority of communications with parents, carers and members of the community are positive especially when all parties take their duty seriously and are willing to work together to resolve conflict and promote the wellbeing of all concerned.

Bethersden Primary School is fully committed to ensuring that all members of the school's staff are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect and are entitled to work and study in an environment that is free from unfair treatment, harassment, discrimination or intimidation.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a reminder to all parents, carers and visitors to our school about the expected conduct. This is so we can continue to flourish, progress and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding

2. Guidance

As well as the guidance set out in our Home-School Agreement, we expect parents, carers and visitors to:

- Respect the caring ethos of our school
- Understand that both teachers and families need to work together for the benefit of all children
- Demonstrate that all members of the school community should be treated with respect and, therefore, set a good example in their own speech and behaviour (including when bringing children to or collecting children from school, whether on foot or by car)
- Seek to clarify a child's version of events with the school's view in order to bring about a successful solution to any issue
- Correct their own child's behaviour, especially on school premises, where it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive or unsafe behaviour
- Approach the school to help resolve any issues of concern

There are occasionally times when difficulties may arise. **The types of behaviour below will not be tolerated** and may result in the Headteacher, the Governing Body, the Local Authority or Police intervention.

- **Physical contact:** pushing, hitting, kicking etc.
- **Bullying or intimidation** of any kind. Bullying may include intimidation, threats or humiliation, deliberately isolating or excluding people, unwarranted criticism, the abuse of power, displaying offensive material, aggressive behaviour (including offensive touching or standing too close), threats and verbal abuse
- **Harassment** which may include unwanted conduct that is offensive or objectionable to the recipient, inappropriate humour or use of language (such as offensive or obscene remarks, ridicule or humiliation).
- **Disruptive behaviour** which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of a classroom, an employee's office, office area or any other area of the school grounds or school trips. This includes aggressive or impolite hand gestures including pointing and/or damaging or destroying school property
- **Abusive or threatening** e-mails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communication
- **Defamatory, offensive or derogatory** comments regarding the school or any of the pupils/parent/staff, at the school on Facebook or other social sites (including slanderous or libellous comments). Any concerns you may have about the school must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned

- **Discrimination** may include remarks or acts that reinforce stereotypes or prejudice, different or unfavourable treatment because of gender, ethnic background, religion, sexual preferences, age or disability
- Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child towards their own child (such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and may have legal consequences)
- Smoking and consumption of alcohol or other drugs whilst on school property
- Bringing dogs on to school premises as some people are intimidated by their presence

In all of these types of behaviour, further communication will need to take place outlining the need for mutual respect (see Appendix 'A'). Where there are threats, physical violence or discriminatory comments, the support of the police should be sought. Guidance for staff is included in Appendix 'B'.

3. Communication with parents

Despite efforts to provide positive, supportive, clear and consistent communication, at times difficulties may arise. Aggressive behaviour from parents/carers or members of the community is unacceptable and can have an intimidating and stressful effect on staff.

Bethersden Primary School also expects its staff to behave professionally and attempt to diffuse, if possible, difficult situations, seeking support from colleagues where necessary.

4. Preventing Violence at Work

The Health and Safety Executive leaflet, "Violence at Work: a guide for employees" defines violence against staff as:

"Any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work"

- It is the duty of the Governors of the school to ensure that full support is given to members of staff who are threatened or assaulted during the course of their duties.
- Staff should identify situations of possible risk and take the appropriate preventative action. This may include holding a meeting in a public area, inviting additional personnel to the meeting, or making a telephone call rather than a face to face meeting
- The procedures for ensuring safe practices at work, including Lone Working, are set out in the Health and Safety Policy

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO PARENT/CARER FOLLOWING AN UNACCEPTABLE OR ABUSIVE COMMUNICATION

Dear

This letter is to inform you that the school considers your actions on when you..... to be unreasonable/unacceptable (delete as appropriate)

I would ask you to understand that such behaviour can be distressing to staff who are trying to support you and your child.

I am aware that you have raised some concerns and would advise you that the school is addressing these by

Please note that Bethersden Primary School's Dignity at Work Policy sets out standards of behaviour expected of all people in their dealings with the school. These include:

- Behaving in an appropriate manner showing due courtesy and respect
- Avoiding harassing and threatening behaviour
- Avoiding physical and verbal aggression at all times

Whilst it is recognised that you were frustrated at being informed that, your behaviour was unreasonable/unacceptable and I therefore ask that for the foreseeable future, any communications are directed through..... (add name or means of communication).

I would ask that you allow the school time to resolve the issues according to the correct procedures and would assure you that we shall take every possible step to move this process forward as quickly as possible.

I am confident that you will respect our need to maintain a calm and welcoming environment at all times.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Gawthorpe
Headteacher

Sam Buckman
Chair of Governors

APPENDIX B GUIDANCE TO STAFF

The following strategies should be adopted by staff to encourage positive interactions with parents/carers or members of the community:-

Diffusing a situation

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- Consider the environment you are having contact in for your own safety and the privacy of the family concerned
- Give the situation/conversation your full attention and speak in a quiet, slow and friendly manner, summarising what is being said
- Be clear about the reason for communication and provide specific examples to illustrate the points you make
- Focus on a child's strengths before areas of concern. This is helpful in engaging support and promoting positive partnerships
- Provide reassurance if appropriate, and emphasise that your goal is to help every child to succeed
- Keep calm and avoid interrupting - reassure that you are taking the concern seriously
- Clearly outline what action will be taken

Aggressive and abusive communications

If a communication becomes abusive or a member of staff finds themselves in a situation where they feel bullied intimidated or threatened they should:

- Politely inform the perpetrator that the conversation will not be continued and will have to be terminated if they continue to behave in this manner
- If this does not resolve the situation, then provide a polite warning that the conversation will be terminated and then end the call if on the telephone
- If in person, give a polite warning that the perpetrator will be asked to leave and if the behaviour continues; call for assistance to escort the person from the site
- If on e-mail politely conclude the e-mail exchange saying that the matter will now be referred to the Headteacher (consider if you need to seek advice as to how to word the email appropriately)
- Seek advice and support from another member of staff and/or the Headteacher or SLT in his absence

Dependent on circumstances, it may be necessary for a member of staff to:

- Call again or arrange/reschedule a meeting when the perpetrator feels able to meet or talk in a reasonable manner
- Speak with a member of SLT for support
- Send a letter outlining circumstances and concerns (Appendix 'C'), which must be directed through a Line Manager and recorded (Appendix 'E')
- Arrange a meeting to be held with the Headteacher and perpetrator

In serious instances the incident should be reported to the Headteacher who may decide to involve the governing body, report an incident to the police, ban a person from the school site or insist that any communication into school comes through a set point. If the incident involves injury, the matter will be reported via the accident/incident report form, with referral to the Health and Safety Executive if appropriate.

A record will be held of all incidents.

APPENDIX C

Record of inappropriate communication with from parents/carers.

Staff must complete this log when a letter is sent home or if there is any other inappropriate communication with a parent/carer. Please ensure the letter is checked by the Headteacher and a copy kept in the child's personnel file.

Child's name/ class	Parents details	Date Type of communication	Record of inappropriate behaviour	Action taken	Occasion
<u>Example:</u> Child A	A. Parent	1/1/11 Phone call	Swearing: use of repeated inappropriate behaviour	Standard letter sent on 1/1/11	First offence