



# MANAGING AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR FROM PARENTS AND VISITORS TO OUR SCHOOL

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## Introduction

The Leading Edge Academies Partnership (the 'Trust') is a team of school leaders that aim to be Leading Edge and pioneering in their approach to education and well-being. We are a growing family of like-minded schools that offer a values-based education to the communities we serve and welcome staff, workers, pupils, parents/carers and volunteers from all different ethnic groups and backgrounds.

The term 'Trust Community' includes all staff, trustees, governors, pupils, parents/carers, volunteers and visitors.

We are a values-based Trust, which means all actions are guided by our three 'Es' as follows:

- **Excellence** – 'Outstanding quality'
- **Evolution** – 'Continuous change'
- **Equity** – 'Fairness and social justice'

This policy is based on the value of '**Equity**'

## Statement of Principles

In all Leading Edge schools, we are extremely fortunate to have supportive and friendly parent bodies. Our parents recognise that educating children effectively is a process that involves partnership between parents, staff and the wider school community.

As partners, our parents 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.

The vast majority of parents, carers and others visiting our schools are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. From time to time it is necessary for parents and the school to deal with problems relating to particular pupils. It is important that discussions between parents and staff are conducted in a calm and respectful manner. In the vast majority of such situations this is what happens but on rare occasions, aggression and verbal and/or physical abuse is directed towards members of school staff or members of the wider school community.

The Board of Trustees 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. However, all members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse, and the right, in extreme cases, of appropriate self-defence. Staff who face these situations have licence to end any conversation (face to face or on the telephone).

Violence, threatening behaviour and abuse against school staff or other members of the school community, including other parents and pupils, will 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 any of our schools.

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

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

## 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 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 the Trust 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 phone 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 eg 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 which amount to harassment and intimidation, despite the school’s best efforts to address a situation
- inappropriate electronic activity including publishing abusive or inappropriate content with regards 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
- hitting, slapping, punching, kicking or pushing
- physical intimidation eg 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
- spitting;
- racist, sexist, homophobic or transgender comments
- breaching the academy’s security procedures

**Unacceptable behaviour may result in the police being informed of the incident.**

## **Inappropriate use of Social Media**

Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools or to share inappropriate information, eg naming pupils involved in incidences, sharing confidential information regarding an aspect of school life, making allegations or accusations or sharing false news. The Trust considers the use of social media websites or Apps in this way as unacceptable and not in the best interests of the pupils or the whole school community. Any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, the leadership team or the Headteacher, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

In the event that any pupil or parent, carer of a child/ren being educated at any school within the Trust is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other social network sites or Apps, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. All social network sites have clear rules about the content that can be posted on the site and they provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity which breaches this. The school will also expect that any parent, carer or pupil removes such comments immediately.

In serious cases the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly is the issue of cyber bullying and the use by one child or a parent to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social network entry. We will take and deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying. Thankfully such incidents are extremely rare. We would expect that parents would make all persons responsible for collecting children aware of this policy.

## **Parental/Visitor Access to the 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 on to school premises at certain times, for instance:

- for appointments
- to attend a school event
- to drop off or pick up younger children

Where there are serious concerns regarding the conduct of a parent, carer or visitor, and possible staff/pupil safety, the Executive Principal or Principal will:

- initiate a meeting/dialogue with the individual
- write to the parent, carer or visitor describing their misconduct, explaining its impact on the academy and stating its unacceptability
- vary the person's 'licence' through the addition of conditions
- warn of the possibility of a 'ban' (ie the withdrawal of their licence) if the misconduct is repeated
- impose a ban with a review after a fixed time period
- impose a ban without review

## **The Trust's approach to dealing with incidents**

If a parent, carer or visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the Executive Principal and/or appropriate senior staff member will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If necessary, the school's complaints procedures should be followed by the

parent, carer or visitor. Where all procedures have been exhausted and aggression or intimidation continue, or where the circumstances otherwise require it, a parent, carer or visitor may be banned by the Executive Principal or Principal from the school premises for a period of time, subject to review.

In imposing a ban the following steps will be taken:

1. The parent/carers will be informed, in writing, that they are banned from the premises, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, eg that police involvement or an injunction application may follow.
2. Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the local police will be made.
3. The Chair of the Board of Trustees will be informed of the ban.
4. As appropriate, arrangements for meetings at school regarding pupils, and arrangements for pupils being delivered to and collected from the school will be clarified.

## **Risk Assessment**

The Executive Principal, Principal or nominated senior member of staff will carry out a risk assessment in order to help make an informed decision about the level of response required. In all cases the response will be reasonable and proportionate. The Principal 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/pupils feel intimidated by the parent's, carer's or visitor's behaviour?
- Is there any evidence of provocation?
- How high is the assessed risk that this will be repeated or there will be retaliation at the academy's action? (low, medium, high)

## **Recording of Incidents**

Staff and pupils subjected to abuse, including any witnesses, should record their statements about the incident(s), including as much factual information as possible on the Academy's electronic safeguarding system eg CPOMS or MyConcern. Depending on an assessment of the risk of retaliation to witnesses or individuals, statements may be made available to the parent if they request it.

## **Guidance for staff**

A staff member must report any matter of intimidation, aggression, abuse or violence to the Principal. If the member of staff is in a meeting with an aggressive, abusive or violent parent, carer or visitor they should calmly and professionally outline that they are unable to continue the meeting in the current circumstances and report this immediately to the Principal or other senior member of staff.

At all times, should situations deemed to be dangerous or illegal arise on the school premises, any member of staff, irrespective of their job role, is empowered to call the police requesting intervention to help maintain public order and/or personal safety. The Principal must be informed immediately.

## The Academy's response

Following the completion of the risk assessment, the Principal 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 academy***

In some instances, it may be appropriate simply to ensure the parent is clear about behaviour standards expected by the academy. This could be explained by 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 their version of events within 10 school (working) days. Depending on the parent's response a meeting may then be held to discuss the situation and how this can be avoided in the 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 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 a parent who could potentially become aggressive.

The main points of discussion and any agreed actions should be noted and a follow-up letter or email sent to confirm the academy's expectations and any agreed actions.

### ***3. Impose conditions on the parent's contact with the academy and its staff***

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Parents of enrolled pupils have an 'implied licence' to come onto the academy premises at certain stated times. It is for the academy to define and set out the extent of such access. Parents exceeding this 'implied licence' would be trespassing.

Depending on the type, level or frequency of the unacceptable behaviour, the academy may consider imposing conditions on the parent's contact with the academy. These conditions may include (but not exclusively):

- being accompanied to any meeting with a member of academy staff by a member of SLT
- 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 parent will be accompanied by a member of the senior leadership of the academy
- any other restriction as deemed reasonable and proportionate by the Principal.

In this case the parent will be informed by a letter from the Principal the details of the conditions that are being imposed. The parent would then be given 10 school (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 parent in writing within 10 school (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 six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The parent will be invited to make written representation to the governors. This, together with the evidence from the Principal will be considered at a meeting of the full governing body. 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 school (working) days of the date 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 from them and any evidence of the offender's co-operation with the school in other respects.

#### **4. *Impose a ban***

Where all relevant procedures have been exhausted and aggression or intimidation continue, or where there is an extreme act of violence, a visitor (including a parent or carer of an existing pupil) may be banned by the headteacher from the school's premises for a defined period.

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 school (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 school (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.

A decision to impose a ban will be reviewed by the governing body after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The parent 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 full governing body. Governors may decide to remove the ban, extend the ban or impose conditions on parent's access to the school. The decision of the review will be communicated to the parent by the clerk to the governors within 10 school (working) days of the date of the meeting.

In deciding whether to remove or extend the ban or impose conditions, governors will give consideration to the extent of the offender's compliance with the ban, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from them and any evidence of their co-operation with the school in other respects.

#### **5. *Remove from the academy***

Parents, carers or visitors who have been banned from the school premises and continue to cause a nuisance will be deemed to have committed a section 547 offence. They will be considered as trespassers. In these circumstances the offender may be removed from school. This may be carried out by a police officer or person authorised by the governing body. Legal proceedings may be brought against the offender.

#### **6. *Complaints policy***

Any complaint that arises from incidents of abusive behaviour will be dealt with under the Trust Complaints Policy.

### **Conclusion**

In implementing this policy, the Trust will, as appropriate, seek advice from the Trust's solicitors and/or the Local Authority if necessary, to ensure fairness and consistency.

This Policy will be reviewed every three years and/or following each incident where the policy is be used.



## Appendix 1 – Model Letters

### Model Letter 1: Warning

(sent by Principal)

Dear

I have received a report about your conduct at the school on (enter date and time or details). This appears to fall far short of the behaviour we would expect of a parent/carer of a pupil at [name of school].

(Add factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils, and other parents.)

I must inform you that the Local Academy Committee (governing body) will not tolerate any form of aggression towards members of the academy community and will act to protect its staff and pupils 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 school (working) days of the date of this letter. These comments may include any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct. 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 Managing Aggressive Behaviour from Parents and Visitors to Our School can be found on our website.

Yours sincerely

Principal

cc Chair of Governors

## Model Letter 2: Imposing conditions on attendance at academy events, pending review

(sent by Principal)

Dear

I have received a report from the (name of staff) about your conduct on (enter date and time).

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

(You will recollect that I have already written to you about a previous incident on (date) warning you of the consequence of any further insulting or aggressive behaviour on your part.)

I must inform you that the Local Academy Committee (governing body), in line with our policy, will not tolerate conduct of this nature on the academy premises and will act to defend academy staff and pupils.

I am therefore writing to inform you that I am imposing conditions on the contact you may have with the academy. These are as follows: (delete as appropriate)

- You must be accompanied to any meeting with a member of the academy staff
- You may not make contact by telephone or in writing with any member of staff
- You may contact either the Principal or Deputy Principal
- 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
- Other as are reasonable and proportionate

The restrictions above are provisional until they have been reviewed by the Chair of the governing body. Please consider them to be in force until you receive confirmation from the Chair.

The Chair of the governing body will need to decide whether it is appropriate to confirm or overturn this decision. You may, if you wish, send to the Chair in writing any comments or observations of your own within 10 school (working) days of the date of this letter. 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 will then write to you with the outcome of their decision.

If on receipt of your comments, the Chair of the governing body considers that my decision should be confirmed, you will be supplied with details of how the conditions will be reviewed by the governing body.

Yours sincerely

Principal

cc Local Academy Committee Chair

### **Model Letter 3: Letter to confirm or overturn Principal's decision to impose conditions**

(sent by the Chair of the LAC)

Dear

The Principal wrote to you on (date) to detail concerns about an incident when your behaviour towards (name) fell short of what we would expect as an academy. You will be aware that the Principal has written to you previously about your behaviour towards staff.

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated ....., the contents of which I have considered carefully.

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 HT's letter)

This decision will be reviewed by the 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 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 hence attend academy events as normal. However, should there be a repeat of inappropriate behaviour towards staff all of the above sanctions may be applied.

Yours sincerely

Chair of the Local Academy Committee

cc Principal

## **Model Letter 4: Imposition of a ban on contacting or attending the academy, pending review**

(sent by Principal)

Dear

I have received a report from the (name of staff) about your conduct on (enter date and time).

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

You will recall that I have already written to you about a previous incident on (date) warning you of the consequence of any further insulting or aggressive behaviour on your part.

I must inform you that the governors, in line with our policy, will not tolerate conduct of this nature on the academy premises and will act to defend academy staff and pupils.

I am therefore writing to inform you that I am recommending imposing a ban on you attending or contacting the academy. This means you may not attend the academy for any reason whatsoever. You must not make contact with any member of staff by telephone or e-mail. You do, however, have the right to attend one meeting per year to discuss your child's progress. This meeting will be with me and I will contact you to arrange this at the time of the next Academic Review Day.

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 confirmation from the Chair.

The Chair of Governors, will need to decide whether it is appropriate to confirm or overturn this decision. Please send, in writing, to the Chair of Governors, any comments or observations of your own within 10 school (working) days of the date of this letter. These comments may be to challenge or explain the facts of the incident, to express regret and give assurances about your future good conduct.

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 this ban will be reviewed by the governing body.

Yours sincerely

Principal

cc Chair of Governors

## **Model Letter 5: Letter to confirm or overturn Principal's decision to impose a ban**

(sent by chair of governors)

Dear

The Principal wrote to you on (date) detailing concerns about an incident when your behaviour towards (name) fell far short of the behaviour we would expect as an academy. You will be aware that the Principal has written to you previously about your behaviour towards staff.

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated ....., the contents of which I have considered carefully (*amend as appropriate*).

In the circumstances and after further consideration of the Principal's report and your letter, I have determined that the decision to impose a ban on you should be confirmed. This means you may not attend the academy for any reason whatsoever. You must not make contact with any member of staff by telephone or e-mail. You do, however, have the right to attend one meeting per year to discuss your child's progress. This meeting will be with the Principal or a member of the senior team.

This decision will be reviewed in six months' time by the governing body. The Clerk to the Governors will write to you in advance of the meeting of the governing body 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 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 a ban should be overturned. You may hence attend academy events as normal. However, should there be a repeat of inappropriate behaviour towards staff, all of the above sanctions may be applied.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

cc Principal

**Model Letter 6: Letter from clerk to the governors requesting parents' statement for review by the governing body**

(sent by clerk to governors)

Dear

The Principal wrote to you on (date) detailing concerns about your behaviour towards academy staff/pupils, which fell short of the behaviour 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 governing body at their next meeting on (date).

I am writing to ask whether you would like to make a written statement to governors for their consideration in making the decision whether to remove the restriction or extend it.

If you should wish to make a written statement, please email it to me at (address) by (date) – *parents should be given 10 school (working) days to respond*).

Yours sincerely

Clerk to Governors

cc Principal

## **Model Letter 7: Letter detailing outcome of governing body's review**

(sent by Clerk to governors)

Dear

I wrote to you on (date) to request a statement to enable governors to review the academy's decision to impose conditions/ban you from attending academy premises.

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated ....., the contents of which were considered carefully by the governors at their meeting on (date).

In the circumstances and after further consideration of the Principal's report (and your letter), governors have determined that the decision to impose conditions/ban you from attending or contacting the academy attend should be confirmed. The conditions of your attendance on site are as follows:

- You must be accompanied to any meeting with a member of the academy staff.
- You may not contact by telephone or in writing any member of staff. You may contact either the Principal or named senior member of staff.
- 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.
- Any other condition imposed

**OR**

- You must not attend any event in the academy except for an annual meeting about your child's progress. This meeting will be conducted by The Principal.
- You may not contact by telephone or in writing any member of staff.

This decision will be reviewed again in six months' time. 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 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, governors have determined that you should once again be allowed to attend parents' events as usual. All conditions have been removed. However, should there be a repeat of inappropriate behaviour towards staff this decision may be revoked.

Yours sincerely

Clerk to Governors

cc: Principal