



Pound Hill Junior School

UNACCEPTABLE ACTIONS POLICY

Pound Hill Junior School believe that our pupils and parents have a right to be heard, understood and respected. Occasionally, certain actions by people can make it very difficult for us to deal with their enquiry or concern.

In a small number of cases the actions of some individuals become unacceptable because they involve abuse of our staff or our processes. When this happens we have to take appropriate steps. We have to consider whether the action impacts on our ability to do our work and to provide an education to our other pupils.

People may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. We do not view an action as unacceptable, just because a person is forceful or determined. However, we do consider actions that are violent, abusive or result in unreasonable demands on our staff to be unacceptable. It is these actions that we aim to manage under this policy.

There is a range of actions we consider to be unacceptable. These are:

- Aggressive or abusive behaviour;
- Unreasonable demands and expectations;
- Challenging our professional judgement and actions;
- Unreasonable levels of contact

Aggressive or abusive behaviour

We understand that people can become angry when they feel that matters about which they feel strongly are not being dealt with as they wish. If that anger escalates into aggression towards our staff, we consider that unacceptable.

Any aggression or abuse directed towards our staff will not be tolerated.

Aggressive or abusive behaviour includes language (whether verbal or written) that may cause staff to feel afraid, threatened, aggrieved or abused and may include threats, personal verbal abuse, derogatory remarks and rudeness.

We also consider inflammatory statements, remarks of a racial or discriminatory nature and unsubstantiated allegations, to be abusive behaviour whether spoken or written either on paper or in an electronic form including social media.

Unreasonable demands

A demand becomes unacceptable when it starts to (or when complying with the demand would) impact excessively on the work of our staff. Or when dealing with the matter takes up an excessive amount of staff time and in so doing, disadvantages other pupils and parents.

For example:

- Repeatedly demanding responses within an unreasonable timescale;
- Disputing a professional opinion and judgement;
- Demanding responses from several members of staff on the same subject;
- Insisting on seeing or speaking to a particular member of staff when that is not possible;
- Insisting on seeing a senior member of staff before speaking to the class teacher or member of staff directly involved with the child or situation;
- Repeatedly changing the substance of an enquiry or complaint or raising unrelated concerns;
- Repeatedly posing a question time and again, when a response has already been given, because the individual may not like the answer they have received.

Unreasonable levels of contact

Sometimes the volume and duration of contact made to our staff by an individual causes problems.

This can occur over a short period, for example, when a large number of calls or emails are received from the same person in one day. When we are dealing with a complaint or enquiry, this may occur when a person repeatedly makes long telephone calls to us or inundates us with emails or copies of information that have been already sent or that are irrelevant to the substance of the complaint or enquiry.

We consider that the level of contact has become unacceptable when the amount of time spent talking to an individual on the telephone, or responding to, reviewing and filing emails or written correspondence, impacts on our ability to deal with the matter, or on our responsibility for carrying out tasks relating to other aspects of our job.

How we manage unacceptable, aggressive or abusive behaviour

The threat or use of physical violence, verbal abuse or harassment towards our staff is likely to result in a termination of all direct contact with the parent and restricting access to the school. Such incidents may be reported to the police. This will always be the case if physical violence is used or threatened.

Where correspondence (either letter or electronic) that is abusive to staff or contains allegations that lack substantive evidence is received, we will inform the sender that we consider their language offensive, unnecessary and unhelpful and ask them to stop using such language. We will ask that the sender edit their correspondence to remove any offensive text and resend it, otherwise it will not be responded to.

Staff will end telephone calls if they consider the caller aggressive, abusive or offensive. Our staff have the right to make this decision, to tell the caller that their behaviour is unacceptable and to end the call if the behaviour then persists.

In extreme situations, we will tell the person in writing that we will not permit any personal contact from them. This means that we will limit contact with them to either written communication or restrict them entering the school building or school site.

Pound Hill Junior will contact the police to report an incident of threatening or violent behaviour or will ring 999 if they feel that there is an expected or actual act of violence or threatening behaviour.

How we deal with other categories of unreasonable behaviour

Where a parent repeatedly phones, visits our school, raises the same issue repeatedly, or sends us large numbers of documents about which the relevance is not clear, we may decide to:

- Limit contact to telephone calls from the person at set times on set days;
- Restrict contact to a nominated member of staff who will deal with future calls or correspondence;
- See the person by appointment only;
- Restrict contact to written correspondence only;
- Refuse to deal with further correspondence and return any documents or, in extreme cases;
- Advise the person that further irrelevant documentation will be destroyed;
- Take any other action that we consider appropriate to the circumstances.
- Where we consider continued correspondence on a wide range of issues to be excessive, we may tell the person that only a certain number of issues will be considered in a given period and ask them to limit or focus their requests accordingly.

Where someone repeatedly demands a response on an issue on which they have already been given a clear answer by the school, we may refuse to respond to further enquiries from the person.

We will always tell the person in writing what action we are taking and why.

The process we follow to make decisions about unreasonable behaviour

Any member of staff who directly experiences unreasonable, aggressive or abusive behaviour from a parent, has the authority to deal immediately with that behaviour in a manner they consider appropriate to the situation and which is in line with this policy.

With the exception of such immediate decisions taken at the time of an incident, decisions to restrict contact with the school are only taken after careful consideration of the circumstances by the Headteacher. Wherever possible, we will give the individual the opportunity to change their behaviour before such a decision is taken.

How we let people know we have made this decision

When a member of staff makes an immediate decision in response to unreasonable, aggressive or abusive behaviour, the individual concerned will be advised at the time of the incident.

When a decision has been made by the Headteacher, the individual will always be told in writing why a decision has been made to restrict future contact, the restricted contact arrangements and the length of time that these restrictions will be in place. They will also be told the process for appealing the decision. This ensures that the individual concerned has a full record of the decision and the reasons behind it.

The process for appealing a decision to restrict contact

Where a parent has been informed that contact is to be restricted, they will be advised of the right of appeal. Any appeal must be made in writing and submitted to the Governing Body through the Clerk to the Governors and must be made within 10 working days of the date of the notification to restrict contact letter. A written letter of appeal should clearly set out why the appellant feels the decision to restrict contact is unreasonable. The appeal will be considered by a panel of Governors. Any reversal or amendment of the restriction arrangements will be at the discretion of the panel of Governors considering the appeal.

The appellant will be notified in writing of the outcome of the appeal within 10 working days of receipt of the letter of appeal. The Governing Body's decision is final.



Pound Hill Junior School

Our staff come to work to educate and care for your children, and it is important for all members of our school community and our staff to be treated with courtesy and respect.

To ensure this is fully observed, we have an

UNACCEPTABLE ACTIONS POLICY.

This means that unacceptable, abusive or aggressive behaviour towards our staff or any member of the public within our school site will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Anyone being verbally aggressive to members of staff, either in person, over the telephone, written in a letter or posted on social media, will be sent a letter from the Headteacher advising that this behaviour will not be tolerated. Any future violation of this policy will result in the restriction of access to the school building or school site for a fixed period.

We feel sure that you will understand that proper behaviour is absolutely necessary for our staff and pupils and that non-observance will not be accepted.

Pound Hill Junior will contact the police to report an incident of threatening or violent behaviour or will ring 999 if they feel that there is an expected or actual act of violence or threatening behaviour.

Pound Hill Junior School Governing Body