



BLACKDOWN
EDUCATION
PARTNERSHIP

BELIEF IN EVERY CHILD

Managing Unreasonable Behaviour of those Raising Concerns or Complaints

November 2023

CEO: Lorraine Heath

Due for review: Autumn Term 2024

This policy is based on our values of collaboration and building trust with the school communities. It aligns with our Complaints Procedure and the Trust's commitment to complaint resolution within the boundaries of reasonable behaviour.

We are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school or Trust, however, we do not expect our students, staff, governors or trustees to tolerate unacceptable behaviour. We will take action to protect students, staff, governors and trustees from unacceptable behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive, threatening or which places excessive demands on our staff and impacts on the day to day running of our schools.

Complainants or those raising concerns should try to limit their communication with the school or Trust that relates to their concern or complaint, while the complaint or concern is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the resolution or outcome of the complaint being reached. Timelines for dealing with complaints can be found in the Complaints Policy.

Before applying this policy, the process below should be followed:

- If a member of staff suspects this policy has been breached, they should inform their Headteacher or a member of the Senior Executive who will review the behaviour against the examples of unreasonable behaviour in Appendix 1.
- Where it is confirmed that unreasonable behaviour has occurred, the school or the Trust will put in place temporary restrictions to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and students. These restrictions could include:
 - Limiting communication routes with the school and/or Trust.
 - Ceasing communications with members of the school and/or Trust community directly and communicating through a representative only.
 - Ceasing communications about a particular issue or question that has already been responded to or answered.
 - A ban from the school site.
- Temporary restrictions will not usually be in place for longer than ten school days. During this time, the school or Trust will follow up with an in-person meeting with involved parties. At this meeting, understanding of the reasoning for the temporary restrictions will be clarified and, where possible, a positive and constructive way forward will be agreed. This meeting will be followed up in writing, detailing agreed actions including, if necessary, any restrictions and the duration of these. The meeting may result in the following:
 - All normal communications resume.
 - A warning letter is sent outlining what may happen should there be any further unreasonable behaviour experienced in line with Appendix 1.
 - Restrictions remain in place or are extended further.
- If after a warning letter has been received, there are further incidents of unreasonable behaviour, the school or Trust will put in place further restrictions to ensure the wellbeing of staff and students. This may be for a period of up to three months and will be reviewed by the Governance Professional or member of the Senior Executive at the end of the three month period, or earlier if agreed.

- If restrictions remain in place or are extended further for up to a period of three months, this will be reviewed by the Governance Professional or a member of the Senior Executive team at the end of the three month period, or earlier if agreed.
- In addition to the above process, if any student or parent/carer of a child/ren being educated at one of our schools is found to be posting libellous, defamatory or discriminatory comments on social media or other public platforms, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. All social network sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted and they provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity which breaches this. The parent/carer or student will be asked by the school or Trust to remove such comments/material immediately. Libellous, defamatory or discriminatory comments will be reported to the police and any relevant safeguarding bodies. The school and/or Trust will also instigate legal action if appropriate.
- Where behaviour is so extreme or it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of our staff or students, we may not give the person raising the complaint or concern prior warning that we have reported their behaviour to the police or have taken legal action.

We may stop responding to the complainant when:

- We believe we have taken all reasonable steps to help address their concerns;
- We have provided a clear statement of our position and the complainant's options;
- The complainant contacts the school or Trust repeatedly and we believe their intention is to cause disruption or inconvenience.

Where we stop responding, we will inform the individual that we intend to do so.

Unacceptable behaviour

- Behaviour which is unkind or disrespectful to an individual, the school or the Trust
- Uses threats or behaviour to intimidate
- Uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- Knowingly provides falsified information
- Publishes derogatory, defamatory or abusive comments about the school, Trust or individual members of staff on social media or other public forums
- Makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint or concern in person, in writing, by email or by telephone while the concern is being dealt with.

Complaints

- Refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- Refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- Refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the Trust's complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed, including referral to the ESFA;
- Seeks an unrealistic outcome or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value.

Complaints that are not in scope

- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure;
- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the Trust's complaints procedure or with good practice;
- Makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced.

Additional complaints, concerns or questions

- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on
- Raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales.

Repeated or serial complaints or concerns

- Repeatedly makes the same or similar complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed).

Contact Details

Governance Professional: Miss J Gregory
Blackdown Education Partnership
Thomas Place
Wellington
TA21 8FP
Tel: 01884 842900
Email: jgregory@bep.ac