

# Ringway Primary School



## Parent and Visitor Conduct Policy

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## **1. Introduction**

At Ringway Primary School we strive to maintain positive relationships with our parents and visitors and value the close links we have forged. We believe our children benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one. We also strive to make our school a place where adults model the behaviour we expect from the children. We place a high importance on good manners, positive communication and mutual respect. We believe that staff and children are entitled to a safe and protective environment in which to work.

The vast majority of our parents and visitors are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school and its policies. However, on very rare occasions the behaviour of some parents or visitors can fall short of our expectations. This can manifest itself in aggression or abuse towards members of the school community.

This policy aims to make it clear how school will deal with these situations and actions that may be taken against an abusive parent or visitor.

All parents with a child on roll at Ringway Primary School will be expected to adhere and abide by the policy at all times.

## **2. Legislation and Guidance**

This policy takes into consideration guidance from the Government which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/controlling-access-to-school-premises/controllingaccess-to-school-premises> and [Section 547 of the Education Act 1996](#).

### **2.1 Permission to enter and be on the school's premises**

In education law, the term “parent” includes the natural or adoptive parents of a pupil, as well as a non-parent with care of a pupil and a non-parent with parental responsibility of a pupil. For the purposes of this policy only, the term “parent” will also include a non-parent who does not have care of or parental responsibility for a pupil, but who is involved in looking after a pupil on a regular basis. (For example, a childminder, non-resident partner of a parent or relative who takes the pupil to or from school, is involved with the care of the pupil in some other way, or a person whose emergency contact number we have been provided with.)

Parents have “implied permission” to enter and be on the school's premises for reasons relating to their child/children's education. This means that parents are welcome to the school to drop off and collect their children, to speak to teachers and other members of staff about their children, or for meetings, parents' evenings and social events. Parents do not have a legal right to enter or be on the school's premises without a good reason.

Other visitors also have “implied permission” to enter and be on the school's premises if they have a reason, for example a courier or delivery person, a contractor or a member of the public attending the school's office to make enquiries about something. Members of the public without a good reason for entering or being on the school premises are trespassing.

## **2.2 Withdrawal of Permission to enter and be on the school's premises**

The school has the right to withdraw the “implied permission” for a parent or visitor to enter or be on the school's premises if their behaviour while they were previously on the school's premises was unacceptable. The withdrawal of the “implied permission” will be effective as soon as the parent or other visitor has been told that they must leave and are prohibited from returning, and will be confirmed in writing to the home address.

Once the “implied permission” has been withdrawn, the school may ask the police to remove the parent or visitor if they subsequently appear on the school's premises. If the parent or visitor causes a nuisance or disturbance while they are on the school's premises, they may also be prosecuted in the criminal courts under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996, be liable to pay a fine of up to £500.00 and have a criminal conviction recorded against them.

Where a parent has had their “implied permission” to enter and be on the school's premises withdrawn, the school will, where appropriate, endeavour to support in making alternative arrangements for the parent's children to be dropped off and collected from the school, and in relation to parents' evenings and other meetings.

## **3. Communication**

Effective communication enables us to share our school values as well as keeping parents well informed about school life. At Ringway, communication is shared through Class Dojo, ParentPay and our school website. This reinforces the vital role parents play in supporting the school and their children. Whilst staff will always seek to establish, open and friendly relationships with parents, it is essential that relationships remain appropriate, positive and professional.

All staff want to respond to parental queries at the earliest opportunity and will do their best to do so. However, the majority of teachers' time is taken up teaching and preparing for lessons. Staff responsibilities extend beyond the classroom, and they may be unable to respond on the day a query is made.

Any in the moment communication is given as and when staff consider it necessary. However, when responding to concerns or queries initiated by parents, staff will follow the Communication Concern Pathways for Parents as outlined in Appendix I.

When raising concerns or queries parents should do this in the ways detailed in the Pathway and not at the classroom door.

Parents do not have consent to record conversations or meetings with school staff.

We have agreed with all staff that they will not respond to queries during their own personal time.

Any school staff whose own children are on roll at Ringway will not be involved in any queries or concerns relating to their children.

The Strategic operation of the school is decided by the Governing Body and Headteacher. The strategic decisions of the school will not be negotiated or discussed with parents.

### 3.1 Contacting the School

Contact with the school should be made in one of the following ways and concerns or queries will be dealt with according to the timelines set out in the Communication Concern Pathways:

- By email using only the school admin email address.  
[admin@guidepostringway.northumberland.sch.uk](mailto:admin@guidepostringway.northumberland.sch.uk)
- By telephone to the main office on 01670 813463.
- In person by speaking to Office staff in the main office.

Office staff will make a note of telephone or in-person messages and relay them to the appropriate member of staff. Learning will not be interrupted for staff to take calls or meet with parents. Office staff will request the reason for all messages.

If you urgently need to speak to someone, for instance if there is a serious family emergency or a child protection issue, please phone ahead and the Office staff will do their best to find a senior member of staff to speak to you.

## 4. Expectations

The following list outlines expectations in terms of the conduct and behaviour from parents and other visitors to the school:

- That adults set a good example to children at all times;
- That staff and children are treated with dignity and respect at all times;
- That parents and visitors conduct themselves in an appropriate manner while on, or in the vicinity of, the school site;
- That no-one on our school premises will be victim of abusive behaviour or open threats;
- That physical attacks and threatening behaviour, abusive or insulting language verbal or written, to staff, governors, parents, children and other users of the school premises will not be tolerated and will result in the withdrawal of permission to be on school premises;
- That social media and group chats, whether public or private, should not be used to fuel campaigns and voice complaints against the school, school staff, parents or children;
- That parents or visitors do not have consent to record conversations or meetings with school staff;
- That any parent or visitor who is asked to leave the school premises will have the right to appeal the decision by writing to the Governing Body;
- That parents and visitors keep our children safe by adhering to the school's request to park safely and courteously outside the school gates during morning and afternoon collections.

## 5. Definition of Unacceptable Behaviour

We believe that aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language from a parent or visitor presents a risk to staff and children. Unacceptable behaviour is such that it makes a member of staff or a child **feel** threatened, regardless of intent, and can be sufficient to ban a person from the premises. This behaviour could be through face-to-face contact, on the telephone, via written communications such as email, or on social media.

The following is a list to illustrate some examples of such behaviour. This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of unacceptable behaviour:

- Any kind of insult as an attempt to demean, embarrass or undermine;
- Any kind of threat;
- Shouting or raising the voice in a way that is deemed as threatening, either face to face or via telephone;
- Physical intimidation, for example, standing very close to the person, aggressive hand gestures or pointing in someone's face;
- Use of foul or abusive language;
- Any kind of physical abuse for example, pushing, hitting, slapping;
- Spitting;
- Racist, sexist or homophobic comments;
- Disruptive behaviour which interferes, or threatens to interfere, with any of the schools' normal operations or activities anywhere on the school premises;
- 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) .
- Allegations which turn out to be vexatious or malicious;
- Damaging or destroying school property.

## **5.1 Online activity**

Social media or group chats should not be used as a medium to air any concerns or grievances. These should be raised in an appropriate manner by contacting school or following the complaints policy. (See 6.5) We take very seriously inappropriate use of social media by a parent or visitor to publicly humiliate or criticise another parent or visitor, member of staff or a child.

Inappropriate online activity includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Social media and group chats, whether public or private, being used to fuel campaigns and voice complaints against the school, school staff, parents or children.
- Identifying or posting images/videos of children;
- Abusive or personal comments about staff, governors, children or other parents;
- Bringing the school in disrepute;
- Posting defamatory or libellous comments;
- Malicious gossip;
- Emails circulated or sent directly with abusive or personal comments about staff or children;
- Using social media, group chats or Class Dojo to publicly challenge school policies or discuss issues about individual children or members of staff;
- Threatening behaviour, such as verbally intimidating staff, or using bad language;
- Breaching school security procedures.

At Ringway Primary School we take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will deal with any reported incidents appropriately. Any inappropriate use of Class Dojo will result in the parent being removed from the platform and future access denied. Any of these behaviours may result in the involvement of the police or legal action.

## **6. Recording of Incidents**

All incidents, no matter how minor, will be recorded using the Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) as will any further statements, actions or letters.

## **7. The School's Response**

Staff will behave professionally and attempt to defuse the situation, seeking involvement from other colleagues where possible and appropriate. Staff who face these situations have the right to end any conversation whether face to face or on the telephone. Staff will then refer the situation to the appropriate person and record the incident on CPOMS.

In each situation the circumstances will be considered and the risk to staff and children assessed. Representatives of the Governing Body will be involved in all decisions and reviews. The following actions are guidance and may be amended depending upon the situation.

### **7.1 Clarify to the parent or visitor what is considered acceptable behaviour by the school**

For minor incidents it may be appropriate to simply ensure the parent or visitor is clear about behaviour expectations set by the school. This may be done via a letter or a telephone call. If this is done as a telephone call it will always be followed by a letter. The letter will explain what behaviour was unacceptable and will contain a warning about actions if there are further incidents. The parent or visitor will be invited to write their response to the Headteacher within 10 working days. A meeting may be held to discuss the situation and how it can be avoided in future.

### **7.2 Impose conditions on the parent or visitor's contact with the school and its staff**

Depending on the type, level or frequency of the unacceptable behaviour, the school may consider imposing conditions on contact with the school. These conditions may include (but are not limited to):

- Being accompanied to any meeting by an additional member of school staff and/or governor as appropriate;
- Restricting contact by telephone to named staff members only;
- Restricting written communications to named staff members only;
- Restricting attendance to school events;
- Any other restriction as deemed reasonable and proportionate by the Headteacher.

In this case the parent or visitor will be informed by a letter from the Headteacher outlining the details of the conditions that are being imposed. They would then be given 10 working days from the date of that letter to make representations in writing about the conditions to the Governing Body. The Governors would then decide whether to confirm or remove the conditions. This would be communicated in writing within 10 working days of the date of the parent or visitor's letter.

If the decision is to confirm the conditions imposed, this decision will be reviewed by the Governors after approximately twelve weeks (and every twelve weeks after that, if appropriate). The parent or visitor will be invited to make written representation to the Governors. This, and the evidence from the Headteacher, will be considered by a committee of Governors who may decide to maintain, extend or remove the conditions. The decision of the review will be communicated within 10 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 or visitor's compliance with the conditions, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from him/her and any evidence of co-operation with the school in other respects.

### **7.3 Imposing a ban**

If the Headteacher considers it unwise to allow a parent or visitor back on the school premises after the initial investigation period, then the school may consider banning the individual from school premises for a fixed term. This may also include banning a person from accessing school staff by written communication or telephone.

In these circumstances, the individual would be advised in writing by the Headteacher that a ban is being imposed pending an investigation. They would then be given 10 working days from the date of that letter to make representations about the ban in writing to the Headteacher.

A committee of the Governing Body would then decide whether to confirm or remove the ban. This would be communicated to the parent, or visitor in writing within 10 working days of the receipt of their letter.

If the decision is to uphold the ban, the parent in these circumstances will still be offered communication about their child's progress, usually with a member of senior staff.

A decision to impose a ban will be reviewed by the Governors after approximately twelve weeks (and every twelve weeks after that, if appropriate). The parent or visitor will be invited to make written representation to the Governors; this and the evidence from the Headteacher will be considered by the Governors who may decide to remove the ban, extend the ban or impose conditions on access to the school. The decision of the review will be communicated to the individual within 10 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 parent or visitor's compliance with the ban, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from him/her and any evidence of co-operation with the school in other respects.

### **7.4 Removal from School**

Any parent or visitor who has been banned from the school premises but continues to attend school premises will be deemed to have committed a section 547 offence. They will be considered as trespassers. In these circumstances the police will be asked to attend school to remove the



offender. Legal proceedings may be brought against the individual. [Section 547 of the Education Act 1996](#).

## **7.5 Complaints Policy**

Any parental complaint, including any that arise from incidents of abusive behaviour, will be dealt with under the complaints policy. The complaints policy can be found on the school website or a copy can be obtained from the office.



### Communication Pathways for Parents.

Please use these pathways so we can best respond to your query or concern.

Concern	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
If you're concerned about a <b>friendship issue or an incident during the school day.</b>	Contact your child's <b>Class Teacher</b> via admin email address or phone call via the school office.	If unresolved, contact <b>Assistant Headteacher</b> via admin email address or phone call via the school office.  <b>EYFS (Playgroup/Nursery/Reception) or KS1 (Years 1 and 2) – Mrs K Smith</b> <b>KS2 (Years 3,4,5 and 6) – Mrs K Sparrow</b>	If unresolved, contact <b>Headteacher, Mrs Robson</b> via admin email address or phone call via the school office.
	Response time: Within 3 Business days	Response time: Within 3 Business days	Response time: Within 3 Business days

Concern	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
If you're concerned about an <b>aspect of your child's learning.</b>	Contact your child's <b>Class Teacher</b> via admin email address or phone call via the school office.	If unresolved, contact <b>Assistant Headteacher</b> via admin email address or phone call via the school office.  <b>EYFS (Playgroup/Nursery/Reception) or KS1 (Years 1 and 2) – Mrs K Smith</b> <b>KS2 (Years 3,4,5 and 6) – Mrs K Sparrow</b>	If unresolved, contact <b>Headteacher, Mrs Robson</b> via admin email address or phone call via the school office.
	Response time: Within 3 Business days	Response time: Within 3 Business days	Response time: Within 3 Business days



## Communication Concern Pathways for Parents.

Concern	Step 1	Step 2
If you're concerned about a <b>member of staff</b>	Contact <b>Assistant Headteacher</b> via admin email address or phone call via the school office.  <b>EYFS (Playgroup/Nursery/Reception) or KS1 (Years 1 and 2) – Mrs K Smith</b> <b>KS2 (Years 3,4,5 and 6) – Mrs K Sparrow</b>	If unresolved, contact <b>Headteacher, Mrs Robson</b> via admin email address or phone call via the school office.
	Response time: Within one Business day	Response time: Within one Business day

Concern	Step 1	Step 2
<i>If you're concerned about <b>the safety and welfare of a child.</b></i>	<p>Contact <b>either of the school's safeguarding leads:</b></p> <p><i>Mrs Robson – Designated safeguarding lead.</i></p> <p><i>Deputy designated safeguarding leads:</i></p> <p><i>Mrs K Smith</i></p> <p><i>Mrs C Mackay</i></p> <p><i>Mrs K Sparrow</i></p> <p><i>Response time:</i></p> <p><i>Within one Business day</i></p>	<i>If you're not happy with the response, call One Call on 01670 536400</i>