

Halfway Nursery Infant School



Policy for Dealing with Unreasonably Persistent, Harassing, Vexatious, Unreasonable or Abusive Complaints

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Signed (Headteacher)	
Signed (Chair of Governors)	
Minute number	

Unreasonable or Abusive Complaints

The Headteacher and Governing Body are fully committed to the improvement of our school and the monitoring of complaints can help us to achieve this. We welcome feedback from parents and carers and will always do our utmost to resolve any that are brought to our attention as quickly as possible. There is a formal procedure for parents and carers should they wish to make a formal complaint.

Occasionally, however, parents and carers in raising issues with staff or others do so in a way that is unacceptable or behave in a manner that is unacceptable. Whilst we recognise that some complaints may well relate to what are considered serious and distressing incidents, we will not accept threatening or harassing behaviour towards any members of the school community, be this staff, school governors, parents, pupils or others.

The aim of this policy is to provide information about the School's procedures for dealing with unreasonably persistent or vexatious complainants, the harassment of staff and inappropriate behaviour.

What is meant by an 'unreasonably persistent complainant'?

An unreasonably persistent complainant is anyone who engages in unreasonable or inappropriate behaviour when making a complaint and will include persons who pursue complaints in an unreasonable manner. Unreasonable behaviour may include actions which are or appear to be:

- out of proportion to the nature of the complaint;
- personally harassing or unjustifiably repetitious;
- using abusive or threatening language;
- seeking unrealistic outcomes;
- persistent and enduring when the local School Complaints Procedure has been exhausted

What is meant by harassment?

We regard harassment as the unreasonable pursuit of issues or complaints, particularly if the matter appears to be pursued in a way that is intended to cause personal distress rather than to seek a resolution. Behaviour may fall within the scope of this policy if, for example

- it appears to be deliberately targeted at one or more members of staff or others without good cause;
- the way in which a complaint or other issue is pursued (as opposed to the complaint itself) causes ongoing and undue distress to school staff or others;
- it has a significant and disproportionate adverse effect on the school and its community.
- actions are pursued aggressively and/or in a manner that is inappropriate to an effective resolution

What is expected of any person who wishes to raise a complaint?

The school expects anyone who wishes to raise concerns with the school to:

- follow and observe the School Complaints Procedure;
- treat all members of the school community with courtesy and respect;
- restrain from acts or threats of violence towards people or property;
- respect the needs of pupils, staff and other members of the school community;
- conduct themselves in a professional manner and discuss matters with school staff with understanding and tolerance;
- recognise the time constraints under which staff in schools operate and allow the school a reasonable time as outlined in the School Complaints Procedure to respond.

What can be expected from the School?

- adherence to the School's Complaints Procedure;
- a response with courtesy and respect and within a reasonable time;
- a commitment to resolve the complaint at the earliest possible opportunity;

School's response to unreasonably persistent complaints and/or harassment

This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the School's Complaints Procedure. Taken together, these documents set out how the School will always seek to work in a positive way with parents, carers and others with legitimate complaints to seek a resolution at the earliest opportunity.

However, in instances where a complaint appears unreasonably persistent and/or the behaviour of the complainant gives cause for concern, the school may take some or all of the following steps:

- inform the complainant informally that his or her behaviour is considered unacceptable or inappropriate and request that this be modified;
- inform the complainant formally in writing that his or her behaviour is unacceptable and advise that appropriate action could be taken;
- require that all future meetings between the complainant and school be attended by an independent third party and be minuted;
- inform the complainant that, except in cases of emergency, the school will communicate with the complainant in writing only and that such communication may be required to be channelled via the Local Authority;
- inform the complainant in writing that the behaviour demonstrated is considered to fall under the terms of this policy and that any complaint will not be investigated further until it is pursued in a manner the School considers to be reasonable;
- place restrictions on the individual's access to school and/or school staff;
- cease all correspondence and communication with the complainant other than is necessary for the health and safety of the pupil;
- involve the police and/or officers of the Local Authority

Physical or verbal aggression

The School and Governing Body will not tolerate any form of physical or verbal aggression against any member of the school community. Should there be any evidence of any such aggression; the school will not hesitate to take appropriate action which may include one or more of the following:

- a ban imposed on an individual with **immediate effect** to prevent them from entering the school premises without a prior appointment or permission from the Head Teacher;
- informing the police to remove an individual from the school premises;
- prosecution under Anti-Harassment legislation.

The school has a responsibility to consider all new complaints and these will always be dealt with according to the procedures outlined in the School's Complaints Policy.

You should complain to us within three months. If you do not contact us within that time, we will normally take no further action in respect of your complaint. We will however, consider any exceptional reasons you may give for not meeting this time limit.