



Community Schools Trust

MAT Policy Front Sheet

Policy:	Policy for managing abusive Parents / Carers
MAT board:	
Date adopted by board:	
Next review date:	
Version number:	

Log of Changes

Version no.	Date	Initials	Note of change(s) made

CST Ethos and Objectives

All policies within the trust must serve to further our ethos and objectives, summarised below.

Our ethos:

- We have the highest possible ambition for educational success in our area and aim to raise achievement for all.
- We expect all members of each school community to challenge each other to reach high standards and to never accept mediocrity.
- We are committed to improving the life chances of all students.
- We believe our schools should stand at the centre of their communities and work with closely with parents.
- We believe in providing a disciplined, safe and structured school environment with open and regular lines of communication between all stakeholders.
- We aim to nurture a strong culture of learning in our area and encourage the participation of local communities and stakeholders in shaping the education we offer.
- We offer a broad, balanced and stretching curriculum for all with a strong focus on the acquisition of skills for learning, literacy, numeracy, social and cultural development, employment and citizenship.

Our objectives:

- We expect staff and students to share a commitment to personal growth and a belief in human potential
- We want all pupils to make better progress than their peers nationally.
- We want all lessons to provide effective feedback to students so that they know how to improve, are fully engaged and are applying basic skills appropriately.
- We want strong leadership from governors, senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and students alike.
- We want effective systems across all schools in the trust to be in place to support the good order and success of all schools.
- We want all schools in the trust to become autonomous, self-improving organisations that can drive continual improvement.
- We want all schools in the trust to be judged good or outstanding by Ofsted

Policy for Managing Abusive Parents/Carers

1.0 General

This policy has been written taking into account the DfE Guidance 'Advice on school security: Access to, and barring individuals from school premises' December 2012 as well as NAHT guidance on dealing with abusive parents.

At the Community Schools Trust (CST), we value the positive relationships forged with parents/carers and visitors to the school. We encourage close links with parents and the community and believe that students benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one. We also strive to make our school a place where all adults model, for students, the behaviour we teach and expect. We place a high importance on good manners, positive communication and mutual respect.

Almost all parents, carers and visitors to schools within the CST are respectful and polite and are supportive of the school's ethos. However, on very rare occasions the behaviour of a small number of parents/carers or visitors can fall short of our expectations. This can manifest itself in aggression or abuse towards members of the school community. This could be in written communication (including social media), on the telephone or in face-to-face incidents.

In these situations we expect members of staff to behave professionally, attempting to defuse the situation where possible and seeking, as appropriate, the involvement of other colleagues. Staff who face these situations have licence to politely end any conversation (face to face or on the telephone). They should then refer the incident to a senior manager who will take appropriate action or invoke the provisions of this policy.

The overriding principle is that all members of the school community have the right to work or be in school without fear of aggression or abuse from parents. The board of trustees has a requirement to protect staff and students from such aggression.

In instances where action is needed, the progress and well-being of the parent's child(ren) will be fully considered. Actions taken against the parent will be reasonable and proportionate. The parent will have the opportunity to put their views forward at every stage. In the case of the imposition of conditions or a ban from school, robust review processes involving the Chair of Trustees and the local school board are in place to ensure fairness.

2.0 Definition of unacceptable behaviour

We consider that aggressive, abusive / insulting behaviour or language from a parent/carer is unacceptable whether it be direct or indirect, and presents a risk to staff and students. Unacceptable behaviour is any which makes a member of staff or student feel threatened. This can be through face-to-face contact, on the telephone or in written communication (including social media). The following is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour:

- any kind of insult as an attempt to demean, embarrass or undermine
- any kind of threat
- raising of voice so as to intimidate
- physical intimidation, eg by standing very close or the use of aggressive hand gestures
- use of foul or abusive language
- any kind of physical abuse
- allegations which turn out to be vexatious or malicious.

3.0 The school's approach to dealing with incidents

If a parent/carer/visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the headteacher or appropriate senior staff will assess the level of risk before deciding on the course of action. The course of action will be reasonable and commensurate with the assessed level of risk.

4.0 Risk Assessment

Where deemed necessary, the Headteacher will carry out a risk assessment in order to help make a decision about the level of response. In all cases the response will be reasonable and proportionate. The Headteacher 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/students feel intimidated by the person's behaviour?
- Is there any evidence of provocation?
- How high is the assessed risk that this will be repeated or that there will be retaliation to the school's action (low, medium, high)?

5.0 Recording of Incidents

Staff/students subject to abuse and witnesses will make written statements about any incident(s) which will be kept in a file with subsequent follow up letters. This file will be kept by the Headteacher's PA.

Depending on an assessment of the risk of retaliation to witnesses or individuals, statements made by these adults may or may not be made available to the parent if they request it.

6.0 The school's response

Following the completion of the risk assessment, the Headteacher will decide the level of action to be taken. Actions will include the following:

6.1 Clarify to the person what is considered acceptable behaviour by the school

The person will be invited to write to the Headteacher with his/her version of events within 10 working days. In some instances it may be appropriate simply to ensure the parent is clear about behaviour standards expected by the school. This could be explained by letter from the Headteacher. Where necessary, this letter will contain a warning about further action to be taken if there are further incidents. Depending on the parent's response there will be either no further action or a meeting will be held to discuss the situation and how this can be avoided in future.

6.2 Invite the person to an informal meeting to discuss events

The safety and well-being of those attending such a meeting will be carefully considered. Members of school staff will always be accompanied by at least one other colleague at any such meeting. Consideration will be given to the seating arrangements, and care taken to ensure exits cannot be blocked by a person who could potentially become aggressive. The main points of discussion and any agreed actions will be noted, and a follow-up letter or e-mail sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions.

6.3 Impose conditions on the person's contact with the school and its staff

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Parents of enrolled students are permitted to come onto school premises at certain stated times, other visitors do not. It is for schools to define and set out the extent of such access. Persons exceeding this would be trespassing. Depending on the type, level or frequency of the unacceptable behaviour, the school may consider imposing conditions on the person's contact with the school. These conditions may include (but are not exclusively):

- being accompanied to any meeting with a member of school staff by a member of the senior leadership team
- 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 school events to those where the person will be accompanied by a member of the senior leadership of the school
- any other restriction as deemed reasonable and proportionate by the Headteacher.

The person will be informed in writing of any conditions to be imposed. The person will then be given 10 working days from the date of that letter to make representations in writing about the conditions to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will then decide whether to confirm or remove the conditions. This would be communicated to the person in writing within 10 working days of the date of the person's letter.

If the decision is to confirm the conditions imposed, this decision will be reviewed by the Local School Board after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The person will be invited to make written representation to the LSB. The written representation, and the evidence from the Headteacher will be considered at a meeting of the local school board. Board members will decide to either maintain, extend or remove the conditions. The decision of the review will be communicated to the person by the clerk to the boards within 10 working days of the date of the meeting.

When deciding whether it will be necessary to maintain, extend or remove the conditions, LSB members will give consideration to the extent of the person's compliance with the conditions, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from him/her and any evidence of the person's cooperation with the school in other respects.

7.0 Imposing a ban

Where other procedures have been exhausted and aggression or intimidation continues or where there is an extreme act, or threat of violence, then the school will consider banning the person from school. In this case the person will be informed in a letter from the Headteacher the details of the ban from the school premises. This will include banning a person from contacting school staff by written communication or telephone.

In these circumstances, the individual will be advised in writing by the Headteacher that a provisional ban is being imposed. The person would then be given 10 working days from the date of that letter to make representations about the ban in writing to the LSB. The LSB would then decide whether to confirm or remove the ban. This would be communicated to the person in writing within 10 working days of the receipt of their letter. If the banned person is a parent they 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 local school board after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The person will be invited to make written representation to the trustees; this and the evidence from the Headteacher will be considered at a meeting of the local school board. LSB members will decide to remove the ban, extend the ban or impose conditions on person's access to the school. The decision of the review will be communicated to the person by the clerk to the trustees within 10 days of the date of the meeting.

In deciding whether to remove or extend the ban or impose conditions, LSB members will give consideration to the extent of the person's compliance with the ban, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from him/her and any evidence of the person's cooperation with the school in other respects.

8.0 Removal from school

Persons 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 person may be removed from school. This may be carried out by a police officer or person authorised by the local school board. Legal proceedings may be brought against the person.

9.0 Complaints policy

Any complaint that arises from incidents of abusive behaviour will be dealt with under the complaints policy.

10.0 Appeal process

Any person who has been served with a ban may appeal. Appeals must be in writing to the Chair of the Trust. The chair of the trust may request further information and will decide on all cases within 15 working days.