Model policy for managing serial and unreasonable complaints

This policy is also for managing unreasonable or persistent contact not directly associated with, or resulting from, formal complaints.

At Fringford C of E Primary School, we believe that only through relationships based upon mutual respect can we build trust and deliver quality outcomes to the community we serve. Our staff are expected to behave professionally and respectfully at all times when engaging with families, visitors and other stakeholders. Likewise, we expect the same standards of behaviour from members of the school community in their interactions with our staff. We do not tolerate aggressive behaviour, or any form of harassment, bullying or discrimination directed against school staff. We reserve the right to bring serious cases to the attention of governors and the relevant local authorities.

Fringford C of E Primary is committed to dealing with all complaints, formal or informal, fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unreasonable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Fringford C of E Primary defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints or grievances because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- 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 or to engage with staff to resolve grievances
- 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 complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect 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
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and/ or seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds

- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff in person, in writing, by email and/or by telephone
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an '*unreasonable'* marking.

If the behaviour continues, the headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact the school causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from the school premises.

Related Content

Please also see the school code of conduct for parents, carers and visitors.