



Expected Behaviour and Communication with Staff Policy



Version History

Version No.	Date	Author	Comments
1.0		FGB	Policy Created and Ratified
1.1	18-12-2023	Frances Troop	Name and role updates including DSLs Request regarding emails at night/late evenings Removed paragraph regarding school closure (post Covid)
1.2	06-05-2024	Frances Troop	Recording of meetings and merged Plumsum with the online advice

Policy Statement

At Bridgewater Primary School, we greatly value our positive relationships with parents, carers and visitors to the school. We strongly believe that children, parents and staff benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one. We also strive to make our school a community where all adults, whether members of the school staff or not, model for pupils the behaviour we expect.

All members of the school community have the right to work without fear of aggression or abuse from parents, carers or visitors, and the Governing Body has committed to protect staff from this. Therefore, the school reserves the right to act in such situations to protect staff.

The school understands and accepts that, on occasions, parents or carers may have concerns regarding their child or may disagree with the school as to a course of action or decision made. It is right for parents to have the opportunity to raise these concerns. The school's website contains the Complaints Policy, which outlines the process for addressing concerns that have not been able to be resolved, through informal contact with the school. However, the Governors and the School does expect that parents or carers are not aggressive or abusive in raising such concerns. The school also expects that all written communication (including emails and social media) should be polite and courteous.

It should be noted that any action taken in response to aggressive, abusive or threatening behaviour from parents or carers is separate from any process being undertaken to address any concerns being currently raised by a parent or carer.

Communication with Staff

At Bridgewater Primary School, we encourage parents and carers to be involved in the education of their children whilst at the school and wish to encourage an ethos of honest, supportive and positive communication.

The school and the Governors, whilst are in full support of positive communication between parents, carers and the school staff, would like to set out reasonable expectations of the manner of these communications and the timeframes in which responses should be expected.

Emails

If sending an email, a member of the school staff will aim to respond within 2 school days. If they cannot provide the requested information in this time, they will ask the Office to contact the parent to let them know when a response can be expected.

Please do not send emails to school staff late into the evening or during the night. If possible, schedule the receipt of an email to arrive within working hours.

School staff will not be expected to respond to emails in their evenings, at weekends or in the holidays.

If you deem your concern to be a Safeguarding matter requiring immediate attention, please call the School Office, which opens at 8am daily. They will direct you to the appropriate member of staff or to a Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL). These are:

- Alison Harvey – Head Teacher
- Frances Troop – Deputy Head Teacher
- Nicola Redden- SENDCo/ Online Safety Lead
- Victoria Ashby – Learning Mentor and Inclusion

Phone Calls

If a member of staff is unavailable to take a phone call when a parent/carer calls, a message will be taken and passed to the staff member, by the Office. Staff will not be able to take telephone calls within teaching hours, they will, however, aim to return the call within 24 school hours or ask the School Office to pass on a message.

Urgent messages should be shared with the School Office, so they can be appropriately prioritised and dealt with.

If you call in with a Safeguarding concern- please ask to speak to a DSL – see list above.

Face-to Face Communication/Remote Communication

Teachers wish to encourage open dialogue, however, it is not always possible to speak in detail about a child or situation at the start of the school day, when teachers are welcoming their children, or at the end of the school day, when teachers may be going on to further meetings. In such cases, the teacher will aim to make a time and date suitable to both parties to discuss any issues further.

On the online learning platform, Seesaw and Tapestry, parents are able to leave messages, but these should be polite and respectful. Staff will reply as soon as they are able, usually within 24 hours. If there is a question that they cannot answer, they will direct the parent to the appropriate member of staff.

Meetings

Teachers make every reasonable attempt to make a meeting when convenient to parents/carers, but this must be within the times that they are available. It is not often possible for teachers to be released from classes within the school day.

Meetings should be clear, concise and focused on the concern or area under discussion.

In order to encourage open communication, free exchange of ideas, spontaneous dialogue and an atmosphere of trust, it is not permitted to record conversations, phone calls or meetings with any recording device (including but not limited to a mobile phone, PDA, digital recording device or digital camera) unless **all parties** have agreed to the conversation being recorded and have given their consent.

The only exception to this is if there unless there is a need for a reasonable adjustment or a clearly stated rationale shared **ahead** of the meeting, which is then agreed by the Head Teacher and the members of staff in the meeting are aware.

As a school, no member of staff needs to agree to a meeting where they are being recorded.

Recordings without consent: whilst we understand that parents may wish a record of a meeting, this must only be made if pre-agreed and for personal or domestic use only. **We do not agree to any meeting being recorded without the people present being informed and the Head Teacher being in agreement.**

No recording devices can be left 'running' at any time in the meeting or in the meeting room afterwards.

If a recording is agreed, it cannot be shared following the meeting. It is for personal use only. **Data protection law applies if a recording is shared.** This is because it no longer falls under the category of personal, domestic use, and data protection law will apply.

If a recording is published in a public place, such as social media, the person publishing it will have to abide by data protection rules on handling third-party data.

If a recording has been shared publicly, the school will take advice from Plumsun (our data manager) and will consider seeking legal advice.

Behaviour towards Staff

What is unacceptable behaviour?

The Governing Body acknowledge that almost all our parents, carers and visitors are polite and courteous in their dealings with the school, modelling the expected behaviour to our pupils in line with our values of honesty, respect, support and co-operation.

However, on very rare occasions, the behaviour of a small number of parents, carers or visitors does not uphold our values, and this sometimes manifests itself in aggression or abuse towards members of the school community, whether via telephone, email, social media or face-to face.

The school does not tolerate aggression or abuse towards members of the school community, whether via telephone, email, on an online learning platform, social media or face-to face.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour are:

- any kind of insult as an attempt to demean, embarrass or undermine a person.
- any kind of threat
- raising of voice/shouting
- physical intimidation; for example, standing very close, or the use of aggressive hand gestures.
- use of swearing or abusive language
- any kind of physical abuse
- refusal to leave school premises when asked.
- allegations which turn out to be vexatious or malicious (please see Complaints Policy for further details)

This list is not exhaustive or limited to the above.

The school's approach to dealing with unacceptable behaviour

All staff are expected to remain professional, polite and courteous. Where possible, they should seek to diffuse the situation. However, staff who are subject to any of the behaviours outlined above have **the right to end any conversation** (face to face or on the telephone). The school also reserves the right **not to respond to aggressive or abusive written communication**, except through reinforcing the expectations set out above.

It may be necessary to seek support from a member of the Senior Leadership Team if a parent, carer or visitor is on site and being aggressive or abusive. This person will then, if necessary, be escorted from the site. Should any threat persist, then the police will be called using the emergency 999 number. **It should be noted that the school site is not a public site, and any person on site is there with the permission of the school.**

Any incident of aggressive, abusive or threatening behaviour, or any aggressive, abusive or threatening behaviour identified in written communication, will be reported to the Headteacher in the first instance, or another member of the Senior Leadership Team in the absence of the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will determine the level of response. The response will be reasonable and proportionate to the behaviour.

The Headteacher may consider the following questions:

- What form did the aggressive behaviour or abuse take?
- What is the context for the incident?
- Did staff feel intimidated or threatened?
- Have there been previous incidents involving this individual?
- How high is the assessed risk that this behaviour will be repeated?

Outcome

Actions may include the following:

A letter to the parent, carer or visitor, from the Headteacher or Chair of the Governing Body, outlining the school's concern, and clarifying what is considered acceptable behaviour by the school.

AND/OR:

The imposition of conditions on subsequent contact with school staff.

Conditions could include, but are not limited to:

- 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 parent will be accompanied by a member of the senior leadership team.
- restricting contact with the school to either telephone and/or written communication.
- banning a parent from all contact with school staff, including via telephone or through written communication.
- banning a parent from the school site.

Governor Review

Conditions will be imposed for the shortest time deemed appropriate. If conditions are imposed, which the recipient is not in agreement with, parents can ask for a review of the decision from a panel of the Governing Body. Please put this request in writing to the School Office – addressing the letter FAO: The governing body.

Governors will always review any decision that extends for eight weeks or longer. At the review a panel of three governors will meet, and may decide to maintain, extend or remove the conditions. The Head Teacher and parents can make written representations to this meeting.

The Governors will communicate the decision of the review to the parent/s or carer/s within 5 school days of the date of the meeting.

When deciding whether it will be necessary to maintain, extend or remove the conditions, governors will consider the extent of the parent's compliance with any conditions set, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct, and any evidence of the parent's co-operation with the school in other respects.

All incidents of aggressive or abusive behaviour to school staff, and any responses issued, will be reported to the Governing Body.