



Reading Community School Leaders
Reading Community School Chairs of Governors

Sent by email:

19 February 2024

Dear Colleague

Parent Carer and Community Acceptable Behaviour Expectations

Further to my letter of 19 January to Reading Community School Leaders, I am writing to you to confirm the expectations regarding parent carer and community acceptable behaviour, and arrangements to support schools regarding these expected behaviours.

This support builds on current policy and support available from Brighter Futures for Children on behalf of Reading Borough Council, and is informed by feedback from Reading Borough Council School leaders at the termly meeting on 12 January.

The commitments and practice attached to this letter are proposed to be enshrined in Reading Borough Council policy and set out in the revised School Effectiveness Framework, which will be recommended for approval by Councillors through ACE Committee on 20 March. We welcome feedback on these arrangements as the basis for a proposed policy to be considered by Reading Borough Council ACE Committee in March.

I hope the arrangements set out and appended to this letter will be helpful. If you have any questions on any of the above, please do contact me, or your School Effectiveness link officer.

Yours sincerely,

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to be 'B Grady', is written over a light blue circular scribble.

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Parent Carer and Community Acceptable Behaviour – statement of expectations

Brighter Futures for Children on behalf of Reading Borough Council strongly believe that our community schools in Reading should be a welcoming and safe place for our children, staff, parents and visitors alike.

Schools have legal responsibilities for the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and staff, and a duty of care to all people who visit a school.

All adults who enter a school site at any time set examples of behaviour and conduct which influence children and young people, and we believe that they should therefore demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same. Parents, carers and visitors must show respect to all other parents, carers, children, staff and visitors.

All members of staff have the right to work without fear of intimidation, violence and abuse and we expect parents, carers and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way at all times.

Adults who do not behave in an acceptable manner may be asked to leave the site and the Headteacher has the right to further restrict their access. The expectations of Brighter Futures for Children on behalf of Reading Borough Council in respect of the conduct of parents, carers and visitors to our school are set out below statement of expectations, which also outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

Brighter Futures for Children on behalf of Reading Borough Council will support schools in the consistent application of these expectations, including providing practical, legal or other support to schools as is necessary. Any Reading community school leader or Chair of Governors who requires support regarding these expectations should contact their School Effectiveness lead professional.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour are as follows:

- Shouting at members of staff, either in person or over the telephone;
- Use of offensive language towards other adults, staff or children;
- Physically intimidating members of staff and/or other parents or pupils;
- Approaching someone else's child in order to question or chastise them;
- Physical abuse, threatening, oppressive or aggressive behaviour;
- Using aggressive hand gestures;
- Swearing;
- Pushing;
- Hitting, eg slapping, punching, kicking or poking;
- Breaching the school's security procedures;
- Refusal to leave the school site when asked to;
- Attempting to gain entry to any part of the school in disregard of procedure or without permission;
- Entering the school site under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- Smoking/vaping/using drugs whilst on school property;
- Bringing alcohol onto school premises or excessive consumption of alcohol at school events;

- Bringing dogs, with the exception of Assistance Dogs, on to the school site without the explicit permission of the Headteacher;
- Damaging or destroying school property;
- Displaying any signs and/or handing out notices or messages which could cause unreasonable upset and/or harm to any member of staff, governor, parent or child.

The above list shows examples of unacceptable behaviour, however, this is not exhaustive. Should any of the above occur on school premises, or any other behaviour which is considered unacceptable, including inappropriate behaviour online (see below under Social Media), the school may feel it is necessary to take action by contacting Brighter Futures for Children or the appropriate authorities or considering restricting the offending adult from entering the school premises.

School-related issues which parents or carers may have concerning the school, pupils or their families must be brought to the attention of a member of staff. Parents or carers must not try to resolve any issues themselves by direct action. If issues cannot be successfully resolved by speaking to a staff member, the correct course of action is for parents and carers to use the school's Complaints Procedure.

We expect all communication between parents and the school to be conducted in a polite and respectful manner. Communication may be similarly restricted if it becomes unacceptable, for example, abusive, persistent or threatening emails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communication.

Social Media

On occasions some parents are tempted to make comments about the school, school staff, other parents and/or pupils on social media. Social media is not the forum for raising concerns or complaints about the school. If parents have a concern about the school, they can raise their concern directly with the Headteacher and complaints can be raised through the school's Complaints Procedure.

Parents and carers should take care when posting messages on social media. Parents are expected to treat everyone with respect and professionalism – even on social media - and adults should set a good example to their children and other pupils, and not use social media to criticise the school or its staff or pupils or make inappropriate comments.

In the event that any pupil or parent/carer of a pupil is found to be posting inappropriate comments on social media, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the social media site and consideration will be given to taking further action. Making potentially defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments about others on social media could have legal implications. In addition, threats of violence can lead to a criminal action. The school will also expect any pupil or parent/carer to remove such inappropriate comments immediately.

Legal framework

Under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 it is an offence for any person to be on school premises to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance. It provides the right to remove and prosecute any person who is believed to have committed an offence.

Whilst a parent or carer of a child attending the school normally has implied permission to be on the school premises at certain times and for certain purposes, this permission may be withdrawn if the parent or carer exhibits behaviour which the Headteacher believes is unreasonable. This also applies to all other individuals invited into the school for other reasons.

In the event of any parent/carer/visitor breaching this Policy then proportionate action will be taken, for example:

- Parents, carers or other visitors exhibiting unacceptable behaviour could have their access restricted which prevents access to the school premises.
- Anyone who has had their access restricted and then ignores the restriction and enters the school site may be removed from the school site and prosecuted, if it is believed they have committed an offence.

The Governing Body, in conjunction with the Headteacher and Brighter Futures for Children will take the lead in authorising the removal of a person believed to be causing a nuisance or disturbance, and, if necessary, will bring legal proceedings against them.

In cases where the unacceptable behaviour is considered to be a serious and potentially criminal matter, the concerns will in the first instance be referred to the Police. This will include any or all cases of threats of violence, and actual violence, to any child, staff, visitor, contractor or Governor of the school. This will include anything which could be seen as a sign of harassment of any member of the school community, such as any form of insulting social media post or any form of social media cyberbullying