



Unreasonable Communication Policy

Policy on Managing Unreasonable and Vexatious Communication

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Approval Level	Headteacher (on behalf of the Local Governing Board)

Overview

Ashover Primary School is committed to fostering a safe, respectful and productive environment for pupils, staff, parents and carers. This policy sets out how we will manage communication that becomes unreasonable or vexatious so that staff can work effectively while ensuring that legitimate concerns are addressed fairly and promptly.

Scope and Audience

This policy applies to all communication with Ashover Primary School by parents, carers, members of the public and external agencies. Staff should read this policy alongside safeguarding and complaints procedures.

1. Policy Statement and Purpose

This policy sets out the school's approach to managing individuals whose actions, correspondence, or behaviour are considered unreasonable, vexatious, or disproportionately demanding of school time and resources.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure that school staff can carry out their duties efficiently and effectively without undue harassment, distraction, or excessive demand.
- Define what constitutes unreasonable or vexatious behaviour.
- Establish clear and fair procedures for responding to and managing such behaviour.
- Protect staff from abuse, intimidation, and unreasonable demands.

2. Definition of Unreasonable and Vexatious Actions

Unreasonable or vexatious actions are defined as any behaviour that, because of its frequency, persistence, demand, or nature, significantly hinders the school's operations, interferes with staff duties, or causes distress to staff members.

This includes, but is not limited to:

A. Communication and Correspondence

- **Excessive Communication:** Sending a disproportionate number of emails, letters, or making excessive phone calls about issues that have already been addressed, or where the volume of communication itself constitutes harassment.
- **Insistence on Unreasonable Outcomes:** Persisting in the pursuit of an issue after due process has been completed and the matter has been fully and properly addressed, and where no new evidence has been provided.
- **Lengthy or AI-Generated Content:** Sending communications that are excessively long, often generated using AI tools, making it unreasonably time-consuming for staff to read, summarise, and respond. The school reserves the right to request a concise summary of the core issue.
- **Demands for Unreasonable Resources:** Demanding responses within unreasonable timescales, demanding meetings with specific staff members without legitimate reason, or demanding access to information beyond what is required by law or reasonable policy.
- **Abusive or Threatening Language:** Using profane, abusive, insulting, intimidating, or derogatory language towards any member of the school community.

B. Behaviour and Actions

- Recording staff (audio or video) without prior consent, unless otherwise agreed upon by the Headteacher or permitted by law.
- Harassing, bullying, or intimidating staff, pupils, or other parents/carers.

- Failing to observe the school's general policies (e.g., safeguarding, code of conduct for parents/carers).

3. Procedures for Managing Unreasonable and/or Vexatious Actions

School staff should report any behaviour they deem to be vexatious or unreasonable to the Headteacher or other suitable person.

Step 1: Initial Review and Warning

- The Headteacher will review the reported behaviour and, if they deem it to meet the criteria for vexatious actions, will issue a Formal Written Warning, unless the matter is so serious as to require immediate action.
- This warning will clearly define why the behaviour is considered vexatious, refer to this policy, and state the consequences of continuation.
- The warning will also outline the reasonable level of future contact the school will maintain (e.g., limiting responses to one per week, requesting concise communication).

Step 2: Implementation of Management Strategy

If the unreasonable or vexatious behaviour continues after the formal written warning, the Headteacher, in consultation with the Chair of Governors, may implement a Management Strategy. This may include:

- Single Point of Contact (SPOC): Limiting all future communication to a single, named member of staff (e.g., the Deputy Head or Headteacher's PA). All other staff will be instructed not to respond.
- Designated communication process (e.g., online form).
- Method of Contact Restriction: Restricting the method of contact (e.g., only via postal letter, or a single monthly email).
- Refusal to Engage: Informing the individual that the school will no longer reply to lengthy, AI-generated, or repeated correspondence that seeks to reopen matters already concluded.
- Temporary Suspension: Suspending the individual's right to attend non-essential school events (e.g., assemblies, fetes) if their behaviour risks disrupting the school environment.
- Legal Action: In cases of severe abuse or harassment, the school reserves the right to seek a restraining order or refer the matter to the police.

Step 3: Notification and Review

- The individual will be formally notified in writing of the Management Strategy being applied and the duration (if applicable).
- The Strategy will be reviewed by the Headteacher (and/or Governors) at appropriate intervals to determine if the restrictions can be lifted.

4. Ensuring Access and Fairness

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently. Applying this policy does not mean the school will refuse to address legitimate concerns or complaints. The school will always ensure essential communication about a pupil's welfare, academic progress, or safeguarding remains accessible, albeit within the defined limits of the Management Strategy.

5. Use of the Policy

The use of this policy is expected to be limited to situations where attempts to manage communication and interaction have been unsuccessful. Any actions taken using this Policy will be open to the Complaint Policy or other reviews.

Related Policies

- Complaints Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Data Protection and Privacy Notices

Contacts

For routine enquiries, please contact the school office in the first instance. Where a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) is in effect, all communication must be directed to that named person.

Main office email: enquiries@ashover.derbyshire.sch.uk

Telephone: 01246 590207

Postal address: Ashover Primary School, Narrowleys Lane, Ashover, Derbyshire, S45 0AU