

# Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct

Reach Academy Trust

*The vast majority of parents, carers and other visitors to our school are supportive of the school, its teachers, other members of staff, its students, their parents and other visitors, and act in a reasonable way, ensuring that the school is a safe, orderly environment in which students can learn. Occasionally, however, a negative attitude is expressed in an aggressive, verbally abusive or physically abusive way towards these members of the school community which is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The school requires its teachers and other members of staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations, attempting to defuse the situation wherever possible, and to seek the involvement of other members of staff as appropriate. However, all teachers and members of staff have the right to work without fear of harassment, violence, intimidation or abuse. The school expects parents and other visitors to always behave in a reasonable way towards all members of the school community. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where the behaviour displayed falls below the standard the school expects and will not be tolerated.*

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## 1. Aims

The vast majority of parents, carers and other visitors to our school are supportive of the school, its teachers, other members of staff, its students, their parents and other visitors, and act in a reasonable way, ensuring that the school is a safe, orderly environment in which students can learn. Occasionally, however, a negative attitude is expressed in an aggressive, verbally abusive or physically abusive way towards these members of the school community which is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The school requires its teachers and other members of staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations, attempting to defuse the situation wherever possible, and to seek the involvement of other members of staff as appropriate. However, all teachers and members of staff have the right to work without fear of harassment, violence, intimidation or abuse. The school expects parents and other visitors to always behave in a reasonable way towards all members of the school community. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where the behaviour displayed falls below the standard the school expects and will not be tolerated.

Section 576 of the Education Act 1976 makes it a criminal offence punishable with a fine of up to £500 for a person to trespass on school premises and cause a nuisance or disturbance. Schools are private premises fulfilling a public function.

Parents and some other visitors, for example family members assisting with drop-off or pick-up normally have implied permission to be on school premises at certain times and for certain purposes and they will not therefore be trespassers unless the implied permission is withdrawn.

Under section 576 Education Act 1976, "parent" includes a child's natural parents, anyone with parental responsibility for the child or anyone who is caring for a child. The public has no automatic right of entry onto school premises.

## 2. Our expectations of parents and visitors

We expect parents, carers and other visitors to:

- Respect the ethos, vision and values of our school
- Work together with staff in the best interests of our pupils
- Treat all members of the school community with respect – setting a good example with speech and behaviour
- Seek a peaceful solution to all issues
- Correct their own child's behaviour (or those in their care), particularly in public, where it could lead to conflict, aggression or unsafe conduct
- Contact staff straight away if there is anything you wish to discuss, approaching the adult you know to be the first point of contact e.g. class or form tutor, in the first instance.

## 3. Behaviour that is not expected and will not be tolerated

In order to create a harmonious environment, free from distractions and centred on pupil learning and well-being there are certain behaviours which we need to avoid. If these behaviours occur there are steps the school will take to prevent them from happening again. This list is not exhaustive, but gives an idea of the kinds of behaviours which are not expected from adults in the school community and seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviours.

- Behaviour which disrupts, or threatens to disrupt, school operations (including events on the school grounds and sports team matches)
- Swearing, or using offensive language
- Displaying a temper, or shouting at members of staff, pupils or other parents

- Threatening another member of the school community, including other parents or pupils
- Sending abusive messages to another member of the school community, including via text, email or social media
- Posting defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments about the school, its staff or any member of its community, on social media platforms
- Any aggressive behaviour (including verbally or in writing) towards any child, including your own, or adult
- Disciplining another person's child – please bring any behaviour incidents to a member of staff's attention
- Smoking or drinking alcohol on the school premises (unless alcohol has been allowed at a specific event)
- Possessing or taking drugs (including legal highs) on school premises
- Any other behaviour likely to cause anybody witnessing it (including the recipient) alarm, distress or to fear that violence may be used against them or others.

The definition in the Education Act 1996 of the word parent is extended and includes an individual who has care of the child regardless of whether s/he is the natural parent or has parental responsibility for the child. This includes step parents. Where an individual does not fall within this broad definition, the principles of this guidance should still be applied (but the wording in any letters should be amended accordingly).

### 3. Permission to enter premises

Parents have "implied permission" to enter and be on the school's premises for reasons relating to their child / children's education. This means that parents are welcome to come to the school to drop off and collect their children, to speak to teachers and other members of staff about their children, or for meetings, parents' evenings and social events. Parents do not have a legal right to enter or be on the school's premises without a good reason. In education law, the term "parent" includes the natural or adoptive parents of a student, as well as a nonparent with care of a student and a non-parent with parental responsibility of a student. For the purposes of this policy only, the term "parent" will also include a non-parent who does not have care of or parental responsibility for a student, but who is involved in looking after a student on a regular basis (for example, a childminder, non-resident partner of a parent or relative who takes the student to or from school, is involved with the care of the student in some other way, or a person whose emergency contact number we have been provided with). Other visitors also have "implied permission" to enter and be on the school's premises if they have a reason, for example a courier or delivery person, or a member of the public attending the school's office to make enquiries about something. Members of the public without a good reason for entering or being on the school premises are trespassing.

### 4. Withdrawal of permission to enter

The school has the right to withdraw the "implied permission" for a parent or visitor to enter or be on the school's premises if their behaviour while they were previously on the school's premises was unacceptable. The withdrawal of the "implied permission" will be effective as soon as the parent or other visitor has been told that they must leave and are prohibited from returning, and will be confirmed in writing by recorded delivery if the home address is known. The full procedure that the school will follow is outlined in further detail below. Once the "implied permission" has been withdrawn, entering the school's site will be trespass and the school will ask the police to remove the parent or visitor immediately. If the parent or visitor causes a nuisance or disturbance while they are on the school's premises, they may also be prosecuted in the criminal courts under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996, be liable to pay a fine and have a criminal conviction recorded against them. Where a parent has had their "implied permission" to enter and be on the school's premises withdrawn, the school will, in appropriate cases, make alternative arrangements for the parent's

children to be dropped off and collected from the school, and in relation to parents' evenings and other meetings.

In the event of a parent behaving in an inappropriate way, each situation will need to be considered individually by the head teacher or a designated member of staff. The following factors should be considered as a risk assessment, before deciding on the most appropriate course of action. Where the word parent is not the best term, or the term used in the family set-up for the person in question, then the correct terminology should be substituted:

- Has the parent been verbally aggressive/threatening/intimidating?
- Has the parent been physically aggressive/threatening/intimidating?
- What evidence is there? What do witnesses say happened?
- Does the parent have a known previous history of aggression/violence? (Information can only be sought from the police when an official complaint has been made).
- Do members of the school staff/community feel intimidated by the parent's behaviour?
- Have pupils witnessed aggressive/threatening/intimidating behaviour from the parent?
- Have pupils been approached inappropriately by the parent?
- Has the parent been abusive to school staff, pupils or visitors?
- Has the parent been persistently abusive to school staff, pupils or visitors?
- Was the parent provoked in any way prior to their behaviour and/or does the parent claim to have been provoked?
- Is there evidence of provocation?
- How frequently have the behaviours occurred?
- Is there a risk (low, medium or high) that the behaviour may be repeated?

In addition to the criminal offence under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 outlined above, unacceptable behaviour by a parent or visitor can also amount to several other forms of criminal offence. Some of these criminal offences are listed below:

- Common Assault

This is committed when a member of the school community has been assaulted and no injury or very minor injuries have been caused. The offence is more serious if it is racially aggravated by the words or behaviour used just before or during the assault.

- Assault occasioning Actual Bodily Harm

This is committed when a member of the school community has been assaulted and slightly more serious injuries have been caused by falling short of fractures or deep wounds. The offence is more serious if it is racially aggravated by the words or behaviour used just before or during the assault.

- Grievous Bodily Harm

This is committed when a member of the school community has been assaulted and serious injuries have been caused such as fractures or deep wounds. The offence is more serious if it is racially aggravated by the words or behaviour used just before or during the assault, and there are two forms of the offence; intention to cause the injury (the more serious of the two) and being reckless as to causing the injury.

- Public Order Offences

This group of offences are committed when a parent or visitor has used threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress; or likely to cause fear of violence; or with intent to cause fear of violence; or using or threatening unlawful violence likely to make those witnessing the incident fear for their safety.

- Criminal Damage

This is committed when a parent or visitor has destroyed or damaged property belonging to the school or a member of the school community, intending to do so or being reckless as to doing so. The offence is more serious where the damage was caused by fire, or there was an intention or recklessness as to endangering life.

- Possession of an Offensive Weapon or Bladed Article on School Premises

This is committed when a parent or visitor enters the school's premises with a knife or an offensive weapon. It does not matter if the parent or visitor intended to use the knife or weapon. Where the school believes that a parent or visitor's conduct would amount to a criminal offence, the school will report the incident to the police for immediate investigation and prosecution. The school will cooperate fully with the police, including encouraging teachers and other members of staff to provide witness statements and to attend court to give evidence at a trial. Where a parent or visitor's conduct amounts to a criminal offence, the school will, in all but exceptional cases, immediately withdraw their "implied permission" to enter and be on the school's premises.

The initial decision to withdraw "implied permission" will be made by one of the Co-Headteacher's or, in their absence from school, the Deputy Headteacher. The decision will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Chair of Governors, who can delegate this task to another Governor in appropriate cases.

## 5. Stages for withdrawing implied permission

### STAGE 1A - CLARIFYING TO THE PARENT OR VISITOR WHAT IS CONSIDERED ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

These are voluntary agreements made between people involved in anti-social behaviour, and the agency/school concerned. They are flexible in terms of content and format, and can be an effective means of encouraging young adults, children and parents to take responsibility for unacceptable behaviour. The person named does not always agree with the contract, but it can be used as evidence at a later stage for an application for an anti-social behaviour order.

### STAGE 1B - WARNING LETTER FROM THE CO-HEADTEACHER BEFORE IMPLIED PERMISSION WITHDRAWN

Where a parent or visitor has behaved in a way which is unacceptable to the school for the first time, they are likely to receive a letter warning them that, if the behaviour is repeated, their "implied permission" to enter and be on the school's premises will be withdrawn. The Co-Headteacher will send a letter (Appendix 1) to the parent or visitor confirming the warning and the consequences of failing to heed it. However, where the unacceptable behaviour is serious and/or amounts to a criminal offence, it is likely that the parent or visitor's "implied permission" will be withdrawn immediately without warning under

### Stage 2- LETTER FROM CO-HEADTEACHER WITHDRAWING IMPLIED PERMISSION

Where a parent or visitor has already received a warning letter under Stage 1 and has behaved in an unacceptable way again, or where a parent or visitor has engaged in serious misconduct and/or conduct amounting to a criminal offence, their "implied permission" to enter and be on the school's premises will be withdrawn. If possible, they will be verbally informed that they are prohibited from entering or being on the school's premises immediately after the incident or as soon as practicable thereafter.

In any event, the Co-Headteacher will send a letter to the parent or visitor confirming the withdrawal of their "implied permission" and the consequences of failing to comply. The prohibition will initially

last for ten school days from the date of the letter. The parent or visitor will be invited to provide written comments within five school days of the date of the letter.

By the tenth school day from the date of the letter, the Chair of Governors will review the Co-Headteacher's decision in accordance with Stage 3 (whether or not any written comments have been received) having been provided with all documentation relating to the incident (and any previous incidents), the Co-Headteacher's record of the decision and the reasons for it.

### STAGE 3 – REVIEW OF CO- HEADTEACHER'S DECISION BY CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

The Chair of Governors will, within ten school days of the date of the letter notifying the parent or visitor of the Co-Headteacher's decision to withdraw their "implied permission" to enter and be on the school's premises, review the decision made, having considered all documentation relating to the incident (and any previous incidents), the Co-Headteacher's record of the decision, the reasons for it, confirmation as to whether the parent or visitor has complied with the instruction, and any written comments received from the parent or visitor.

The Chair of Governors must consider whether, with the benefit of hindsight, the Co-Headteacher's decision, made in the immediate aftermath of the incident, was unjustified; whether, although the Co-Headteacher's decision was justified at the time, the withdrawal of "implied permission" for a period of ten school days is sufficient to serve as a warning and to allow the parent or visitor time to reflect upon their past and future behaviour; or whether the Co-Headteacher's decision was entirely justified and should be confirmed for further review at a later date.

The Chair of Governors will, by the tenth school day of the date of the letter, write to the parent or visitor confirming whether the decision of the Co-Headteacher has been confirmed or revoked, stating their reasons. Where the decision has been confirmed, the letter will confirm the date of the next review, which will be for a period of between fifteen and thirty school days, or until the last day of the term or half term period, at the Chair of Governor's discretion, subject to a maximum period of thirty school days.

When the decision has been confirmed, the parent or visitor will be invited to provide further written comments at least five school days before the date of the next review. These comments should be restricted to the parent or visitor's conduct since the decision was last confirmed or any new consequences of the decision, and should not repeat comments provided previously which the Chair of Governors will already be in possession of.

### STAGE 4 – FURTHER REVIEWS OF THE DECISION

Where the Co-Headteacher's decision was confirmed by the Chair of Governors under Stage 3, or the decision has previously been confirmed under Stage 3, the Chair of Governors will carry out a further review of the decision by the review date, having considered all documentation relating to the incident (and any previous incidents), the Co-Headteacher's record of the original decision, the reasons for it, confirmation as to whether the parent or visitor has complied with the instruction since the last review, any written comments provided by the parent or visitor previously, the record of the Chair of Governors' previous review, and any further written comments received from the parent or visitor following the last review.

The Chair of Governors must consider whether, in view of the length of time that the parent or visitor has been prohibited from entering or being on the school's premises, and in light of the parent or visitor's conduct since their "implied permission" was withdrawn, and in consideration of any genuine assurances given in their written comments as their future conduct, it is now appropriate to revoke the decision to withdraw their "implied permission" to enter and be on the school's premises. The Chair of Governors will, by the review date, write to the parent or visitor confirming whether the decision has been further confirmed or revoked, stating their reasons.

Where the decision has been further confirmed, the letter will confirm the date of the next review, which will be for a period of between fifteen and thirty school days, or until the last day of the term

or half term period, at the Chair of Governor's discretion, subject to a maximum period of thirty school days. Where the decision has been further confirmed, the parent or visitor will be invited to provide further written comments at least five school days before the date of the next review. These comments should be restricted to the parent or visitor's conduct since the decision was last confirmed or any new consequences of the decision, and should not repeat comments provided previously which the Chair of Governors will already be in possession of.

The procedure under Stage 4 will be followed in relation to all further reviews.

## 6. Third parties

The procedure outlined above relates to parents and visitors who had a valid reason for entering and being on the school's premises. Sometimes, members of the public enter the school's premises when they have no good reason for doing so (for example, they do not have children registered as students at the school, and they are not delivering items or making valid enquiries at the school's office). Such people do not have "implied permission" to enter and be on the school's premises, and are therefore trespassing. This means that, if they are causing a nuisance or disturbance on the school's premises, they can be prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. In those circumstances, the school will inform the third party that they are trespassing and ask them to leave the school's premises and, in appropriate cases, call the police and support any prosecution for criminal offences which follows.

Although third parties do not have "implied permission" to enter and be on the school's premises, for the avoidance of doubt, where the address of the third party is known, the Co-Headteacher will write to the third party warning them of the consequences of reappearing on the school's premises.

## 7. Emergency situations

In an emergency, police assistance should be sought. In cases where a ban is in place but is ignored and the person comes onto the school site, the police should be notified immediately.

In situations where there is no immediate threat to staff, pupils, other members of the school community or the school's property, the co-headteachers may still wish to make their local community police officer (e.g. neighbourhood support team, youth intervention officer) aware of the situation.



## Appendix 1 - Letter Template STAGE ONE WARNING

Dear <INSERT>,

Thank you for coming to school for a meeting today.

In line with expectations of adult visitors to the school, as outlined in our policy, I am writing to advise you formally that your behaviour towards ..... on ..... was totally unacceptable and I have taken advice on how to proceed.

*Or*

I am very concerned about the unsatisfactory nature of our meeting/telephone conversation on ..... and I have taken advice on how to proceed.

(add summary of incident and its effect on staff and pupils)

I have now been able to investigate the incident further and I understand that .....

*Or*

As I witnessed your behaviour myself there is no need for me to investigate the incident further.

Optional I am not prepared to continue to accept such behaviour. If parents are unhappy about any aspect of their child's education they can arrange to have a meeting with me at an appropriate place and time.

Optional In the circumstances I must ask you not to approach any of my staff directly until further notice, though you will still be able to make contact through me.

For the future I must inform you that any repetition of such behaviour towards any of the school staff, pupils or others connected with the school will be followed by an immediate withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of Governors.

The school remains committed to the education of your children and we look forward to moving forward.

Kind regards,

Co- Headteacher

## Appendix 2 - Letter Template STAGE TWO WITHDRAWAL OF IMPLIED PERMISSION

Dear <INSERT>

Thank you for meeting with me today.

I am writing about your conduct <INSERT> on <INSERT>. Whilst we appreciate that <INSERT>, your behaviour was <INSERT>towards members of staff. During this time you were <INSERT>.

I must inform you that Reach Academy will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to defend its staff and pupils. I am therefore notifying you that your implied permission to enter the school's premises is withdrawn. Your point of contact during this time is <INSERT> and they can be contacted directly on <INSERT> if you have any questions. You will continue to receive all text and email communication as usual.

The prohibition will last for ten school days from the date of this letter. In the meantime the Chair of Governors will review my decision. You are invited to provide written comments within five school days of the date of this letter as a response to this letter. Written comments should be emailed to me directly. By the tenth school day from the date of the letter, the Chair of Governors will review my decision (whether or not any written comments have been received) having been provided with all documentation relating to the incident (and any previous incidents) and will write to you.

Notwithstanding this decision the school remains committed to the education of your children who must continue to attend Academy as normal.

Kind regards,

Co- Headteacher

### Appendix 3 - Letter Template STAGE THREE

Dear <INSERT>

On ..... I wrote to inform you that on the advice of the headteacher I had withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of ..... School. To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by .....

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated ....., the contents of which I have carefully considered.

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the headteacher's report, I have determined that the decision to withdraw permission for you to come onto school premises should be confirmed. I am therefore instructing that, until further notice, you are not to come onto the premises of the school without the prior knowledge and approval of the headteacher.

If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises of the school. If you cause a nuisance or disturbance on the premises, you may be prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

Even though we have taken this decision, the headteacher and staff at ..... School remain committed to the education of your child(ren), who must continue to attend school as normal (insert for primary age children) under the arrangements set out in my previous letter.

This decision will be reviewed again .....(insert review date). When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the withdrawal of permission to come onto the school premises, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from you; and any evidence of your co-operation with the school in other respects.

If you wish to pursue the matter further you have a right to complain to a panel of school governors who have not been involved previously and who will consider the circumstances of the decision to withdraw permission for you to come on to the school site. You can make your complaint by writing to the Clerk to the Governors, c/o ..... School.

(Where the incident has arisen in the context of a parental complaint against the school, the following may be inserted) Finally, I would advise you that I have asked the headteacher to ensure that your complaint that..... is considered under the appropriate stage of the school's parental complaints procedure. The school will contact you about this in due course.

Yours sincerely

Kind regards,  
Chair of the Local Governing Body

## Appendix 4 - Letter restoring permission

Dear

On ..... I wrote to inform you that on the advice of the head teacher I had temporarily withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of ..... School. To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by .....

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated ....., the contents of which I have carefully considered.

In the circumstances, and after consulting further with the head teacher, I have decided that it is not necessary to confirm the decision and I am therefore restoring to you permission to come onto the school premises, with immediate effect.

(Optional) I must warn you, however, that if it should become necessary in the future I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the school premises once again.

Yours sincerely

Chair of the Local Governing Body