



Parents, carers and visitors' code of conduct policy

Priestley Smith Specialist VI School

April 2024

Policy review date: April 2026

Policy status: non statutory

Responsible member of SLT: Joanna Garvey Headteacher

Priestley Smith School is committed to the rights of the child as outlined in the UN Convention and is working towards Rights Respecting Schools Gold award. This belief influences everything the school does and impacts upon all our policies.

Article 3 The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.

Article 5 Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and carers to direct and guide their children as they grow up, so that they can enjoy their rights properly.

Article 23 A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and independence, and to play an active part in the community.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

This policy has been written taking into account the DfE Guidance 'Advice on school security: Access to, and barring individuals from school premises' December 2012 as well as NAHT guidance on dealing with abusive parents.

At Priestley Smith Specialist VI School, we value the positive relationships forged with parents and visitors to the school. We encourage close links with parents and the community and believe that students benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one. We also strive to make our school a place where as adults we model for students the behaviour we teach and expect. In general, we place a high importance on good manners, positive communication and mutual respect.

Almost all parents, carers and visitors to Priestley Smith Specialist VI School are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. However, on very rare occasions the behaviour of a small number of parents falls short of what we expect. This sometimes manifests itself in aggression or abuse towards members of the school community. This can be in written communication (including social media), on the telephone or in face-to-face incidents.

In these situations we expect members of staff to behave professionally, attempting to defuse the situation where possible and seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues. Staff who face these situations have licence to end any conversation (face to face or on the telephone). They should then refer the incident to a senior manager who will take appropriate action or invoke the provisions of this policy.

The overriding principle is, however, that all members of the school community have the right to work or be in school without fear of aggression or abuse from parents. The Governing Body has a requirement to protect staff and students from such aggression.

The progress and well-being of the parent's child(ren) will be fully considered. Actions taken against a parent or carer will be reasonable and proportionate. The parent or carer will have the opportunity to put their views forward at every stage. In the case of the imposition of conditions or a ban from school, robust review processes involving the Chair of Governors and then the Governing Body are in place to ensure fairness.

BEHAVIOUR

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated:

- shouting at members of the school staff, parents or children either in person or over the telephone;
- physically intimidating a member of staff, parent or child eg standing very close to her/him;
- the use of aggressive hand gestures;
- threatening behaviour;
- shaking or holding a fist towards another person;
- swearing;
- using abusive/ offensive language
- pushing;
- hitting, e.g. slapping, punching and kicking;
- spitting;

- racist, sexist, homophobic or transgender comments;
- Threatening to harm a member of school staff, visitor, fellow parent/carer or pupil regardless of whether or not the behaviour constitutes a criminal offence.
- Sending abusive or threatening e-mails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communications.
- Defamation of the school or staff character on Facebook or other social network sites

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour.

Unacceptable behaviour may result in the local authority and the police being informed of the incident.

STEPS TO BE TAKEN IF AN INCIDENT OCCURS

STEP 1: VERBAL WARNING The head teacher (or member of SLT) will speak to the person or persons perpetrating such an incident, privately. It will be put to them that such behaviour is unacceptable and an assurance will be sought that such an incident will not be repeated. If staff experience abusive or threatening telephone calls they will cease the conversation immediately. If staff experience abusive or threatening behaviour from families when collecting or dropping pupils off at their homes they will leave the home immediately with the child in the care of their family. It will be stressed on these occasions that repetition of such an incident will result in further, more serious action being taken. If the Headteacher has been subject to abuse this will be done by the Chair of Governors (or another appointed governor). A record of the conversation will be kept on file

STEP 2: WRITTEN WARNING If a second incident occurs involving the same person or persons, the Headteacher will write to the adult(s) informing them once again that this conduct is unacceptable. As for Step 1, if the Headteacher has been subject to abuse this will be done by the Chair or Governors or other appointed governor. NB: Any incidents of violent conduct would immediately proceed to step 5. Any act of actual or threatened violence will be referred to the police immediately.

STEP 3: FINAL WRITTEN WARNING If a third incident occurs involving the same person or persons, the Headteacher, Chair of Governors or other appointed independent governor, will write to the adult(s) giving a final warning that this abusive and threatening behaviour is unacceptable, and that a repetition of this conduct will leave the governors no option but to take further action.

STEP 4: EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL PREMISES If such an incident recurs or if an initial incident is considered serious enough, the Chair of Governors (or other appointed governor) would enforce an exclusion from school premises.

STEP 5: REMOVAL BY POLICE If, following a decision to exclude a person from the school premises, that person persists in entering school premises, they may be removed by the police as a trespasser under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 and charged with an offence under the Public Order Act 1986.

All parents, even if excluded from school premises, are not excluded from the rights of their child to access the school and have a right to seek an appointment to speak to school staff about their child's educational progress

Appendix 1

Step 2 letter: This is an example of a warning letter to be sent to a parent, carer or visitor who has breached the expected behaviour standards at the school or in communication with the school. The actual wording may need to be varied according to the circumstances. It is advisable to discuss the matter with the LA before sending such a letter.

Dear

It has been reported to me that you have caused a disturbance on Priestley Smith Specialist VI School premises on (date).

We have spoken privately about your unacceptable behaviour in the past and you reassured me (or member of the SLT) that such an incident would not be repeated.

On this occasion, your behaviour has upset (who or a number of members of staff, pupils, etc.) who were present. (Optional)

If you are unhappy about any aspect of your child's education then we can arrange to have a meeting at an appropriate time and place. This letter serves as a written warning, in accordance with our Parents, Carers and Visitors' Code of Conduct Policy.

I must inform you that any repetition of such behaviour could lead to an immediate withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises.

Should you wish to discuss the content of this letter, please make an appointment to see me via the school office.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher
cc: Chair of Governors

Appendix 2

Step 3 Letter: This is an example of a warning letter to be sent to a parent, carer or visitor who has breached the expected behaviour standards at the school or in communication with the school. The actual wording may need to be varied according to the circumstances.

Dear

I have received a report from the Headteacher of Priestley Smith Specialist VI School about your unacceptable conduct on (date). (Provide a brief summary of the incident and its effect on staff and pupils) I

note that you have had a private conversation and a written warning about your conduct in the past. I must inform you that the governors will not tolerate conduct of this nature and will act to defend school staff and pupils. (Optional)

If you are unhappy about any aspect of your child's education then you can arrange to have a meeting with the Headteacher at an appropriate time and place. This letter serves as a final written warning, in accordance with our Parents, Carers and Visitors' Code of Conduct Policy.

I must inform you that any repetition of such behaviour will lead to an immediate withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises.

Should you wish to discuss the content of this letter, please make an appointment to see me via the school office.
Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors
cc: Head teacher

Appendix 3

STEP 4 LETTER 1 This is an example of an initial ban letter to be sent to a parent, carer or visitor who has breached the expected behaviour standards at the school or in communication with the school. The actual wording may need to be varied according to the circumstances. At this stage, the ban takes effect immediately, but as the letter indicates, the parent must be enabled to make representations. A period of a week is recommended to allow for this, at the end of which the Chair of Governors should consider any representations made, and then make a decision to either confirm the ban or discontinue it.

Dear

I have received a report from the head teacher of Priestley Smith Specialist VI School about your unacceptable conduct on (date). (Provide a brief summary of the incident and its effect on staff and pupils)

I note that you have had a private conversation and a written warning about your conduct in the past.

I must inform you that the governors will not tolerate conduct of this nature and will act to defend school staff and pupils. On the advice of the Head teacher, I am therefore instructing you that until I have reviewed this incident, you are not to reappear on the school premises.

If you do not comply with this instruction, I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises. 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 currently liable to a fine of £500. Special arrangements can be made for you to meet with the head teacher, if necessary, but this may only be with the written permission of the governors.

The withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises takes effect immediately and will be in place for (insert days) school days in the first instance.

I still need to decide whether it is appropriate to confirm this decision. Before I do, I wish to give you an opportunity to write to me with any comments or observations of your own in relation to the report that I have received from the head teacher.

These comments may be to challenge or explain the facts of the incident, to express regret and give assurances about your future good conduct. To enable me to take a decision on this matter, please send me any written comments you wish to make by (date 10 school days from date of letter).

If, on receipt of your comments, I consider that my decision should be confirmed, you will be supplied with details of how to pursue a review of your case.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors
cc: Head teacher

Appendix 4

STEP 4 LETTER 2 This is an example of a letter to state that a ban is being upheld. The actual wording may need to be varied according to the circumstances.

Dear

On (date) I wrote to inform you that on the advice of the head teacher I had withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of Priestley Smith Specialist VI 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 (date).

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

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the head teacher'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 head teacher.

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 head teacher and staff at of Priestley Smith Specialist VI 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 which should be a reasonable period and no longer than 6 months).

When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the withdrawal of permission to come on to 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/oSchool. (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 head teacher to ensure that your complaint that (insert details) 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

Chair of Governors
cc: Head teacher

Poster

Notice to Parents, Carers and Visitors to Priestley Smith Specialist VI School



If you have concerns we will always listen to them and seek to address them.

Please be aware, however, that abusive, threatening or violent behaviour will not be tolerated in this school.

Visitors behaving in this way are likely to be removed from the premises and prosecuted.