



# Richmond Hill School policy

## Maintaining positive behaviour and relationships within our Richmond hill community

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**We aim to in all we do to -**

**'Grow independence, build communication and believe we can achieve our personal goals'**

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## 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 Richmond Hill 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 Richmond Hill 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 board of governors 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 the parent will be reasonable and proportionate. The parent 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.

- **What we define as behaviour within our community that is not acceptable**

### **Definition of unacceptable behaviour**

We consider that aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language from a parent presents a risk to staff or students. Unacceptable behaviour is such that makes a member of staff or student feel threatened. This can be through face-to-face contact, on the telephone or in written communication (including social media). The following is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour:

- any kind of insult as an attempt to demean, embarrass or undermine
- any kind of threat
- raising of voice so as to be intimidating
- physical intimidation, eg by standing very close to him/her or the use of aggressive hand gestures
- use of foul or abusive language
- any kind of physical abuse
- allegations which turn out to be vexatious or malicious.

- **How we manage incidents where behaviour is unacceptable**

### **The school's approach to dealing with incidents**

If a parent/carer/visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the Headteacher or appropriate senior staff will assess the level of risk before deciding on a future course of action. The course of action will be reasonable and commensurate with the assessed level of risk.

### **Risk Assessment**

The Headteacher will carry out a risk assessment in order to help make a decision about the level of response. In all cases the response will be reasonable and proportionate. The Headteacher will consider the following questions:

- What form did the abuse take?
- What evidence is there?
- What do witnesses say happened?
- Are there previous incidents to take into consideration?
- Do members of staff/students feel intimidated by the parent's behaviour?
- Is there any evidence of provocation?
- How high is the assessed risk that this will be repeated or there will be retaliation at the school's action? (low, medium, high).

- **How we record incidents**

Staff/students subject to abuse and witnesses will make written statements about incident(s) which will be kept in a file with subsequent letters. This file will be kept by The Office Manager, depending on an assessment of the risk of retaliation to witnesses or individuals, statements made by adults these may be made available to the parent if they request it.

- **The School's response when there has been an incident of poor behaviour that is deemed unacceptable.**

Following the completion of the risk assessment, the Headteacher will decide the level of action to be taken. Actions will include the following:

1. Clarify to the parent what is considered acceptable behaviour by the school

In some instances it may be appropriate simply to ensure the parent is clear about behaviour standards expected by the school. This could be explained by a letter from the Headteacher. This letter may contain a warning about further action if there are further incidents. The parent will be invited to write to the Headteacher with his/her version of events within 10 working days. Depending on the parent's response a meeting may then be held to discuss the situation and how this can be avoided in future.

2. Invite the parent to an informal meeting to discuss events

This could be helpful to discuss and diffuse the situation.

The safety and well-being of those attending such a meeting must be carefully considered. Members of school staff will always be accompanied by at least one other colleague at any such meeting.

Consideration should be given to the seating arrangements, and care taken to ensure exits cannot be blocked by a parent who could potentially become aggressive.

The main points of discussion and any agreed actions should be noted, and a follow-up letter or email sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions.

3. Impose conditions on the parent's contact with the school and its staff

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Parents of enrolled students have an 'implied licence' to come onto school premises at certain stated times. It is for schools to define and set out the extent of such access. Parents exceeding this would be trespassing.

Depending on the type, level or frequency of the unacceptable behaviour, the school may consider imposing conditions on the parent's contact with the school. These conditions may include (but are not exclusively):

- being accompanied to any meeting with a member of school staff by a member of SLT
- 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 of the school
- any other restriction as deemed reasonable and proportionate by the Headteacher.

In this case the parent will be informed by letter from the Headteacher the details of the conditions that are being imposed. The parent would then be given 10 working days from the date of that letter to make representations in writing about the conditions to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors would then decide whether to confirm or remove the conditions. This would be communicated to the parent in writing within 10 working days of the date of the parent's letter.

If the decision is to confirm the conditions imposed, this decision will be reviewed by the governing body after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The parent will be invited to make a written representation to the governors. This and the evidence from the Headteacher will be considered at a meeting of the full governing body. Governors may decide to maintain, extend or remove the conditions. The decision of the review will be communicated to the parent by the clerk to the governors within 10 days of the date of the meeting.

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

#### **4 What happens when the school makes a decision to impose a ban**

Where other procedures have been exhausted and aggression or intimidation continues OR where there is an extreme act of violence then the school may consider banning the individual from school premises. This will include banning a parent from accessing school staff by written communication or telephone.

In these circumstances, the individual would be advised in writing by the Headteacher that a provisional ban is being imposed. The parent would then be given 10 working days from the date of that letter to make representations about the ban in writing to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors would then decide whether to confirm or remove the ban. This would be communicated to the parent in writing within 10 working days of the receipt of their letter.

If the Chair's decision is to confirm the ban, parents in these circumstances will be offered an annual meeting about their child's progress, usually with a member of senior staff.

A decision to impose a ban will be reviewed by the governing body after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The parent will be invited to make a written representation to the governors; this and the evidence from the Headteacher will be considered at a meeting of the full governing body. Governors may decide to remove the ban, extend the ban or impose conditions on parent's access to the school. The decision of the review will be communicated to the parent by the clerk to the governors within 10 days of the date of the meeting.

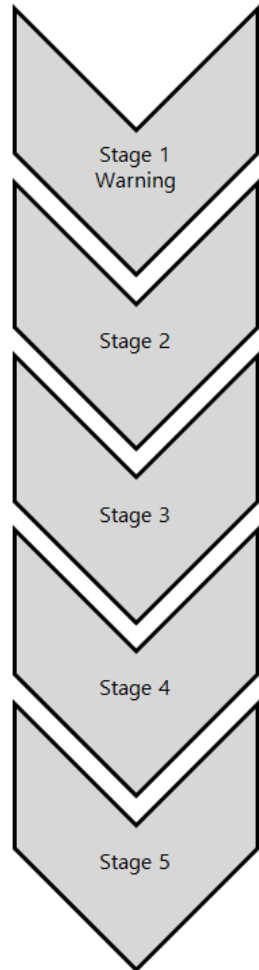
In deciding whether to remove or extend the ban or impose conditions, governors will give consideration to the extent of the parent's compliance with the ban, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from him/her and any evidence of the parent's co-operation with the school in other respects.

#### **5. Removal from school**

Parents who have been banned from the school premises and continue to cause a nuisance will be deemed to have committed a section 547 offence. They will be considered trespassers. In these circumstances the offender may be removed from school. This may be carried out by a police officer or person authorised by the governing body. Legal proceedings may be brought against the parent.

#### **6. Complaints policy**

Any parental complaint that arises from incidents of abusive behaviour will be dealt with under the complaints policy.



- An initial letter from the Headteacher to ensure the parent is clear about behavior standards expected by the school. This letter contains a warning about further action if there are other incidents. The letter invites a written response and suggests a meeting.
- A letter from the Headteacher informing parents of the school's decision to impose conditions on the parents attendance at school events, pending review by the chair of Governors.
- Letter from the Chair of Governors informing parent of the school's intention to impose a ban on their attendance at school premises, pending review by the Chair of Governors.
- Letter from the chair of governors informing parent of his decision to confirm or remove ban.
- Letter from clerk to the governors requesting statement from parents to governing body for review of decision.
- Letter from clerk to the governors to confirm the outcome of further reviews of decisions where the imposition of conditions/ban has been extended or removed.

## **Parents complaints about other parents**

At Richmond Hill school we will discuss all complaints about other families and pupils in person and encourage parents to raise their complaints with a member of the senior leadership team in person or in writing.

We would encourage parents to discuss this with the school and not to discuss things with another family and or parent.

We would Invite the complaining parent into school to discuss the issues in person.

If there's more than one parent making a complaint, all parents will be invited into the school individually rather than as a group. Headteacher and Deputy headteachers will use this as an opportunity to find out the facts from all parties involved.

At the start of the meeting the school will outline the purpose of the meeting and revisit the school policy.

We will explain how Richmond Hill School handles complaints about pupils and other parents.

sharing if needed the Guidance on complaints procedures for maintained schools, we would also highlight the internet acceptable use agreement for parents.

Expectations will be managed by being clear with all parties, while you'll investigate their concerns and take them seriously, the outcome may not be what they expect. The school will not take sides or discuss other families or children.

The school will not enter into a discussion with parents about details of other children or families, because this information may be confidential.

We will listen and be sympathetic, we will not be able to conduct the meeting in a restorative supportive way without appearing to agree or disagree with what is being said. For example:

- Use phrases such as "I can see that this has upset you" to help you maintain a neutral position
- Concentrate on the facts
- Reassure the parent that their concerns will be investigated

We will keep a record of meetings and Include any discussions and actions taken. Both parties can then refer to these records in any future meetings, if the parent decides to escalate their complaint.

We will not alienate a parent by dismissing their concerns about other parents.

However, we will make it clear that, as a school, your priority is to address pupils' needs. Unless the issue is directly school-related, parents shouldn't expect us to resolve disputes among themselves.

If needed the school will involve a family worker, where appropriate, a police liaison officer to work with the parents. The governing board might also be able to meet with the parents individually.

We will remind parents the importance of setting a good example and explain the importance of modelling good behaviour for pupils.

## **Complaints about pupils**

Richmond Hill will take all complaints about a pupil very seriously. Site lead will Investigate the complaint and there will be plans agreed to observe and look at the relationship between the two pupils.

Pupils will be supported and the approach to investigate will depend on their developmental age and their ability to understand their action and consequences, interventions and additional measures will be introduced to reduce the issues arising for the child concerned and this will be followed up frequently.

These measures could include and are not exhaustive and will vary depending on the child's pathway and small school site.

- Discussions with parents
- Discussions with child
- Observations by teachers/pathway lead
- Temporary one to one
- Revised behaviour support plan for child
- ABC chart
- Class temporary moves

All observations, interventions or changes will be recorded and procedures will be followed in line with our behaviour policy and our safeguarding policy. We adhere to KCSIE 2021.

If following the complaint the claims are found to be unfounded, we will meet with the parent again and explain this. RHS will always maintain a neutral position and work with the parent to help both pupils and or parents to move forwards and prevent further problems in the future, if this is appropriate for the children involved and their developmental understanding of the situation.