

Bradfields Academy



A Parent & Carer Task Group Document

Protocol for Parent & Carer Conduct at Bradfields Academy



Introduction

As a general rule, schools/academies are orderly, safe places, where relationships between staff and visitors, especially parents/carers, demonstrate mutual respect and recognition of shared responsibility for students' welfare and educational progress.

At Bradfields this is consistently the case. However, on occasions, the behaviour of a few parents/carers can cause difficulty and see them resort to abusive or aggressive behaviour towards staff, students, or other members of the school community.

This document is about dealing with violence, threatening behaviour or abuse by parents/carers of a student in our academy, including those cases where the parent/carer has been asked not to come onto the premises.

It was prepared by a Working Group of Parents/Carers, Staff and Governors to provide a protocol for all Parents & Carers to follow as a minimum expectation.

The Working Group recognised that

- violence, threatening behaviour and abuse against academy staff or other members of the academy community must not be tolerated.
- all members of the academy community have a right to expect that Bradfields is a safe place in which to work and learn.
- there is no place for violence, threatening behaviour or abuse in Bradfields.
- where such behaviour does occur, Bradfields knows that the referring LA will play a proactive role in taking all possible action to deal with it, in response to the wishes of the school/academy.

In certain circumstances, this will mean the LA taking the lead in initiating action on the academy's behalf with the academy's support, and in other circumstances we expect the LA to support the academy in action that the academy itself will initiate.

At all times the common purpose remains clear : to achieve zero tolerance of violence, threatening behaviour or abuse in Bradfields, and to ensure all members of the academy community, and all visitors to the academy, can be confident that they are operating within a safe environment.

In the first instance we will ask the LA for advice on the appropriateness of the remedies available and the LA should, where they have the power to do so, take the lead in initiating action. In circumstances where power does not lie with the LA (eg. under the criminal law) we would expect the LA to support and advise us and they should remove as much of the burden from us as possible.

Academy Policy for dealing with incidents

Parental Rights

Every attempt should be made to maintain normal communications with parents/carers.

Even where a parent/carer has been banned from the academy premises, they retain their right to an annual consultation in relation to the educational progress of their child/ren. However, the academy may determine who will be present at the meeting (e.g. a senior member of staff might accompany the class teacher) and its location (e.g. it may well be arranged off site).

Section 547, Education Act 1996

Section 547 makes it an offence for a trespasser on school/academy premises to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance, and allows for the removal and prosecution of any person believed to have committed the offence. The penalty for a person convicted of the offence is a fine of up to £500.

A parent/carer of a child attending a school/academy normally has implied permission (limited licence) to be on the school's/academy's premises at certain times and for certain purposes but if their behaviour is unreasonable this permission may be withdrawn and they will become a trespasser.

A person who nevertheless persists in entering the school/academy premises and displaying unreasonable behaviour may be removed and prosecuted under section 547.

Statement of Principles

The Governing Body & Parents/Carers Consultative Group of Bradfields Academy encourages close links with parents/carers and the community. It believes that students benefit when the relationship between home and academy is a positive one.

The vast majority of parents/carers and others visiting our academy are keen to work with us and are supportive of the academy. However, on the rare occasions when a negative attitude towards the academy is expressed, this can result in aggression, verbal and or physical abuse towards members of academy staff or the wider academy community.

The Governing Body expects and requires its members of staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to defuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues. However, all members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse, and the right, in an extreme case, of appropriate self-defence.

We expect parents/carers and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards members of academy staff. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

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

- shouting at members of the academy staff, either in person or over the telephone
- physically intimidating a member of staff [e.g. standing very close to him/her]
- the use of aggressive hand gestures
- threatening behaviour
- shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- swearing
- pushing
- hitting [e.g. slapping, punching and kicking]
- spitting
- breaching the academy's security procedures

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.

Procedure to be followed

If a parent/carer behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the academy community, the Principal or appropriate senior staff will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If necessary, the academy's complaints procedures should be followed. Where all procedures have been exhausted, and aggression or intimidation continue, or where there is an extreme act of violence, a parent or carer may be banned by the Principal from the academy premises for a period of time, subject to review.

In imposing a ban the following steps will be taken :

- The parent/carer will be informed, in writing, that she/he is banned from the premises, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, e.g. that police involvement or an injunction application may follow
- Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the local authority and the police will be included
- The chair of governors/LA will be informed of the ban
- Where appropriate, arrangements for students being delivered to, and collected from the academy gate will be clarified.

Conclusion

The local authority itself may take action where behaviour is unacceptable or there are serious breaches of our home-academy code of conduct or health and safety legislation.

In implementing this policy, the academy will, as appropriate, seek advice from the Local Authority's education, health and safety and legal departments, to ensure fairness and consistency.

This Policy will be reviewed annually.