



Managing Unreasonable and Vexatious Communication

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Policy on Managing Unreasonable and Vexatious Communication

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, local governors and trustees 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. This includes harassing staff, Governors, or Trustees about issues already addressed, or complaints already closed.
- **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, Governors or Trustees 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, including

Governors, Trustees and independent panel members during correspondence or hearings.

B. Behaviour and Actions

- Recording staff, Governors or Trustees (audio or video) without prior consent, unless otherwise agreed by all parties or permitted by law.
- Harassing, bullying, or intimidating staff, Governors, Trustees, 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 appropriate authority within the school or Trust.

Step 1: Initial Review and Warning

- The appropriate authority (Headteacher, Chair of Governors, CEO or Chair of Trustees) 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, a Management Strategy may be implemented by:

- The Headteacher, in consultation with the Chair of Governors, for school targeted behaviour
- The Chair of Governors, in consultation with the Headteacher, for Local Governing Body-targeted behaviour
- The Trust CEO, in consultation with the Chair of the Trust Board for Trust-targeted behaviour

The strategy 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) or Trust governance mailbox. All other staff will be instructed not to respond.

- Designate communication process - e.g. online form or email address
- 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

- Step 1 may not be used if it previous experience leads an appropriate authority to conclude that it will not be effective.
- 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 issuing authority 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 or Trust will refuse to address legitimate concerns or complaints. 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 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.