

Policy on Unacceptable Actions – Ysgol Penrhyn-coch ac Ysgol Penllwyn

1. Introduction

- 1.1 **Ysgol Penrhyn-coch ac Ysgol Penllwyn** comes into contact with many parents, guardians, relatives, and visitors as a part of our typical day and, in the vast majority of cases, these interactions are positive and productive for all parties. Very occasionally however, the behaviour or actions of individuals we have dealings with can become challenging and poses challenges for us to continue having any constructive engagement with them. In this small number of cases we have to consider taking steps to protect our staff and/or to ensure that our ability to work effectively is not undermined. This policy explains how we will approach these situations
- 1.2 This Policy sets out the School's approach to the relatively few individuals whose actions or behaviour is considered unacceptable. The term '**visitor**' refers to **any person who contacts the School or acts on behalf of another individual, any complainant, and any person who requests School information.**
- 1.3 A copy of this Policy will be available on the School's website and upon request.

2. Policy Aims

- 2.1 We believe that all correspondents and complainants have the right to be heard, understood, and respected. We also believe that our staff have the same rights.
- 2.2 Throughout our contact with visitors, we aim to:
- Make it clear to everyone we deal with, both on initial contact and throughout our engagement, what **Ysgol Penrhyn-coch ac Ysgol Penllwyn** can and cannot do to meet their concerns and expectations
 - Be open and not raise expectations that we cannot meet
 - Deal fairly, honestly, consistently, respectfully, and appropriately with all correspondents and complainants, even those whose behaviour or actions we consider unacceptable
 - Provide a service that is accessible to all
 - Ensure that our staff and other people within the school community do not suffer any disadvantages as a result of the unacceptable behaviour of others
- 2.3 To provide services that are accessible to all visitors. However, where a visitor's actions are deemed unacceptable, the School has the right to consider restricting or changing how we interact with such individuals.
- 2.4 Specific measures will be taken in instances that demand a level of intervention to minimise disruption, any risks, and/or disadvantages that may arise as a consequence of the unacceptable behaviour. Our priority is to ensure other visitors and School staff do not suffer any disadvantage from those who act in an unacceptable manner.

3. Defining Unacceptable Actions by Service Users

3.1 People may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to contact with the School. The School does not view behaviour as unacceptable just because an individual is forceful or determined. However, the actions of individuals who are angry, demanding, or persistent may be considered to be making unreasonable demands on the School or are displaying unacceptable behaviour towards School staff. It is these actions that are considered unacceptable and ones that this policy aims to manage. The School has grouped these actions under three broad headings:

3.2 Aggressive or Abusive Behaviour

3.2.1 Violence is **not** restricted to acts of aggression that may result in physical harm. It also includes behaviour or language (whether oral or written) that may cause staff to feel afraid, threatened or abused. This includes any unacceptable intrusion, derogatory or defamatory statements made against staff, or references made to their private lives.

3.2.2 Examples of behaviour grouped under this heading include threats, physical violence, personal verbal abuse, derogatory remarks, and rudeness. Inflammatory statements and unsubstantiated allegations can also be interpreted as abusive behaviour.

3.2.3 The School expects its staff to be treated courteously and with respect. Violence or abuse towards staff is unacceptable. School staff understand the difference between aggression and anger and they acknowledge people's frustrations in instances whereby they feel it necessary to make a complaint against the School. However, it is not acceptable when anger escalates into aggression or abuse (whether oral or written) and is directed towards School staff.

3.2.4 Similarly, the School may need to consider this policy if a visitor displays threatening and/or abusive behaviours towards another visitor. The School **will not** engage in disputes between third parties but will consider applying this Policy if the behaviours demonstrated by visitors, particularly while they are on school premises, is deemed to be aggressive, threatening or abusive.

3.3 Unreasonable demands

3.3.1 Service users may make what are considered to be unreasonable demands on the School through the amount of information they seek, the nature and scale of contact they expect or the number or frequency of approaches they make. Deciding what amounts to unreasonable demands will always depend on the circumstances surrounding the behaviour and the seriousness of the issues raised by the visitor.

3.3.2 Examples of actions grouped under this heading include: demanding responses within an unreasonable time-scale, insisting on seeing or speaking to a particular member of staff,

continual phone calls, letters, or e-mails, repeatedly changing the substance of the request or complaint or raising unrelated concerns.

- 3.3.3 These demands are considered unacceptable and unreasonable if they start to impact substantially on the work of the School, such as taking up an excessive amount of staff time to the disadvantage of other visitors or the delivery of school functions.

3.4 Unreasonable persistence

- 3.4.1 Some visitors will not accept that the School is unable to assist them further or to provide a level of service other than that provided already. Service users may persist in disagreeing with the action or decision taken in relation to their concerns or may contact the School persistently about the same issue.

- 3.4.2 Examples of actions grouped under this heading include: persistent refusal to accept a decision made by the School, persistent refusal to accept explanations relating to what the School can or cannot do and continuing to pursue an issue without presenting any new information. The way in which these visitors approach the School may be entirely reasonable, but it is their persistent behaviour in continuing to do so that is not.

- 3.4.3 The persistent actions of visitors are considered to be unacceptable when they take up what the School regards as being a disproportionate amount of time and resources.

4. Managing Unacceptable Actions by Service Users

- 4.1 There are relatively few individuals whose actions are considered by the School to be unacceptable. The way in which these actions are managed will depend on their nature and extent. If it adversely affects the School's ability to do its work and provide a service to others, the visitor's contact with the School may need to be restricted in order to manage the unacceptable actions. The School will aim to do this, wherever possible, in a way that allows a request or complaint to progress to its completion through the usual processes and will explain to the visitor (in writing) any restrictions it puts in place. Contact in person, by telephone, fax, letter or electronically, or by any combination of these, may be restricted, this may include ensuring that a witness is present for face to face communications. The School will try to maintain at least one form of contact. In extreme situations however, the visitor will be told in writing that their name is on a '*no personal contact*' list. This means that they must restrict contact with the School to either written communication or through a third party.

- 4.2 Verbal abuse and/or harassment towards School staff is likely to result in the ending of all direct contact with the visitor and incidents may also be reported to the police. This will **always** be the case if physical violence is used or threatened against staff.

- 4.3 The School will not deal with correspondence (letter, fax or electronic) that is abusive to staff or contains allegations that lack substantive evidence. When this happens, the visitor will be told that their language is considered unacceptable. They will be asked to stop using such language and the School will state that there will be no response to their correspondence if they do not stop. The School may require future contact to be through a third party.
- 4.4 School staff will end telephone calls if the caller is considered aggressive, abusive, or offensive. The staff member taking the call has the right to make this decision and to tell the caller that their behaviour is unacceptable and end the call if the behaviour does not stop.
- 4.5 Where a visitor repeatedly phones, visits the office, sends irrelevant documents, or raises the same issues, the School may decide to:
- 4.5.1 only take telephone calls from the visitor at set times on set days or put an arrangement in place for only one member of staff to deal with calls or correspondence from that visitor in the future.
 - 4.5.2 require the visitor to make an appointment to see a named member of staff before visiting the office or that the visitor contacts the office in writing only.
 - 4.5.3 return the documents to the visitor or, in extreme cases, advise the visitor that further irrelevant documents will be destroyed.
 - 4.5.4 take other action that is considered appropriate. The School will, however, always explain to the visitor what action is being taken and why.
- 4.6 Where a visitor continues to correspond on a wide range of issues, and this action is considered excessive, then the visitor will be told that only a certain number of issues will be considered in a given period and be asked to limit or focus their requests accordingly. In extreme cases, where the demands impact unreasonably on the work of the School, the visitor will be told that the School will cease to consider their requests.
- 4.7 A visitor's action may be considered unreasonably persistent if all internal review mechanisms have been exhausted and the visitor continues to dispute the School's decision relating to their request or complaint. The visitor will be told that no future phone calls will be accepted, or interviews granted concerning the matter. Any future contact by the visitor on the issue must be in writing. Future correspondence will be read and filed, but only acknowledged or responded to if the visitor provides significant new information relating to the matter.
- 4.8 The School will not take into consideration any covert recordings (in audio or video format) as evidence in any complaint. Our expectation is that all communication with visitors is transparent and occurs in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR). The School reserves the right to consider this policy if it becomes aware of any covert recordings made, particularly if such material is circulated in the public domain.

5. Deciding to Restrict Visitor Contact

- 5.1 School staff who directly experience aggressive or abusive behaviour from a visitor have the authority to deal with that behaviour immediately, in a manner they consider appropriate to the situation and in line with this policy.
- 5.2 With the exception of any immediate decisions that are taken at the time of an incident, decisions to restrict contact with the School will only be taken after careful consideration of the situation by a member of staff at a Senior Leadership level. Wherever possible, visitors will be given the opportunity to modify their behaviour or action before a decision is taken. Visitors will be told in writing why a decision has been made to restrict future contact, what the restricted contact arrangements are and, if relevant, the length of time that these restrictions will be in place.

6. Appealing a Decision to Restrict Contact

- 6.1 A visitor can appeal a decision to restrict contact via the Headteacher or the Chair of the School's Governing Body. It is essential that the person considering the appeal was not involved in the original decision to restrict contact. Following careful consideration by the individual conducting the appeal, the visitor will be advised in writing that either the restricted contact arrangements should remain, or whether a different course of action may be taken.
- 6.2 The outcome of the appeal is final, and the matter will not be considered further.

7. Recording and Reviewing a Decision to Restrict Contact

- 7.1 The School records **all** incidents that fall within the definition of 'unacceptable actions' as described in this policy. Where it is decided to restrict visitor contact, an entry noting this is made in the relevant file and/or on appropriate computer records. This information will be reviewed, amended and/or removed on a six-monthly basis, in accordance with our information governance procedures.
- 7.2 A decision to restrict visitor contact may be reconsidered if the visitor demonstrates they have amended their behaviour and are displaying a more acceptable approach. As outlined in point 7.1 (above) the School will review the status of all visitors with restricted contact arrangements on a six-monthly basis.

Policy agreed by School's Senior Leadership and Governing Body

16.6.2025