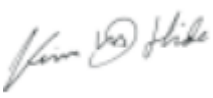
Dealing with Abusive Parents Policy

Reviewed by	Finance Committee
Date reviewed	October 2026
Next review	2028
Ratified by Governors	Nicola Denton-Dash & Kevin Hinde
Governor Signature	

1. Statement of Principles

This policy has been written taking into account the DfE Guidance *Controlling Access to School Premises* (November 2018), statutory guidance on Health and Safety at Work, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, as well as NAHT guidance on dealing with abusive visitors, violence, and threatening behaviour in schools.

At John Scurr 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 adults 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 John Scurr 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, electronic messaging, WhatsApp groups, and online platforms), 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 leader 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, abuse, or harassment from parents or visitors.

The progress and wellbeing of the parent's child(ren) will be fully considered at all stages. 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 Board are in place to ensure fairness.

2. Definition of Unacceptable Behaviour

We consider that aggressive, abusive, or insulting behaviour or language from a parent presents a risk to staff and students.
Unacceptable behaviour is such that makes a member of staff or student feel threatened, harassed, or intimidated.

This can occur through face-to-face contact, on the telephone, or in written or digital communication. 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 staff or members of the school community.
- Any kind of threat, direct or implied.
- Raising of voice so as to be intimidating.
- Physical intimidation, e.g., by standing very close, blocking exits, or using aggressive hand gestures.
- Use of foul, abusive, racist, sexist, or discriminatory language.
- Any kind of physical abuse or assault.
- Allegations which turn out to be vexatious or malicious.
- Cyberbullying, online harassment, abusive emails, or defamatory posts on social media networks and group messaging applications (e.g., WhatsApp).
- Unauthorised audio or video recording of staff, pupils, or school activities without prior written permission from the Executive Headteacher.

3. The School's Approach to Dealing with Incidents

If a parent, carer, or visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the

Executive Headteacher, Head of School or an appropriate member of 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.

4. Risk Assessment

The Executive Headteacher or Head of School 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 Executive Headteacher or Head of School will consider the following questions:

- What form did the abuse take?
- What evidence is there (including witness statements, written records, or CCTV footage)?
- What do witnesses say happened?
- Are there previous incidents to take into consideration?
- Do members of staff or 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).

5. Recording of Incidents & Data Protection

Staff and students subjected to abuse, as well as witnesses, will make written statements about incident(s) which will be kept in a confidential file by the Executive Headteacher alongside subsequent communications.

All records, CCTV evidence, and written statements are collected, stored, and managed in compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Depending on an assessment of the risk of retaliation to witnesses or individuals, statements made by adults may be made available if requested under Subject Access Request (SAR) provisions, provided redacting sensitive third-party details is sufficient to protect individuals' safety.

6. The School's Response

Following the completion of the risk assessment, the Executive Headteacher or Head of School will decide the level of action to be taken.

Level 1: Clarify acceptable behaviour

In some instances, it may be appropriate simply to ensure that the parent is clear about behavioural standards expected by the school. This could be explained by a letter from the Executive Headteacher or Head of School containing a warning about further action if there are further incidents. The parent will be invited to write to the Executive Headteacher or Head of School with their version of events within 3 working days. Depending on the parent's response, a meeting may be held to discuss the situation and how future issues can be avoided.

Level 2: Informal meeting

An informal meeting could be helpful to discuss and defuse the situation. The safety and wellbeing 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. The main points of discussion and any agreed actions should be noted, and a follow-up letter or email sent to confirm expectations and agreed actions.

Level 3: Impose conditions on contact

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 limited to):

- Being accompanied to any meeting with a member of school staff by a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- Restricting contact by telephone to named members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Restricting written communications to named members of the Senior Leadership Team or a dedicated administrative email address.
- Restricting attendance at school events to those where the parent will be accompanied by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Any other restriction as deemed reasonable and proportionate by the Executive Headteacher.

If conditions are imposed, a letter will be sent by the Executive Headteacher or Head of School explaining the details.

The parent will be given 5 working days from the date of that letter to make representations in writing to the Chair of Governors (sent via the Clerk to the Governing Board at the school address or clerk email). The Chair of Governors will decide whether to confirm or remove the conditions within 10 working days of receiving the parent's representation.

If confirmed, the conditions will be reviewed by the Governing Board after approximately six months (and every six months thereafter, if appropriate). The parent will be invited to make written representation prior to each review. When deciding whether to maintain, extend, or remove conditions, Governors will consider the extent of compliance, appropriate expressions of regret, assurance of future good conduct, and overall cooperation.

Level 4: Imposing a ban (including Emergency / Immediate Interim Bans)

Where other procedures have been exhausted and aggression or intimidation continues, or where there is a serious risk of harm or extreme act of violence, the school may consider banning the individual from school premises. This includes banning access via written communication or telephone.

Immediate Interim Ban: In circumstances where there is an urgent safety risk, the Executive Headteacher reserves the right to impose an immediate interim ban prior to formal representation windows. The parent will be informed immediately in writing.
In standard or interim ban scenarios, the individual will be advised in writing that a ban/provisional ban is in place. The parent will be given 10 working days from the date of the letter to make representations in writing to the Executive Headteacher or Chair of Governors. The Executive Headteacher or Chair of Governors will decide whether to confirm or remove the ban, communicating this decision in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the representation.
A confirmed ban will be reviewed before its expiry date by the Chair of the Governing Body, taking into account written representations from the parent and evidence provided by the Executive Headteacher. Decisions will be communicated within 10 working days of the review meeting.

Level 5: Removal from school premises

Parents who have been banned from the school premises and continue to cause a nuisance or disturbance will be deemed trespassers and to have committed a Section 547 offence under the Education Act 1996. In these circumstances, the offender may be removed from the school premises by a police officer and legal proceedings may be instigated.

7. Safe Drop-off and Pick-up Arrangements

A ban or restriction from entering school premises does not deprive a child of their right to an education. Where a parent/carer is banned from entering the school grounds, practical arrangements for dropping off and picking up their child(ren) must be established in advance:

- The parent/carer must nominate another responsible adult (approved by the school) to bring the child

to school and collect them at the end of the school day.
- If no nominated adult is available, a handover point at the school perimeter gate will be agreed with a designated member of staff at specific times.
- The banned parent must not approach the school gates or staff during drop-off and pick-up times outside of agreed procedures.

8. CCTV and Media / Recording Policy

- CCTV Evidence: The school premises are monitored by CCTV. CCTV footage may be used to investigate reported incidents, conduct risk assessments, and serve as evidence for formal reviews or police inquiries.
- Recording of Staff: Unauthorised audio or video recording of conversations, meetings, or staff members by parents/visitors (whether face-to-face or during phone calls) is strictly prohibited. Any covert recording made may be disregarded in formal internal procedures and repeated attempts to record staff without consent will be treated as unacceptable behaviour.

9. Staff Support and Wellbeing

The school recognises that dealing with abusive or aggressive behaviour can cause significant distress. The Governing Body is committed to supporting staff well-being:

- Immediate debriefing opportunities with a member of the Senior Leadership Team following any severe incident.
- Access to professional counselling and mental health support services via the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- Occupational Health referrals where appropriate.

  Full support from the school leadership team if police involvement or legal action becomes necessary.

10. Complaints Policy

Any complaint that arises from incidents of abusive behaviour will be dealt with under the school's formal Complaints Policy. However, raising a complaint will not suspend or delay any temporary conditions or bans imposed under this policy for safety reasons.

11. Monitoring by the Governing Board

This policy is reviewed by the school's Governing Board every two years (or earlier if necessary). All actions taken under this policy are monitored by the Governing Board, with details of incidents reported as part of the Executive Headteacher's Report to the Governing Board.

Appendix: Model Letters

Model Letter 1: Initial Warning Letter from the Executive Headteacher

Dear [Parent Name],
Further to the incident that took place on [time and date] when you [Summary of incident, including location, and the effect on staff, pupils and other parents].
I must inform you that John Scurr Primary School will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to defend its staff members and other members of the school community. I am therefore putting you on notice that,

if I receive a further report of unacceptable conduct from you, I will have no option but to instigate the school's formal procedure to withdraw your permission to enter or be on the premises of John Scurr Primary School.
I should warn you that, if your permission to enter or be on school premises is withdrawn, you can be removed from the premises by a police officer and you may be prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted under that section, you will be liable to a fine of up to £500.00 and have a criminal conviction recorded against you. If you have any concerns about the school which have led to your conduct, you should raise these with the school in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy, a copy of which is attached for your consideration.
I trust that we will now be able to put this matter firmly behind us.
Yours sincerely,
Nicola Denton-Dash
Executive Headteacher

Model Letter 1a: Initial Warning Letter (Minor/Serious Incident)

Dear [Parent Name],
I refer to the incident that took place on [time and date] when you [Summary of incident, including location, and the effect on staff, pupils and other parents].
[If Executive Headteacher did not witness the incident]: I have considered the witness accounts of the incident, (including your own), and it would appear [insert details of incident].
[If minor incident]: This behaviour is not in keeping with our parent code of conduct. [Please find a copy attached to this letter.] / Your behaviour falls short of the standard of conduct expected of those visiting the school.
[If more serious incident]: As written in our parent code of conduct, we do not tolerate this kind of behaviour in our school. [Please find a copy attached to this letter.]
I must therefore warn you that if you are involved in a similar incident again, you will leave me with no alternative other than to ban you from coming onto the school site without my written permission.
I do hope that this will not be necessary and that I can rely on your cooperation in this matter.
Yours sincerely,
Nicola Denton-Dash
Executive Headteacher

Model Letter 2: Temporary Ban & Safe Drop-Off/Pick-Up Notification

Dear [Parent Name],
Your conduct on school premises on [insert date]
I refer to the incident that took place on school premises on [insert date] when you [insert details of incident].
[If Executive Headteacher did not witness the incident]: I have considered the witness accounts of the incident, (including your own), and it would appear [insert details of incident].
Your behaviour falls short of the standard of conduct expected of those visiting the school. I have considered the matter very carefully and have decided that you should not be allowed onto the school premises from now until [insert date]. During that time I will review the situation. Before I make a final decision you may, if you wish, write to me or the Chair of Governors (via the Clerk to the Governing Board at [Clerk Email / School Address]) to give any further information you want us to take into consideration. You have until [insert date - 10 working days] to submit written representations.
Child Handover Arrangements:
This ban does not affect your child's entitlement to education. However, you must make alternative arrangements for your child(ren) to be dropped off and collected. Please notify us of the nominated responsible adult who will accompany your child to the school gate. If no alternative adult is available, please contact the school office to agree a designated handover point at the perimeter gate.
If you need to speak to me or a member of staff about any matter, please telephone or email, and I will make the necessary arrangements. You will not be allowed to come onto the school site unless you have written authorisation from me.
If you do not comply with this ban, you will be guilty of causing a nuisance or disturbance on educational premises under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 and may be subject to removal and legal prosecution.
Yours sincerely,
Nicola Denton-Dash

Executive Headteacher

Model Letter 3: Confirmed Ban from School Premises for Specified Period

Dear [Parent Name],
Your conduct on school premises on [insert date]
I refer to the incident that took place on school premises on [insert date] when you [insert details of incident]. In my letter dated [insert date], I referred to my intention to ban you from the premises and invited you to make representations.
I have considered the points you have made and have decided to proceed with the ban for a period of [insert period], until [insert date], after which the ban will be reviewed by the Chair of Governors and myself. I will write to you again prior to the review date so that you may make written representations.
Please remember that agreed child drop-off/pick-up arrangements remain in place as previously outlined. You are not permitted onto the school premises without prior written authorisation.
If you do not comply with this ban, you will be guilty of causing a nuisance or disturbance under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 and subject to prosecution in the magistrates' court.
Yours sincerely,
Nicola Denton-Dash
Executive Headteacher

Model Letter 4: Temporary Ban Pending Governing Body Decision

Dear [Parent Name],
Your conduct on school premises on [insert date]
I refer to the incident that took place on school premises on [insert date] when you [insert details of incident].
Your behaviour falls short of the standard expected of visitors. In the interest of the safety and wellbeing of staff and pupils, I have imposed a temporary ban preventing you from entering the school site. This ban will continue until the Governing Body meets to decide whether to extend or remove the ban.
The Governing Body will be considering this matter during the week of [insert date]. Should you wish to make representations to the Governing Body, please submit these in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Board at [Clerk Email / School Address] no later than [insert date - 1 week from receipt].
You must arrange for another responsible adult to bring your children to school each day. You may not enter any part of the school site. Breach of this condition constitutes an offence under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996.
Yours sincerely,
Nicola Denton-Dash
Executive Headteacher

Model Letter 5: Unban / Restoration of Permission Letter

Dear [Parent Name],
Your conduct on school premises on [insert date]
On [insert date] I wrote to you informing you that permission to enter school premises had been temporarily withdrawn. To enable a final determination, you were given the opportunity to provide written comments.
I have considered your response dated [insert date] / noted that no written response was received. In the circumstances, I have decided to restore your permission to come onto the school premises with immediate effect.
Nevertheless, I remain concerned about the incident which occurred, and I must warn you that if there is any repetition of such behaviour, I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission again.
Yours sincerely,
Nicola Denton-Dash
Executive Headteacher