

Upper Shirley High School Mutual Respect Policy

General Statement

At Upper Shirley High School we pride ourselves on our positive and collaborative relationships with our parent body. We welcome positive and constructive communication between school and home. However, on the very rare occasions that this is not the case we have procedures in place to maintain calm and to keep our staff safe.

Introduction

All school staff have a right to work in a safe place and any abuse, threats or violence towards staff on school premises or via the telephone or e mail by parents or any other members of the community will be met by prompt and appropriate action. Equally, parents have the right to be treated respectfully and in a professional manner by the staff of the school.

Abusive, threatening and aggressive language, the most common form of unreasonable behaviour, will lead to a warning that such behaviour will not be tolerated and further similar behaviour will lead to the withdrawal of permission to be on school premises and a letter will be sent as notification of this decision.

Subsequent incidents of this nature will be referred to our legal advisors who will then write a warning letter. Further breaches may lead to prosecution by the Police. When a person recklessly or intentionally applies unlawful force on another or puts another in fear of immediate attack this constitutes an assault.

To ensure parents and visitors are aware of this policy, the following information is shared with all our parents;

- We welcome visitors to our school
- We aim to make sure that it is a safe place for students, staff and all other members of the school community
- Please remember that if you are angry with someone, it is not necessarily the person who is on the end of the phone or at reception trying to help you.
- If you feel you are angry about something, please ask to see a senior member of staff.
- If visitors threaten or assault anyone in the school, or persist in abusive behaviour, they will be asked to leave.

In terms of staff responsibility, we train our staff to maintain polite communications with parents and visitors and to behave at all times as ambassadors for the school. If a member of staff is rude or aggressive to a parent or visitor this would then be dealt with in accordance with our school's disciplinary procedures.

Harassment

Situations can arise where staff find themselves subjected to a pattern of persistent and unreasonable behaviour from individual parents which is not abusive or overtly aggressive but which can be perceived as intimidating and oppressive. In these circumstances staff may be faced with a barrage of constant demands or criticisms (on an almost daily basis) which, whilst not particularly taxing or serious when viewed in isolation, can have the cumulative effect over time of undermining their confidence, wellbeing and health.

In extreme cases this can be an offence under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and the Police can take action. In less serious situations the parent(s) will be informed by the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (or in the case of the Head teacher the Chair of Governors) that their behaviour is unacceptable and that action may well be taken if it continues.

Abusive Telephone Calls

If a parent is shouting or threatening a member of staff down the telephone that member of staff should try to remain calm and ask the parent to stop shouting or threatening. If they do not stop then the member of staff should advise him/her that he / she intends to end the call and refer the matter to a senior member of staff (in the case of the Head teacher she will refer the matter to the Chair of Governors). Staff should not be expected to listen to aggressive and threatening comments on the phone.

Threatening Behaviour in Meetings

A member of staff should not meet with a parent alone if they have already been in receipt of a threatening phone call or email. If in a meeting a parent or visitor starts to raise their voice or make threatening or personal comments, the staff member should ask them to stop doing so. If the behaviour continues the member of staff will advise the parent that he/she will terminate the meeting and then do so. He / she should then refer the matter to a more senior member of staff.

Threatening e mails or letters

Any written threats made to members of staff by e mail or letter should be copied immediately to the Headteacher (or in the case of the Headteacher to the Chair of Governors). They may then be shared with our legal advisors who will advise us on possible next steps. Staff should not engage in heated written exchanges and should always endeavour to be polite and constructive in any written communication they send home to parents.

Respect for the School's Policies and Procedures

When parents sign their children up to the school they will complete a Home School agreement whereby they agree to abide by the school's policies. If the parent therefore takes issue with a school policy or procedure, including sanctions given for unacceptable behaviour, then they should complain in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy. However, it is unreasonable for parents to be selective with regard to which policies, sanctions or homework they will agree

with and uphold. It is much better if the parent and school work in partnership together to give a common message to the student about expectations and standards.

Coming onto the school site

We request that parents do not come into school other than by the main entrance and do not approach staff in their classrooms or the staffroom. This is important too as part of our safeguarding procedures, to keep our students safe. If parents wish to make an appointment to see a member of staff they should do so via e mail or reception. It is also important that parents respect the complaints procedure and try and see the class teacher or tutor in the first instance and not immediately request to see the Headteacher or a senior member of staff every time they are dissatisfied with some aspect of the school's provision.

Advice to staff

In the event of an incident staff should remember to speak calmly and without raising their voice, be assertive but not aggressive, be polite but firm, seek assistance and walk away if needed, or terminate a meeting with a parent until a later date when heated emotions have dissipated. Staff should not become involved in a heated exchange of views and contact a senior member of staff to report the matter as soon as possible.

All incidents must be reported to the Headteacher as soon as possible.