



ACET Parent/ Carer/ Visitor Code of Conduct Policy

DATE: November 2025
POLICY LEAD: CPO
APPROVED BY: Executives



Excellence



Equity



Empowerment

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Policy Level	Trust	
Approved By	Executives	
Approval Date	24.11.25	
<p>This policy remains valid until it is reviewed and replaced; it does not expire by date alone. Policies are reviewed annually, or sooner if required by statutory or legislative changes, in line with best practice</p>		
Policy Lead / Author	G. Shore	
Version Number	Date Issued	Updated Information
<p>Please complete this section with a brief summary of the changes you have made or if this is a full re-write / new policy. The contents of this version control box will be shared with trustees / the LGB as part of the approval process – Thank you</p>		
1.0	June 2023	New policy, replaces the previous 'Abuse to Staff Policy'
2.0	September 2023	Added section 'Communication between Parents/Carers and the Academy'
3.0	July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor grammatical amendments. • Page 6, clarified that anyone who is subjected to unacceptable conduct or abuse must make written statements about the incident(s). • Page 6, added detail to ensure Chairs of Governors are provided with all available evidence before they make a decision to support/amend/overturn any restrictions. • Page 6, added sentence about the principal reporting any incident to the CPO for monitoring • Page 7, added Violence to Staff Policy to list of linked policies
4.0	September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal is now the decision maker regarding conditions and bans. The Chair of Governors is no longer required to confirm the decision • A right of appeal replaces the CoG involvement • Language throughout the policy amended to be more concise <p>Internal appendices (separate document – model letters etc.) updated to reflect policy changes</p>

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INTRODUCTION

We value positive relationships with parents/carers, visitors, and our wider communities. We encourage close links with parents and the community and believe that students/pupils benefit when the relationship between home and the academy is a positive one. We also strive to make our academies places where as adults we model the behaviour we expect from students/pupils. We place a high importance on good manners, positive communication, inclusivity and mutual respect.

This policy sets and maintains standards of conduct expected of all parents/carers and visitors in our academies. We aim to ensure that all ACET academies are safe, respectful environments for all.

OUR EXPECTATION OF PARENTS/CARERS AND VISITORS

We set clear expectations and guidelines on behaviour for all members of our community. This includes staff (through our Staff Code of Conduct) and students/pupils (through our Behaviour and Rewards Policy).

We expect parents/carers and visitors to:

- Respect the ethos, vision and values of our academy and the wider ACET trust
- Set a good example to our students/pupils with their own conduct
- Treat all members of the academy community with respect and dignity
- Seek a peaceful solution to any concerns
- Work together with staff in the best interests of our students/pupils
- Act in line with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

- Correct their own child's behaviour where appropriate
- Follow communication procedures to ensure staff are able to resolve issues effectively

DEFINITION OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Unacceptable behaviour includes any action or communication that causes a member of the academy community to feel threatened or intimidated, whether in person, on the phone, or online. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Threatening, aggressive, intimidating or abusive behaviour
 - Offensive language or shouting
 - Derogatory social media posts
 - Harassment or intimidation
 - Physical aggression or punishment
 - Disciplining another person's child
 - Smoking, drinking alcohol, or drug use on premises
 - Malicious or vexatious complaints

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS/CARERS AND THE ACADEMY

We believe that clear, open communication between school and home has a positive impact on students'/pupils' learning because it provides parents/carers with the information they need to support their child's education, and it helps the academy to improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers.

The academy is responsible for:

Responding to communication from parents in a timely manner and respectfully. Staff will aim to respond to communication during core school hours, or their working hours (if they work part time), and to redirect communication to the most appropriate person if they are unable to assist themselves. In line with promoting staff wellbeing and a healthy work/life balance, staff may choose to work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of core hours if they wish, but they are not expected to do so.

Parents/carers are responsible for:

Responding to communication from the academy in a timely manner and respectfully (any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated as unacceptable behaviour in line with this policy). Parents/carers should aim to direct their communications to the appropriate member of staff or through the appropriate channels. Parents/carers should not expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours or during school holidays.

Managing unreasonable communication

We are committed to maintaining open, constructive communication with parents and carers, and we value the partnership between home and school. In most cases, there is no need to limit communication. However, where communication becomes excessive, inappropriate, or disruptive, the Principal may take proportionate action to protect staff wellbeing and ensure the smooth operation of the academy.

Unreasonable communication may include, but is not limited to:

- Making excessive or repeated contact with staff in person, by phone, email, or other methods that consume significant time.
- Persistently raising the same issue, or multiple issues, in a manner that is obsessive, harassing, or unproductive.
- Seeking unrealistic outcomes and continuing to pursue them despite clear responses.
- Contacting staff outside of working hours, including by text or email.
- Demanding to speak to staff immediately or without an appointment.
- Using aggressive, confrontational, or provocative language or behaviour.
- Repeatedly raising large volumes of minor or irrelevant queries and expecting immediate responses.
- Refusing to accept a decision has been made or insisting on continuous review without new evidence.
- Making unfounded complaints about staff or demanding their removal.
- Contacting multiple members of staff simultaneously in an attempt to escalate or gain a different response (“scattergun” approach).
- Submitting frequent or unreasonable Freedom of Information requests.

Where communication is deemed unreasonable, the Principal may impose restrictions. These could include limiting communication to a specific method (e.g., email), to a named staff member, or to a scheduled time period. In some cases, the academy may notify the parent/carer that further correspondence will be acknowledged only if it contains new or significant information.

Parents/carers who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their communication may refer to the ACET Complaints Policy.

OUR APPROACH TO DEALING WITH INCIDENTS

If a member of staff or governor is subjected to unacceptable behaviour by a parent, carer, or visitor, they are expected to remain professional, attempt to de-escalate the situation if it is safe to do so, and involve a colleague if appropriate. However, staff and governors are not expected to tolerate abuse. If necessary, they have the right to end the interaction immediately—whether face-to-face, by phone, or through other means—and should report the incident without delay.

All reported incidents will be referred to the Principal or a senior leader, who will assess the nature of the incident and determine the level of risk. Based on this assessment, the Principal will decide the appropriate next steps.

In cases of persistent or unreasonable communication, the Principal also has the discretion to implement proportionate measures to safeguard staff wellbeing and the effective operation of the academy.

In all cases, the welfare and educational progress of any students involved will be a central consideration. Responses will be reasonable, measured, and appropriate to the circumstances. The parent, carer, or visitor involved will be given the opportunity to share their views at each relevant stage of the process.

If the Principal decides to impose conditions or a ban on communication or access to the academy, the individual will be informed in writing and provided with the right to appeal the decision through the Trust's appeal process.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The principal will carry out a risk assessment, if appropriate, in order to help make a decision about the level of response to an incident. In all cases the response will be reasonable and proportionate, although it will not always be necessary to complete a risk assessment document. The principal will consider the following questions:

- What was the specific conduct that was unacceptable?
- What evidence is there? (witness statements should be collected and retained)
- What do witnesses say happened?
- Are there previous incidents to take into consideration?
- Do staff/governors/students/pupils feel intimidated by the parent/carer/visitor'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 academy's action? (low, medium, high).

RECORDING OF INCIDENTS

Any individual who experiences or witnesses unacceptable conduct or abuse is expected to provide a written account of the incident. These statements will be securely stored and treated as confidential. All breaches of this Code of Conduct, along with the actions taken in response, will be documented in the academy's internal records.

Where appropriate, witnesses may also be asked to provide written statements. The Principal will use their discretion when deciding whether statements from adults should be shared with the parent or carer involved—particularly where there is concern about potential retaliation or safeguarding implications.

The Chief People Officer must be sent copies of all relevant documentation related to the incident and any restrictions put in place by the Principal, for monitoring and oversight purposes.

All data gathered under this policy will be handled in accordance with the ACET Data Protection Policy. Any Subject Access Requests will be referred to the ACET Data Controller.

THE ACADEMY'S RESPONSE

Once a risk assessment has been completed (if applicable), the Principal will determine the most appropriate course of action. The response will be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the behaviour and may include one or more of the following:

- Issuing a formal warning letter, outlining expectations and the consequences of further incidents.

- Inviting the parent/carer/visitor to a meeting with the Principal or a senior leader to discuss the concerns and seek resolution.
- Imposing specific restrictions on how the parent/carer/visitor may communicate with the academy or engage with staff and the wider school community.
- Banning the parent/carer/visitor from the academy and/or limiting their communication with staff.
- Reporting the matter to external authorities, where behaviour may constitute a criminal offence.
- Seeking legal advice if the behaviour is potentially defamatory, harassing, or otherwise unlawful.

The Principal has sole authority to decide on the appropriate response to any breach of this Code of Conduct. Any restrictions or bans imposed will be clearly communicated in writing, along with details of the right to appeal. A review period—typically six months—will be set, though this may be adjusted based on the circumstances.

REMOVAL FROM THE ACADEMY

If a parent, carer, or visitor who has been banned from the academy premises continues to attend without permission or causes further disruption, they will be considered a trespasser under section 547 of the Education Act 1996. In such cases, the academy may request support from the police to have the individual removed. Legal action may also be taken where necessary.

COMPLAINTS

Any complaints arising from incidents of abusive or inappropriate behaviour will be managed in accordance with the ACET Complaints Policy. This ensures that all concerns are addressed fairly, consistently, and through the appropriate channels.

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

- Safeguarding
- Whistleblowing
- Behaviour and Rewards
- Anti-bullying
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Visitors to Academies
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints
- Data protection
- Violence to Staff

EXAMPLE / MODEL LETTERS AND DOCUMENTS

Example risk assessment, incident reports and model letters for each stage are available to staff in the document entitled “ACET Parent/Carer/Visitor Code of Conduct – Internal Appendices”. These are shared with principals and HR colleagues and are available on the ACET Hub.