Our Lady & St Kenelm Catholic Primary School

Dealing with Abusive, Aggressive and Unacceptable Behaviour by Parents, Carers and Visitors Policy

Our Lady & St Kenelm Catholic Primary School (OLSK) is committed to providing a safe, welcoming and respectful environment for all members of our school community.

We believe that positive relationships between home and school are essential to children's wellbeing, learning and development. We actively encourage parents and carers to work in partnership with the school and to raise any concerns they may have.

However, the school will not tolerate abusive, aggressive, threatening, intimidating or harassing behaviour towards members of staff, governors, volunteers, pupils or other members of the school community.

All members of our school community have the right to be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect.

This policy sets out how OLSK will respond when parents, carers or visitors behave in an unacceptable manner, and how the school will protect and support its staff.

Aims of the Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure that all staff, governors, volunteers, pupils and visitors feel safe and respected.
- Establish clear expectations regarding appropriate behaviour towards school staff.
- Provide a consistent approach to managing hostile, aggressive or abusive behaviour.
- Ensure staff know how to respond to and report incidents.
- Protect staff from verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment and physical aggression.
- Set out the action the school may take when unacceptable behaviour occurs.
- Maintain positive relationships with parents wherever possible.
- Ensure that all concerns and complaints are managed fairly and in accordance with the school's complaints procedure.

Expected Standards of Behaviour

OLSK expects all parents, carers and visitors to:

- Treat all members of the school community with courtesy, dignity and respect.
- Communicate concerns calmly and appropriately.
- Respect the professional responsibilities of school staff.
- Follow school procedures when raising concerns or making complaints.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of other children, families and staff.
- Refrain from shouting, swearing, threatening or using intimidating language.
- Respect the school's right to manage its day-to-day operations without unnecessary disruption.

The school recognises that parents may occasionally feel upset, frustrated or disagree with decisions made by the school. This does not mean that their concerns cannot be heard or considered.

However, disagreement does not justify aggressive, abusive or threatening behaviour.

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What Constitutes Unacceptable Behaviour?

Unacceptable behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

Verbal abuse and aggression

- Shouting, swearing or using offensive language.
- Making personal insults or derogatory comments.
- Speaking to staff in a threatening, intimidating or aggressive manner.
- Making unreasonable or persistent demands.
- Refusing to allow staff to speak or repeatedly interrupting conversations.

Threatening or intimidating behaviour

- Threatening physical violence or harm.
- Behaving in a manner that causes staff or others to feel unsafe.
- Aggressive gestures, invading personal space or deliberately intimidating staff.
- Following, confronting or repeatedly approaching staff in an intimidating manner.

Harassment and bullying

- Repeated unwanted contact with individual members of staff.
- Targeting or singling out particular staff members.
- Making malicious, discriminatory or derogatory comments.
- Making repeated accusations or complaints in a manner intended to intimidate or harass.
- Encouraging others to intimidate or target members of staff.

Online and written abuse

- Sending abusive, threatening or intimidating emails or messages.
- Posting offensive or defamatory comments about staff on social media.
- Publishing photographs, recordings or personal information to intimidate or harass staff.
- Encouraging others to participate in online harassment or abuse.

Disruptive behaviour on school premises

- Refusing to follow reasonable instructions from school staff.
- Disrupting lessons, meetings or school activities.
- Entering restricted areas without permission.
- Refusing to leave school premises when reasonably requested to do so.
- Behaving aggressively towards other parents, children or visitors.

The school will consider the circumstances, seriousness, frequency and impact of each incident when deciding what action is appropriate.

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Procedures for Managing Aggressive or Hostile Behaviour

Face-to-Face Incidents

Where a parent or visitor becomes verbally aggressive or confrontational towards a member of staff, the member of staff should:

1. Remain calm and professional wherever possible.
2. Avoid becoming involved in an argument or responding in an aggressive manner.
3. Explain calmly that the conversation must remain respectful.
4. Give the parent an opportunity to calm down.
5. End the conversation if the behaviour continues or becomes threatening.
6. Seek assistance from the Headteacher or another senior member of staff.

Staff are not expected to remain in a situation where they feel threatened, intimidated or unsafe.

Where necessary, the member of staff should remove themselves from the situation and seek immediate assistance.

If there is an immediate threat of violence or serious harm, the police should be contacted by calling 999.

Telephone Calls

Where a parent becomes abusive or aggressive during a telephone conversation, staff should:

- Remain calm and explain that abusive language is unacceptable.
- Give the caller an opportunity to continue the conversation appropriately.
- Explain that the call will be terminated if the behaviour continues.
- End the call if the caller continues to shout, swear, threaten or use abusive language.
- Inform the Headteacher or appropriate senior member of staff.
- Record the incident using the school's incident reporting procedure.

Staff should not feel obliged to continue an abusive telephone conversation.

Emails and Written Communication

The school will not tolerate abusive, threatening or intimidating correspondence.

Where an email or letter contains unacceptable language or personal attacks:

- The correspondence should be referred to the Headteacher.
- A decision will be made about whether a response is appropriate.
- The school may explain that future correspondence must remain respectful.
- Where necessary, communication may be restricted to a nominated member of staff or a single designated email address.

The school will continue to respond to legitimate concerns and complaints through the appropriate procedures.

Meetings with Parents

Where there is a known history of aggressive or confrontational behaviour, the school may take additional precautions before arranging a meeting.

These may include:

- Ensuring that two members of staff are present.
- Holding the meeting in an appropriate room.
- Informing a senior member of staff of the meeting arrangements.
- Establishing clear expectations about respectful communication.
- Ending the meeting if behaviour becomes abusive or threatening.

Where a parent requests to record a meeting, the school will consider the request and establish clear arrangements, including obtaining the consent of all parties where required.

Any recording must not be used to intimidate, harass or cause harm or distress.

Action Following an Incident

The school will respond proportionately, taking account of the seriousness and circumstances of the incident.

Depending on the nature of the behaviour, the following action may be taken.

Stage 1 – Informal Verbal Warning

For a first incident involving inappropriate or discourteous behaviour, the Headteacher or senior member of staff may speak to the parent and explain that their behaviour is unacceptable.

The parent will be reminded of the school's expectations and asked to ensure that future communication remains respectful.

A record of the incident should be maintained.

Stage 2 – Formal Written Warning

Where behaviour is repeated, serious or continues following an informal warning, the Headteacher may issue a formal written warning.

The letter will:

- Explain the nature of the unacceptable behaviour.
- Make clear that the behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Set out the expectations for future communication.
- Explain the possible consequences of further incidents.

The parent will be advised that continued unacceptable behaviour may result in restrictions being placed on their access to the school premises or the way in which they communicate with the school.

Stage 3 – Restrictions on Communication

Where a parent repeatedly contacts the school in an abusive, excessive or intimidating manner, the Headteacher may introduce reasonable communication restrictions.

These may include:

- Requiring communication to take place through one nominated member of staff.
- Requiring correspondence to be sent to a designated school email address.
- Arranging meetings by appointment only.
- Limiting unnecessary telephone contact.
- Requesting that communications are consolidated rather than sent through multiple emails or messages.

Such restrictions must not prevent parents from raising legitimate concerns, making complaints or communicating essential information about their child.

Stage 4 – Restriction or Withdrawal of Permission to Enter School Premises

In serious cases, or where previous warnings have been unsuccessful, the school may consider restricting or withdrawing an individual's permission to enter the school premises.

This may be appropriate where a person's behaviour poses a risk to the safety or wellbeing of staff, pupils or other members of the school community.

The school will consider the relevant legal framework, including Section 547 of the Education Act 1996, and seek advice from the appropriate employer, local authority or legal adviser where necessary.

Any decision will be:

- Based on the circumstances and seriousness of the incident.
- Proportionate to the risk presented.
- Communicated clearly in writing.
- Subject to appropriate review arrangements.

Where a parent is restricted from entering the school premises, arrangements will be made, where reasonably possible, to ensure that their child can continue to attend school safely and that essential communication can take place.

These arrangements may include remote meetings, telephone contact or an agreed alternative person collecting or delivering the child.

The school will also consider any safeguarding, parental responsibility or court order implications before implementing restrictions.

Serious Incidents and Police Involvement

Some incidents may be sufficiently serious to warrant immediate action without progressing through the stages outlined above.

These include:

- Physical assault or attempted assault.
- Threats of violence.
- Serious intimidation or harassment.
- Threatening behaviour that places staff or pupils at risk.
- Damage to school property.
- Conduct that may constitute a criminal offence.

Where appropriate, the school will report incidents to the police.

In an emergency or where there is an immediate threat to someone's safety, staff should call 999.

For non-emergency incidents, the school may contact the police through 101 or seek advice from the appropriate authorities.

The school will not attempt to investigate suspected criminal offences beyond what is necessary to protect individuals and preserve relevant information.

Online Abuse and Social Media

The school recognises that unacceptable behaviour may take place outside school premises and normal school hours, particularly through social media and online communication.

OLSK will take reports of online abuse, harassment or intimidation of staff seriously.

Where appropriate, the school may:

- Preserve copies of relevant messages, emails or posts.
- Request that offensive or abusive content is removed.
- Contact the relevant platform or seek advice about reporting the content.
- Seek support from the police where threats or harassment may constitute an offence.
- Take action under this policy where the behaviour affects staff safety, wellbeing or the operation of the school.

Parents are reminded that social media should not be used to make personal attacks against staff or publish information intended to intimidate, harass or cause distress.

Recording and Reporting Incidents

All incidents of aggressive, abusive, threatening or harassing behaviour towards staff should be reported to the Headteacher as soon as possible.

An incident record should include:

- Date and time of the incident.
- Location or method of communication.
- Name of the individual involved.
- Name of the member of staff affected.
- A factual description of what happened.
- Exact words used where relevant and appropriate.
- Names of any witnesses.
- Any action taken at the time.
- Whether the police or other agencies were contacted.
- Any further action required.

Where appropriate, supporting evidence such as emails, letters, screenshots or other relevant records should be retained.

Records will be stored securely and handled in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy and Records Retention Schedule.

Incidents should be monitored to identify repeated patterns of behaviour or any emerging risks to staff safety.

Support for Staff

OLSK recognises that aggressive or abusive behaviour can have a significant impact on staff wellbeing, confidence and professional relationships.

The school is committed to ensuring that staff receive appropriate support following an incident.

Support may include:

- An opportunity to discuss the incident with the Headteacher or a senior member of staff.
- Appropriate time to recover following a distressing incident.
- Support with completing an incident report.
- Access to occupational health or employee assistance support, where available.
- Advice from the relevant HR service or trade union representative.
- Risk assessments and additional safety measures where necessary.
- Appropriate follow-up and communication regarding the action taken.

No member of staff should be expected to manage repeated or serious aggressive behaviour alone.

Where the Headteacher is the person affected, the matter should be referred to the appropriate governing body representative, employer or local authority, as applicable.

The Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is implemented consistently.
- Providing support and guidance to staff.
- Investigating reported incidents or arranging for appropriate investigation.
- Deciding what action is proportionate and appropriate.
- Issuing warnings and considering restrictions where necessary.
- Ensuring incidents are recorded and monitored.
- Seeking advice from the local authority, employer, HR or legal advisers where appropriate.
- Reporting significant concerns to the governing body.

The Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Supporting the Headteacher in maintaining a safe and respectful school environment.
- Ensuring appropriate procedures are in place to protect staff.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the school's arrangements.
- Receiving appropriate anonymised information about significant or recurring incidents.
- Ensuring that concerns involving the Headteacher are managed through an appropriate independent process.

Governors should not become involved in the day-to-day management of individual incidents unless this is necessary and appropriate to their governance responsibilities.

Parents' Right to Raise Concerns and Make Complaints

OLSK recognises that parents have the right to raise concerns, question decisions and make formal complaints about the school.

The school will always aim to listen to concerns and respond fairly, professionally and within reasonable timescales.

This policy must not be used to prevent a parent from making a legitimate complaint or exercising their legal rights.

Where a parent is unhappy with a decision or response, they should be directed to the school's Complaints Policy and Procedure.

A parent may disagree with the school without being considered aggressive or abusive.

However, the manner in which a concern or complaint is communicated must remain respectful and appropriate.

Equality and Inclusion

OLSK is committed to treating all members of the school community fairly and without discrimination.

When responding to incidents, the school will consider individual circumstances, including disability, additional needs, communication difficulties and any reasonable adjustments that may be required.

Any action taken will be proportionate, fair and consistent with the school's Equality and Inclusion responsibilities.

Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher will monitor incidents and review the effectiveness of this policy.

The Governing Body will receive appropriate anonymised information about significant incidents, recurring concerns and actions taken to protect staff wellbeing.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier where there are changes to legislation, government guidance or school procedures.

Date approved: November 2026
Review date: November 2028

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Appendix 1 – Staff Incident Reporting Record

Managing Abusive, Aggressive and Unacceptable Behaviour

Date of incident: _____

Time of incident: _____

Location / method of communication: _____

Name of parent / visitor involved: _____

Name of member(s) of staff affected: _____

Description of incident

Please provide a factual account of what happened, including any exact words used where relevant.

_____

_____

_____

Type of incident (please tick):

- Verbal abuse / shouting
- Swearing / offensive language
- Threatening behaviour
- Physical aggression
- Harassment / intimidation
- Abusive emails or messages
- Social media abuse
- Disruptive behaviour
- Other: _____

Witnesses (if applicable):

_____

Action taken at the time:

_____

Was the Headteacher informed? Yes / No
Was the police contacted? Yes / No
Was a written warning issued? Yes / No
Further action required:

Member of staff completing the report: _____

Date completed: _____

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Headteacher's comments / follow-up:

Signed: _____

Date: _____

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Appendix 2 – Suggested Formal Warning Letter

Private and Confidential

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Unacceptable Behaviour Towards School Staff

I am writing following an incident on [date], during which your behaviour towards a member of staff at Our Lady & St Kenelm Catholic Primary School was considered unacceptable.

The school fully recognises that parents may occasionally have concerns or disagree with decisions made by the school. We welcome constructive communication and encourage parents to raise any concerns through the appropriate channels.

However, we cannot accept behaviour that is aggressive, abusive, threatening or intimidating towards members of our school community.

I must therefore remind you that all communication with school staff must remain respectful and appropriate.

Please be advised that any further incidents of this nature may result in additional action being taken, which could include restrictions on your communication with the school or, in more serious circumstances, restrictions on access to the school premises.

We remain committed to maintaining a positive working relationship with you and hope that we can move forward constructively, with the interests and wellbeing of your child at the centre of our partnership.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher
Our Lady & St Kenelm Catholic Primary School

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Appendix 3 – Staff Response: Suggested Wording

Staff may find the following phrases helpful when dealing with difficult conversations.

Where a parent is becoming aggressive:

"I understand that you are upset, but I need you to speak to me respectfully so that we can discuss your concerns."

Where a parent continues shouting:

"I am happy to listen to your concerns, but I cannot continue this conversation while you are speaking to me in this manner."

Where a conversation needs to end:

"I am now ending this conversation because your behaviour is unacceptable. The Headteacher will be informed, and any further communication can take place through the appropriate channels."

Where a parent is abusive over the telephone:

"I am going to end this call now because the language being used is unacceptable. You can contact the school again when you are able to discuss your concerns calmly."

Where a parent refuses to leave:

"I have asked you to leave the premises. Your behaviour is causing concern, and I am now seeking assistance from the Headteacher."

Policy reference documents

- Department for Education (July 2026), *Preventing and tackling the bullying and harassment of school staff*.
- Department for Education, *Behaviour in Schools*.
- Education Act 1996, Section 547.
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997.
- OLSK Complaints Policy.
- OLSK Health and Safety Policy.
- OLSK Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- OLSK Data Protection Policy and Records Retention Schedule.