

Acceptable behaviour and visitor code of conduct

Introduction and Rationale

At Briarwood School we strive to build strong relationships with parents to help create a stimulating learning environment that continues from school to home, providing all pupils with the opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability. We are very proud and fortunate to have a very dedicated and supportive school community. At our school the staff, governors, parents and carers recognise that the education of our children is a partnership between us. We expect our school community to respect our school ethos and set a good example through their own behaviour. As a rule, our schools are orderly, safe places, where relationships between staff and visitors, especially parents/carers, demonstrate mutual respect and recognition of shared responsibility for pupils' welfare and educational progress.

To create a welcoming and safe learning environment, the school implements a specifically designed set of rules regarding behaviour and conduct which parents, carers and visitors are expected to act in accordance with. The purpose of this code of conduct therefore, is to provide clarity regarding the expectations of the conduct of all parents, carers and visitors connected to our school. Briarwood School is responsible for protecting the health and safety of the staff and pupils in our schools. This document is mainly about dealing with violence, threatening behaviour or abuse by parents/carers of a pupil in a school, including those cases where the parent has been asked not to come onto the premises. Some of the remedies listed are also applicable when dealing with other visitors or intruders on school premises.

We are committed to resolving difficulties in a constructive manner, through an open and positive dialogue. However, we understand that everyday misunderstandings can cause frustrations and have a negative impact on our relationships. Where issues arise or misconceptions take place, please contact your child's teacher or Head of School, who will be available to meet with you and go through the issue and hopefully resolve it. Where issues remain unresolved, please follow the school's complaints procedure. This is available on the school website or a copy can be requested from the school offices.

The code of conduct sets out the actions the school can take should this code be ignored or where breaches occur. All staff members have the right to work without fear of violence or abuse; therefore, physical attacks, threatening behaviour, and abusive or insulting language towards staff members, governors, visitors, pupils or other parents may result in individuals being removed from the premises.

Legal framework

This document has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2011
- Education Act 1996
- Children Act 2004
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DfE (2018) 'Controlling access to school premises'

This document operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Summary

Day to day access to a school is within the control of the Executive Headteacher. Normally parents / carers (and those with parental responsibility) are granted “implied licence” to visit the grounds and buildings of one of our schools. All Briarwood sites have established procedures for access to the school and grounds. Parents are informed about these when their children are enrolled into school and information can also be found on the school website. Where there is a breach of procedures the school needs to respond in a measured way, depending on the seriousness of any inappropriate conduct e.g.

- initiate a meeting/dialogue with the individual;
- write to the visitor, describing their misconduct, explaining its impact on the school and stating its unacceptability;
- vary the person’s “licence”, say, through the addition of conditions;
- warn of the possibility of a “ban” (i.e. the withdrawal of their licence) if the misconduct is repeated;
- impose a ban with a review after a fixed period;
- impose a ban without review.

It is possible for an Executive Headteacher to initiate any of these actions on their own authority, although they may take advice from the Governing Body and local authority. It is less likely to lead to personal confrontation if the more serious sanctions are initiated by the Governing Body as appropriate.

Expectations

Our School expects parents, carers and visitors to:

- Act in accordance with this code of conduct at all times.
- Support and reflect the school’s ethos and values through their behaviour.
- Set a good example to pupils through their behaviour and the way they interact with staff, pupils and other adults.
- Work together with staff members for the benefit of their child and to resolve any issues of concern.
- Treat all governors, staff members, pupils, other parents and any members of the school community with dignity and respect.
- Manage their child’s behaviour appropriately on the school grounds where it could otherwise lead to conflict or aggressive or unsafe behaviour.
- Respect the school’s property and environment by keeping it clean and tidy.
- Follow the school’s parking rules and procedures for dropping-off and collecting pupils from school.
- Dress in an appropriate manner when on the school premises and attending school events, and ensure their dress and appearance reflects that they are role models for pupils.

School Policy for dealing with incidents

Violence, threatening behaviour and abuse against school staff or other members of the school community must not be tolerated. All members of the school community have a right to expect that their school is a safe place in which to work and learn. There is no place for violence, threatening behaviour or abuse in schools. Where such behaviour does occur, Briarwood school will play a proactive role in taking all possible action to deal with it.

Behaviours that will not be tolerated:

The following list serves to illustrate the nature of behaviours that would fall outside of what might be deemed reasonable within the context of a school community. However, it cannot be exhaustive and any behaviour of concern will be judged upon its own merits.

- Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with any of the school’s normal operation or activities anywhere on the school premises.
- Any inappropriate behaviour on the school premises.
- Using loud, offensive or abusive language or displaying temper.
- Raising voices inappropriately at another individual, including acting in a threatening way, using aggressive hand gestures or physically intimidating an individual
- Damaging or destroying school property.
- Sending abusive or threatening emails or text/voicemail/phone messages/messaging apps (including SeeSaw) or other written communications (including social media) to anyone within the school community.
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory, racist or sexual comments regarding members of the school community either directly to individuals at the school or on social media.
- The use of physical, verbal or written aggression towards another adult or child. This includes physical punishment of your own child on school premises.
- Approaching someone else’s child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child towards their own child. (Such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and may have legal consequences.)
- Smoking (including e-cigarettes), taking illegal drugs or the consumption of alcohol on school premises.
- Dogs being brought on to the school premises (other than guide and therapy dogs).
- Discriminating against any member of the school community, including pupils, staff, governors and other parents
- Bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical, verbal and sexual abuse offline and online
- Sending abusive, aggressive or threatening messages, emails or other communications to any member of the school community
- Trespassing on school property without prior permission or implied licence
- Causing intentional damage to school property
- Breaching the school’s security procedures
- Using physical violence on the school premises or on a member of the school community, e.g. hitting, slapping, punching, kicking and pushing
- Partaking in unnecessary physical contact with an individual
- Psychologically harassing any member of the school community, including displaying vexatious behaviour which is humiliating for the individual and is damaging to their self-esteem
- Arriving on the school premises partially clothed
- Taking photographs or videos on the school premises without permission from the school
- Driving unsafely within the vicinity of the school

Should any of the above occur on school premises or in connection with school then the school may feel it necessary to take action by contacting the appropriate authorities or consider banning the offending adult from entering the school premises.

It is not the intention of this Code of Conduct to constrain a parent or carer asking questions or communicating their concerns. However, it is the case that the school expects parents and carers to engage with the school in an appropriate manner and to use processes (such as the complaints procedure) as the vehicle for exploring their concerns and seeking a resolution.

Issues of conduct with the use of Social Media

Most people take part in online activities and social media. It’s fun, interesting and keeps us connected.

Within these spaces however we ask that you use common sense when discussing school life online.

'Think before you post.' We ask that social media, whether public or private, should not be used to fuel campaigns and voice complaints against the school, school staff, parents or children. We take very seriously inappropriate use of social media by a parent to publicly humiliate or criticise another parent, member of staff or child.

If parents/carers have any concerns about their child in relation to the school then they should:

- Initially contact the class teacher.
- If the concern remains they should contact the Head of School.
- If still unresolved then engage next steps in the complaints procedure.

Parents and carers should not use social media as a medium to air any concerns or grievances.

Online activity considered inappropriate:

- Identifying or posting images/videos of children without the consent of the other parent / carer. There is of course nothing preventing you as a parent/carer posting appropriate images or your own child.
- Abusive or personal comments about staff, governors, children or other parents.
- Bringing the school in disrepute.
- Posting defamatory or libellous comments.
- Emails circulated or sent directly with abusive or personal comments about staff or children.
- Using social media to publicly challenge school policies or discuss issues about individual children or members of staff.
- Threatening behaviour, such as verbally intimidating staff, or using bad language.
- Breaching school security procedures.

What happens if someone ignores or breaks the code?

If a parent is behaving inappropriately, a report will be made to the Executive Headteacher or the most senior member of staff available in their absence, who will decide on the most appropriate course of action.

Parents will raise concerns regarding another parent's behaviour or conduct directly with their child's class teacher or the Executive Headteacher and will not approach the parent themselves.

Instances of parents displaying inappropriate behaviour will be managed in a variety of ways, depending on the severity of the situation.

When a parent has behaved inappropriately, they will be invited to a meeting by the Executive Headteacher to discuss their behaviour and to attempt to resolve the issue. Where this initial meeting is not sufficient to resolve the issue, the Executive Headteacher, in collaboration with other staff and relevant agencies, will consider what further action may be required. This action, depending on the situation, could include the following:

- Barring the parent from the school premises
- Contacting the police
- Seeking legal redress through the courts
- Restricting the parent's channels of communication to the school, e.g. no longer allowing the parent to send emails to a staff member directly
- Reporting content the parent has posted online to the website's admin
- Referring the case to children's social care, where the behaviour indicates that the parent poses a risk to children

- Any child protection and safeguarding concerns will be addressed in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The school reserves the right to escort anyone off the premises who is displaying aggressive or disruptive behaviour. The police may be contacted to provide advice on managing an incident or to assist in the removal of an individual from the premises, where necessary. The police will be contacted where a parent is being violent or has committed assault, or where the event has caused harm to an individual.

If a parent has been previously barred from the premises, or has exceeded their implied access to the premises and is causing a disturbance, the police will be contacted to remove the individual from the premises.

If concerns are raised in relation to a parent's appearance or dress, personal factors will be taken into consideration, on a case-by-case basis, when addressing the concern.

If a parent persistently displays unacceptable and inappropriate behaviour, this may result in them being barred from the school premises, in line with the Barring from the school premises section of this policy.

In the event of any parent/carer or visitor of the school breaking this code then proportionate actions will be taken as follows:

The Banning Process

The Executive Headteacher will need to assemble the full facts before proceeding, making sure that all those involved in any incidents, or witnesses to those incidents, make a full written record as soon as possible. Crucial elements:

- Write to parent/carer/intruder to record in detail the incident and why it is unacceptable;
- Explain that the school will consider banning the parent / carer / Intruder, giving the parent /carer / intruder a period in which they may respond in writing giving their version and why they should not be banned;
- Tell the parent/carer/intruder when a decision will be made.

The ban should be finite in length, as only the most serious misconduct would justify an indefinite ban. The duration needs to be sufficient to convey a clear message about the seriousness of the associated misconduct, but not so long as to be disproportionate. The aim should always be to restore "normal" relations as soon as is reasonably practicable. Even if a ban is permanent, it should be reviewed periodically, taking account of subsequently demonstrated patterns of behaviour.

What does a ban achieve?

- It confirms to a parent that the school will not tolerate misbehaviour;
- Shows the school takes health and safety of its staff, visitors and pupils seriously;
- It provides a key element in making it easier to use legal remedies to prevent repeated misconduct, including use of S547 of the 1996 Education Act to enable Police removal and possible prosecution of those on school premises without permission;
- It may form the basis for an application for an injunction to curtail repeated instances of misbehaviour.

Parental Rights

Every attempt should be made to maintain normal communications with parents/carers, including giving them the opportunity to participate in elections for parent governors. Even where a parent/carer has been banned from the school premises, they retain their right to an annual consultation in relation to the educational progress of their child/ren. However, the school may determine who will be present at the meeting (e.g. a senior member of staff

might accompany the class teacher) and its location (e.g. it may well be arranged off site). The interests of the child should continue to be paramount.

Incident report form

Briarwood School accident/incident report form should be completed as well as Bristol local authority forms 1 and 2. This will assist with the recording of any incidents of abuse, threatening behaviour or violence against any members of our school community. A record of an incident will help in the collection of evidence where necessary, such as when proceedings are being brought against an alleged assailant. Available photographic evidence of any injuries or damage, or relevant CCTV footage, can also be helpful. Recording details of incidents will also help in reviewing the school's policy, and should ideally inform future risk assessments. If there is an injury to staff from an assault, the school must report this to the local authority via forms 1 and 2, as it may need to be reported to the health and safety executive (HSE) under the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR), as amended in 2012.

Section 547, Education Act 1996

The model letters included suggest how use might be made of section 547 of the Education Act 1996 in the letters that are sent to parents. Section 547 makes it an offence for a trespasser on school premises to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance, and allows for the removal and prosecution of any person believed to have committed the offence. The penalty for a person convicted of the offence is a fine of up to £500. A parent/carer of a child attending any of the Briarwood schools has implied permission (implied licence) to be on the school's premises at certain times and for certain purposes but if their behaviour is unreasonable this permission may be withdrawn, and they will become a trespasser. A person who nevertheless persists in entering the school premises and displaying unreasonable behaviour may be removed and prosecuted under section 547. The school will take the lead in authorising the removal of a person believed to be causing or permitting a nuisance or disturbance and may bring proceedings against them. The school can authorise the removal of someone from the premises by the police and may also authorise a person to bring proceedings against that individual. Additionally, in all situations the police are authorised to remove someone from school premises and to bring proceedings for an offence under this section. It is not set down in law how a person should be authorised. Good practice suggests that this is done in writing. If the police have been involved the school should clarify whether the police intend to summon or charge and whether the Crown Prosecution Service has decided that there is sufficient evidence to prosecute. In most cases it will be in the public interest to prosecute if there is sufficient evidence to support a prosecution.

**Thank you for abiding by this code in our school.
Together we create a positive and uplifting environment not only for the
pupils but also for all who work and visit our school.**

Appendix 1

Model letters

Following are examples of letters (which can be modified for different legal purposes where necessary) to parents/carers or other visitors to school premises whose permission to be on the premises is to be, or has been, withdrawn. The letters show that where such a parent re-enters school premises and causes a nuisance or disturbance, section 547 might be used. The Executive Headteacher has the right to decide who can come onto school premises, but the letters should be sent by the governing body on behalf of the Executive Headteacher. Using powers under section 547 allows for action which can be straightforward, quick and effective in removing violent, aggressive or abusive people from school premises. In practice, it is amongst the most widely used remedies. Section 547 will not be the most appropriate remedy in every circumstance. Serious violence, repeated harassment or racially aggravated behaviour for example, may warrant stronger criminal sanctions.

Warning letter

From the Executive Headteacher: to parent/carer with child/ren at the school

Dear

I have received a report about your conduct at the school on (enter date and time).
(Add factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils, other parents.)

I must inform you that Briarwood School will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to protect its staff and pupils.

Therefore if, in the future, I receive any reports of conduct of this nature I will be forced to consider removing your licence to enter the school grounds and buildings. If you do not comply with that instruction I will be able to arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

Nevertheless, I wish to give you an opportunity to give me in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to the report which I have received about your conduct. These comments may include any expressions of regret on your part and any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct. To enable me to take a decision on this matter at an early point, you are asked to send me any written comments you wish to make by (state date ten working days from the date of letter).

Yours sincerely,

Executive Headteacher

Banning Letter

From the governing body: to parent/carer with child/ren at the school

Dear

I have received a report from the Executive Headteacher about your conduct on (enter date and time).
(Add factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils, other parents.)

I must inform you that Briarwood School will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to protect its staff and pupils.

On the advice of the Executive Headteacher I am therefore instructing that until (add date) you are not to reappear on the premises of the school. If you do not comply with this instruction I may arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

For the duration of this decision you may bring your son(s)/daughter(s) (complete as appropriate) to school and collect them/him/her (delete as appropriate) at the end of the school day, but you must not go beyond the school gate. Arrangements have been made for your (delete as appropriate) son(s)/daughter(s) (insert child/rens names) to be collected, and returned to you, at the school gate by a member of the school's staff.

The withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises takes effect straightaway. However, I still need to decide whether it is appropriate to confirm this decision. Before I do so, I wish to give you an opportunity to give me in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to the report which I have received from the Executive Headteacher. These comments may include any expressions of regret on your part and any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct. To enable me to take a decision on this matter at an early point, you are asked to send me any written comments you wish to make by (state date ten working days from the date of letter). If on receipt of your comments I consider that my decision should be confirmed, or extended, you will be supplied with details of how to pursue a review of the circumstances of your case. In any event, the decision to withdraw your licence to enter the school premises will be reviewed by (complete as appropriate). That review will take account of any representations that you may have made and of your subsequent conduct.

Yours sincerely,
Chair of governing body

Banning Letter

From the Governing body: to member of the public

Dear

I have received a report from the Executive Headteacher at Briarwood school about your conduct on (enter date and time).

(Add factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils, other parents.)

I must inform you that Briarwood School will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to protect its staff and pupils.

On the advice of the Executive Headteacher I am therefore instructing that you are not to reappear on the premises of the school. If you do not comply with this instruction I may arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

Yours sincerely,

Chair of governing body

Letter updating a banning letter

From the governing body confirming ban: to parent/carer with child/ren at the school

Dear

On (give date) I wrote to you informing you that on the advice of the Executive Headteacher, I had withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of (insert name) School until (insert date).

To enable Briarwood School to determine whether to confirm this decision, or to impose it for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by (give date).

I have not received a written response from you / I have now received a letter from you dated (insert the date), the contents of which I have noted. (delete either sentence as appropriate)

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Executive Headteacher’s report, I have determined that the decision to withdraw permission for you to come onto school premises should be confirmed/extended. (delete as appropriate)

I am therefore instructing that until (insert date) you are not to come onto the premises of the school without the prior knowledge and approval of the Executive Headteacher. If you do not comply with this instruction I may arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted, you are liable to a fine of up to £500. Notwithstanding this decision the Executive Headteacher and staff at Briarwood school remain committed to the education of your child/children (delete as appropriate), who must continue to attend school as normal under the arrangements set out in my previous letter. The Governing body will take steps to review the continuance of this decision by (give date). When deciding whether it is necessary to extend the withdrawal of permission to come onto the school’s premises, the governing body will take into account the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurances of future good conduct received from yourself and any evidence of your cooperation with the school in other respects.

Finally, I would advise you that I have asked the Executive Headteacher to ensure that your complaint (give brief details) is considered under the appropriate procedure. You will be contacted about this by the school in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Chair of governing body

Letter updating a banning letter

From the governing body, withdrawing ban: to parent/carer with child/ren at the school

Dear

On (insert date) I wrote to you informing you that, on the advice of the Executive Headteacher, I had temporarily withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of (insert name) School. To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to let me have your written comments on this incident by (insert date) I have not received a written response from you / I have now received a letter from you dated (insert date), the contents of which I have noted. (delete either sentence as appropriate) In the circumstances, and after consulting with the Executive Headteacher, I have decided that it is not necessary to confirm the decision, and I am therefore restoring to you the permission to come onto the school premises, with immediate effect.

Nevertheless I remain very concerned at the incident which occurred on (insert date), and I must warn you that if there is any repetition of your behaviour on that occasion, I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the premises.

Yours sincerely,

Chair of governing body

Letter extending ban

From the governing body, extending ban: to parent/carer with child/ren at the school

Dear

I wrote to you on (insert date) withdrawing permission for you to come onto the premises of Briarwood School until (insert date). In that letter I also advised you that I would take steps to review this decision by (insert date).

I have now completed the review. However, after consultation with the Executive Headteacher, I have determined that it is not yet appropriate for me to withdraw my decision. (Give a brief summary of reasons) I therefore advise that the instruction that you are not to come onto the premises of Briarwood school without the prior knowledge and approval of the Executive Headteacher remains in place until (insert date).

I shall undertake a further review of this decision on (insert date). If you are dissatisfied with this decision, you have a right to request a review of the decision by the governing body.

Yours sincerely,

Chair of governing body

Letter ending ban

From the governing body, ending ban: to parent/carer with child/ren at the school

Dear

I wrote to you on (insert date) informing you that I had withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of Briarwood School until (insert date). In that letter I also advised you that I would take steps to review this decision by (insert date).

I have now completed the review. After consultation with the Executive Headteacher, I have decided that it is now appropriate to change that decision and I am therefore restoring to you the permission to come onto the school premises, with immediate effect.

I trust that you can now be relied upon to act in full co-operation with the school and that there will be no further difficulties of the kind which made it necessary for me to prevent you entering the premises. I should point out that if there is any repetition of your behaviour, I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the premises once more.

Yours sincerely,

Chair of governing body