

Threatening or Abusive Behaviour towards Staff

Dover College



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1. OVERVIEW

The Board of Governors of Dover College encourages College staff to maintain close links with parents. It believes that pupils benefit when the relationship between home and school is strong, positive and professional.

The vast majority of parents, carers and others visiting our school are keen to work with us and support the school. However, on rare occasions when a negative attitude towards the school is felt, this can result in aggression, verbal or physical abuse towards school staff members or the wider school community.

The Board of Governors expects and requires its staff members to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to defuse the problem where possible, seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues.

However, all staff members have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse and the right to self-defence in extreme cases. We expect parents and other visitors to behave reasonably towards all College staff members.

This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable. The common purpose remains clear: To achieve zero tolerance of violence, threatening behaviour or abuse, and ensure all members of our community and all visitors to the College can be confident that they are operating within a safe environment.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Types of behaviour that are considered threatening and abusive and will not be tolerated include:

- Shouting at school staff members, either in person or over the telephone.
- Physically intimidating a staff member, e.g. deliberately standing very close to them.
- The use of aggressive hand gestures.
- Threatening behaviour.
- Shaking or holding a fist or finger towards another person.
- Swearing.
- Pushing.
- Hitting, e.g. slapping, punching and kicking.
- Spitting.
- Discriminatory comments.
- Breaching the school's security policies.
- Aggressive and threatening phone calls or emails.
- Aggressive or threatening behaviour towards staff or their families via social media.

This list is not exhaustive but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour.

2. RESPONSE

If a parent behaves unacceptably towards a staff member, the Headteacher or other appropriate senior staff member will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If necessary, the school's Complaints Policy should be suggested. Where all other avenues have been exhausted, and aggression or intimidation continues or where there is an act or threat of violence, a parent may be banned by the Headteacher from the school premises, subject to review. Unacceptable behaviour may result in the Chairman of Governors and the police being informed of the incident.

3. BANS PROCEDURE

1. The parent will be informed, in writing, that they are banned from the premises, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, e.g. police involvement or an injunction application.
2. If an assault leads to a ban, a statement indicating the matter has been reported to the police will be included.
3. The Headmaster will inform the Chairman of Governors of the ban.
4. The College will make appropriate arrangements for pupils to be delivered to and collected from the premises.
5. The ban will usually be finite in length. The duration will be sufficient to convey a clear message about the seriousness of the associated misconduct, but not so long as to be disproportionate.
6. Bans will be reviewed periodically, considering subsequently demonstrated behaviour.

4. RIGHTS OF THE PARENT

Every effort will be made to maintain regular communications with parents. Even where a parent has been banned from the school premises, they have the right to consult about their children's educational progress. The Headmaster may determine who will be present at the meeting and the location. Parents always have recourse to the College Complaints Policy and may appeal against a ban in writing to the Chairman of Governors.