

Zero-Tolerance Approach to Abuse Policy

1 Introduction

The school is committed to ensuring it's governors, employees and all visitors can carry out their duties and work in an environment which is free from violence, harassment, and abuse.

This zero-tolerance abuse policy will outline our expectations for interactions between our governors, employees and all visitors.

Any allegations against school employees, governors and visitors who have failed to comply with the provisions of the policy will be considered under our relevant procedures.

2 Expectations of Behaviour

The safety of our governors and employees should never be compromised.

We expect governors, employees and school visitors to engage in an appropriate manner with one another and one which underpins mutual respect.

Any incident where a governor or an employee is abused, threatened, or assaulted is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

3 Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

Abusive behaviour can take place in person, but it can also occur over the telephone, via written communication or via technology such as social media and email. Aggressive or abusive behaviour includes verbal and physical abuse.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of abusive behaviour (which may amount to a criminal offence) that will not be tolerated:

- Physical violence
- Hostile or aggressive behaviour
- Racial abuse
- Distribution of misinformation
- Being stalked, followed, or loitered around
- Sexual harassment or sexual assault
- Discriminatory abuse
- Threats or threatening behaviour
- Harassment
- Malicious allegations
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4 Reporting Abusive Behaviour

When abusive behaviour occurs, we would encourage governors, employees and school visitors to disengage with the perpetrator(s). Where there is any immediate danger, we would encourage that the Police are contacted by calling 999 in the first instance.

An employee who receives any type of abuse should report this to the Headteacher and the employee should complete the online incident report form which is submitted to Health and Safety. If an employee feels they are unable to raise their concerns with their Headteacher, they should follow the schools Confidential Reporting Code. Staff or visitors should speak to the Chair of Governors if the concern is in relation to the headteacher. Contact with the police will be made if necessary and individual risk assessments undertaken by the school where appropriate. It may also be appropriate to take legal advice to determine the schools next steps in response to the abuse.

Governors, employees and visitors are encouraged to keep their own record of any abuse. Emails, social media posts or letters should be copied, screen shot or saved. Where a telephone call or face-to-face discussion has taken place, a written note of the exchange should be prepared as soon as possible after the incident or recorded.

Where abuse is serious but not serious enough to warrant a 999 call, it may be appropriate for the incident(s) to be reported to the Police by calling 101. Even where the Police decide to take no action, having the incident(s) logged may be used in evidence to demonstrate a pattern of behaviour.

5 Our Response to Abusive Behaviour

Where abusive behaviour has occurred, action will be taken by the school to stop or prevent the unacceptable behaviour.

The following actions may be taken against the perpetrator(s):

- Being asked to leave and/ or be removed from school buildings or events.
- Reporting the incident and perpetrator(s) to the Police.
- Civil proceedings (e.g. applying for an injunction)

We recognise that abusive behaviour can have a serious impact on a person's mental health and wellbeing. A wide range of wellbeing support is therefore available for our governors and employees which can be found on our schools' portal.

You may also find zero-tolerance posters displayed in our schools as a useful reminder of the behaviour expected in school. In relation to a complaint, please contact the school directly for the appropriate complaint procedure.



HR Advice and Support

For advice regarding the application of this policy please contact:

HR Advice and Support

hradvice@durham.gov.uk

Pay, Reward and Employment Services can be contacted by emailing:

Schools

PESSchools@durham.gov.uk

Further support can be accessed by contacting:

Occupational Health

occhealthadmin@durham.gov.uk

Health and Safety

hsteam@durham.gov.uk

Employee Assistance Programme

wisdom.healthassured.org/login

Employer Code MHA042951

Tel 0800 0280199

School policies and guidance documents will be reviewed periodically as required, and in accordance with any changes to legislation and best practice.

The school complies with all relevant statutory obligations. The school privacy notice provides more specific information on data collected and how it is handled, a copy of which can be accessed from the school. For more information please contact the school directly.

If you have any concerns about how your data is handled, please contact either the school Data Protection Officer (details available from the school office), or the Information Commissioner's Office

Author	Version	Last review
TT	V 1	January 2025