



## **Wood Ley Community Primary School Policy for Managing Serial, Persistent or Unreasonable Complaints and Communication**

Approved by: Governing Body

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy Lead: Headteacher



## **1. . Introduction**

At Wood Ley Community Primary School, we are committed to working positively with parents, carers, and members of the community. We recognise that concerns and complaints are an important part of school improvement and provide opportunities to review practice, strengthen communication, and resolve difficulties wherever possible.

We aim to:

- Listen to concerns respectfully and fairly;
- Resolve issues promptly and professionally;
- Maintain positive relationships with families;
- Ensure all parties are treated with dignity and respect.

However, on rare occasions, the behaviour or communication of a complainant may become unreasonable, persistent, excessive, or abusive. This can place significant pressure on staff, impact staff wellbeing, and affect the school's ability to carry out its duties effectively.

This policy outlines how the school may respond proportionately where communication or behaviour becomes unacceptable, while continuing to ensure legitimate concerns are considered appropriately.

## **2. Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to:

- Parents and carers;
- Members of the public;



- Visitors to the school;
- Individuals making complaints or raising concerns with the school.

This policy should be read alongside:

- The School Complaints Procedure;
- Parent/Carer Code of Conduct;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

### **3. Principles**

The school will:

- Treat all concerns seriously and objectively;
- Act fairly, proportionately, and consistently;
- Seek to resolve concerns informally wherever possible;
- Ensure staff are protected from harassment, intimidation, or abuse;
- Make reasonable adjustments where appropriate;
- Consider individual circumstances, including disability or additional needs.

Nothing within this policy prevents a complainant from raising legitimate concerns or accessing the school's formal complaints procedure.

### **4. Expectations for Communication**

The school expects all communication with staff and governors to remain:

- Respectful;



- Courteous;
- Professional;
- Reasonable in frequency and tone.

We understand that parents may feel upset, frustrated, or anxious when concerns arise. However, aggressive or excessive communication is not acceptable.

Staff should not be expected to tolerate:

- Personal insults or accusations;
- Intimidating or threatening behaviour;
- Offensive or discriminatory language;
- Repeated demands for immediate responses;
- Excessive correspondence;
- Harassment via email, telephone, social media, or in person.

## **5. Defining Persistent or Unreasonable Behaviour**

A complainant may be regarded as acting unreasonably where previous attempts to resolve concerns have been unsuccessful and the individual's behaviour places an unreasonable burden on the school or its staff.

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Sending large volumes of emails or messages;
- Contacting multiple staff members simultaneously regarding the same issue;
- Repeated telephone calls;
- Persistent requests for meetings without new information;



- Repeatedly raising substantially the same concern after the complaints process has concluded;
- Refusing to accept findings reached through the school's procedures;
- Using inflammatory, offensive, threatening, or accusatory language;
- Personal attacks on staff or governors;
- Demanding responses within unrealistic timescales;
- Expecting staff to respond outside working hours;
- Excessive copying of emails to multiple parties;
- Recording meetings without consent;
- Publishing misleading or defamatory statements.

## **6. Reasonable Adjustments**

The school recognises that some behaviour may be linked to disability, mental health needs, communication difficulties, or other vulnerabilities.

Where appropriate, the school will consider:

- Alternative communication methods;
- Additional support during meetings;
- Adjusted timescales where reasonable;
- The involvement of an advocate or support person.

Any adjustments will be balanced alongside the school's duty to protect staff wellbeing and maintain safe working practices.



## 7. Managing Persistent or Unreasonable Behaviour

Before implementing restrictions, the school will usually:

- Attempt to resolve concerns informally;
- Clarify the issues being raised;
- Explain expectations regarding communication;
- Offer meetings where appropriate;
- Provide written responses outlining the school's position.

Where behaviour continues, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors may consider proportionate measures.

## 8. Possible Actions

The school may implement one or more of the following measures:

- Requiring communication through one named point of contact;
- Restricting communication to written correspondence only;
- Limiting telephone contact;
- Consolidating responses into a single reply;
- Responding only where new issues are raised;
- Requiring meetings to be pre-arranged;
- Limiting the number of attendees;
- Ending meetings where behaviour becomes abusive or aggressive;
- Restricting access to school premises where behaviour presents a risk to staff wellbeing or safety.



In serious cases, the school may:

- Seek advice from the Local Authority;
- Seek legal advice;
- Report threatening or abusive behaviour to the police;
- Issue formal warnings regarding conduct.

## **9. Decision-Making Process**

Any decision to implement restrictions will:

- Be proportionate and evidence-based;
- Consider the circumstances of the case;
- Be authorised by the Headteacher or Chair of Governors;
- Be recorded appropriately.

The complainant will normally receive written notification which will include:

- The reason for the decision;
- The actions being taken;
- The duration of the restrictions;
- How the decision may be reviewed.

## **10. Review of Restrictions**

Restrictions will be reviewed periodically, normally after:

- 3 months; or
- another reasonable timeframe determined by the school.



Restrictions may be lifted if communication improves and concerns can be managed appropriately.

## **11. Recording and Confidentiality**

The school will maintain accurate records of:

- Correspondence;
- Meetings;
- Telephone calls;
- Actions taken under this policy.

Information will be handled in accordance with:

- UK GDPR;
- Data Protection Act 2018;
- School confidentiality procedures.

## **12. Staff Support and Wellbeing**

The Governing Body recognises its duty to protect staff from harassment, intimidation, and unreasonable behaviour.

Staff should:

- Refer concerning communication to senior leaders promptly;
- Avoid engaging in lengthy or confrontational exchanges;
- Maintain professional records of communication;
- Seek support where communication becomes distressing.

The school may:



- Limit direct contact with individual staff members;
- Support staff wellbeing through appropriate supervision and leadership support;
- Intervene where staff wellbeing is being adversely affected.

### **13. Monitoring and Review**

The Governing Body will review this policy regularly to ensure it remains:

- Lawful;
- Fair;
- Proportionate;
- Aligned with current guidance and best practice.

### **Appendix A – Communication Expectations**

Wood Ley Community Primary School values positive home-school relationships and asks all members of the school community to communicate respectfully.

We ask parents and carers to:

- Communicate courteously with staff;
- Allow reasonable time for responses;
- Raise concerns through appropriate channels;
- Avoid copying large groups of staff into correspondence unnecessarily;
- Respect staff working hours and wellbeing.

The school will not tolerate:

- Threatening behaviour;



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- Harassment;
- Abusive or offensive language;
- Persistent or excessive communication;
- Intimidation of staff or governors.