



Strood Academy

Engagement of parents, carers and visitors to the Academy Policy

2023-2024

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Engagement of parents, carers and visitors to the Academy

The Governing Body of Strood Academy actively encourages close links with parents and the community. It believes that students benefit when the relationship between home and Academy is a positive one.

The vast majority of parents, carers and others visiting our Academy are keen to work with us and are supportive of the Academy. From time to time it is necessary for parents and the Academy to deal with problems relating to particular students. It is important that discussions between parents and staff are conducted in a calm and respectful manner. In the vast majority of such situations this is what happens, however on rare occasions, aggression and verbal and or physical abuse has been directed towards members of Academy staff or members of the wider Academy community.

The Governing Body expects and requires its members of staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to defuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues. However, all members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse, and the right, in an extreme case, of appropriate self defence.

Violence, threatening behaviour and abuse against Academy staff or other members of the Academy community, including other parents and students, **will not be tolerated**. All members of the Academy community have a right to expect that their Academy is a safe place in which to work and learn. There is no place for violence, threatening behaviour or abuse in our Academy.

We expect parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards members of Academy staff and the wider Academy community at all times. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and which will not be tolerated in relation to members of staff, and other members of the community are:

- shouting, either in person or over the telephone
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- offensive/insulting or defamatory comments about students, staff or Academy either in person, over the telephone or in written form
- constant emails and/or phone calls which amount to harassment and intimidation, despite the Academy's best efforts to address a situation

- Inappropriate electronic activity including publishing abusive or inappropriate content with regards to the Academy, teachers or students on social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter or in email communication
- physical intimidation, assault or damage to Academy property
- the use of rude or aggressive hand gestures, including shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- spitting
- breaching the Academy's security procedures

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour. Whilst the use of such behaviour is unacceptable in all circumstances, the Academy is particularly concerned to protect its students from being exposed to such behaviour (whether or not directed at them).

Unacceptable behaviour may result in the police being informed of the incident or parents/carers being banned from the Academy site.

Parental/Visitor Access to the Academy Premises

We understand that from time to time parents/carers may wish to speak or meet with a member of staff. To avoid parents and carers being turned away from the Academy we politely request that appointments are requested in advance when attending the school site.

Normally parents/carers (and those with parental responsibility), plus visitors, are granted what is known as "limited licence" to visit the grounds and buildings of an Academy. Where there are serious concerns regarding the conduct of a parent/visitor, and possible staff/student safety, the Principal can:

- initiate a meeting/dialogue with the individual
- write to the visitor, describing their misconduct, explaining its impact on the Academy 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

Procedure to be followed

If a parent/carer/visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the Academy community, the Principal and/or appropriate senior staff will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If necessary, the Academy's complaints procedures should be followed by the parent. Where all procedures have been exhausted, and aggression or intimidation continue, or where the circumstances otherwise require it, a parent/carer or visitor may be banned by the Principal from the Academy premises for a period of time, subject to review.

In imposing a ban the following steps will be taken:

1. The parent/carer will be informed, in writing, that s/he is banned from the premises, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, eg that police involvement or an injunction application may follow
2. Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the local police
3. As appropriate, arrangements for meetings at Academy regarding students, and arrangements for students being delivered to and collected from the Academy will be clarified.

Conclusion

In implementing this policy, the Academy will, as appropriate, seek advice from the Academy's solicitors, and/or the Department for Education, to ensure fairness and consistency.