



The
Appleton
School

Communications and Meetings Policy

Adopted by the Governing Body on	3 rd December 2024
Signature Chair of Governors	
Next Review Date	

September 2024

Introduction

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning because it:

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child/children
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers
- Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
- Setting clear standards for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers.

Dignity at Work

Parents, Pupils and Staff have a right to be treated with dignity and respect in the workplace. Conduct at all times should encapsulate the core values of Respect, Care, Integrity and Trust.

Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Regularly reviewing this policy

Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

To protect Work-Life balance, Staff will not respond to communications outside of school hours 17.00hrs to 08.00hrs or their working hours (if they work part-time), or during weekends or school holidays.

Section A Home- school communication and contacting the school

Please note that in the event of any local and national crisis, or school closure, communications with the school will be subject to amendment. During the pandemic, the school will observe Public Health guidance. Online and virtual platforms will be utilized and person-to-person presence may be limited according to the national guidance. Microsoft Teams or similar software will be used to ensure accessibility.

Telephone

Please use the main reception number to leave a message for a teacher to contact you:

- Reception staff will relay messages to teachers as soon as possible.
- If a call is urgent, please inform the receptionist who will attempt to find a senior member of staff to speak to you.

- We will try to respond to you within two working days, if not the same day.
- **Please note lessons will never be interrupted for teachers to take calls.**

Email

Please also note that we do not expect staff to be constantly available via email, or to have extensive contact with parents via this medium. We operate an email curfew to protect staff work – life balance, and do not expect staff to respond either frequently or in detail to an email from a parent. Staff may email you a response or respond by calling you to discuss your queries or concerns, or to arrange a time to meet with you. Staff have been asked to advise their line manager if they receive frequent or lengthy email communications from a parent, who will reinforce our policy. We thank you in advance for your support and cooperation in this respect.

Please use staff email addresses if known, or use the general enquiries function via the school's website info@theappletonschool.org, if you need to contact staff directly:

- Teachers are not in a position to check emails consistently throughout the day and the school does not expect work email to be checked during a teacher's personal time.
- We aim to respond to you as soon as possible and within three working days. Please note that part-time staff may take longer to reply.

Meetings

The day-to-day care, welfare and safety of your child is managed by the person who is placed closest to them.

- In the first instance, please approach the following members of staff who are responsible for your child in the following order:
 - 1) Form Tutor or Classroom Teacher (if query is relevant to a specific subject)
 - 2) Head of Year, **Assistant Head of Year or** Subject Leader (if query is relevant to a specific subject)
 - 3) Assistant Headteacher
 - 4) Deputy Headteacher
 - 5) Headteacher
- Meetings should always be pre-arranged with members of staff.
- If you urgently need to see someone, for instance if there is a serious family emergency or a child protection issue, please phone ahead and the reception staff will do their best to find a senior member of staff to see you.
- For non-urgent meetings we will aim to meet with you within five working days. The school will determine the level of urgency at its discretion, to enable it to manage multiple demands.

Meeting conduct expectations

We expect meetings to be conducted in cordial terms, even if you are unhappy with the school. We will listen to your concerns and try to resolve them. You will be expected to use a cordial and low tone, and not raise your voice towards the staff. You are **not permitted** to record the meeting, and if you do so covertly the Governing Body will not allow you to use any such recordings as evidence in a complaint. If the staff cannot immediately resolve your concern they will give you a timeframe for when they will feed back to you. A set of brief notes will be kept of the meeting. A copy of these minutes can be sent to parents on request.

Ground rules that support a conducive and productive environment which are based on:

- Letting everyone participate
- Listening with an open mind
- Thinking before speaking
- Attacking the problem and not the person

Contacting You

Our preferred method of contacting you is via **the school's communication system**/email/ text message, for generic events (trips, school closures, special reminders, detention notification). If your child is not present for morning registration, and you have not advised us of the reason for absence, a text message will be sent to you. Staff may contact you by phone or email, in order to discuss progress and behaviour or arrange a meeting.

No Response

If you have not received a response from the school within three working days please contact the school by emailing info@theappletonschool.org and we will chase up your enquiry. Communication with parents and carers is important to us, and we will continue to monitor this policy and our approach to improve the process further.

School Website & Social Media

School Website

The Appleton School observes the DfE guidance as detailed in 'What academies, free schools and colleges must publish online' (February 2021).

We use our School website, www.theappletonschool.org to inform parents of school dates, calendar events, policies and procedures and subject information and generic educational information. All parents who are signed up to **the school's communication system** will receive the weekly The Appleton School Parental Bulletin.

Social Media

Expectations:

- The expectations regarding safe and responsible use of social media applies to all members of The Appleton School.
- The term *social media* may include (but is not limited to): social networking sites, blogs, wikis, forums, bulletin boards, online gaming, apps, video/photo sharing sites, chatrooms and instant messenger.
- All members of The Appleton School are expected to engage in social media in a positive, safe and responsible manner:
 - **The use of social media during school hours for personal use is not permitted.**
 - All members of The Appleton School are expected to engage in social media in a positive, safe and responsible manner.
 - All members of The Appleton School are advised not to publish specific and detailed private thoughts, concerns, pictures or messages on any social media services, especially content that may be considered threatening, hurtful or defamatory to others.
 - We will control learner and staff access to social media whilst using school provided devices and systems on site.
 - Inappropriate or excessive use of social media during school hours or whilst using school devices may result in disciplinary or legal action and/or removal of internet facilities.
 - Concerns regarding the online conduct of any member of The Appleton School community on social media should be reported to the DSL (or deputy) and will be managed in accordance with our anti-bullying, allegations against staff, behaviour and child protection policies.

Staff Personal Use of Social Media

- The safe and responsible use of social networking, social media and personal publishing sites will be discussed with all members of staff as part of staff induction and will be revisited and communicated via regular staff training opportunities.
- Safe and professional behaviour will be outlined for all members of staff (including volunteers) as part of our code of conduct/behaviour policy as part of acceptable use policy.

Reputation

- All members of staff are advised that their online conduct on social media can have an impact on their role and reputation within the school.
- Civil, legal or disciplinary action may be taken if staff are found to bring the profession or institution into disrepute, or if something is felt to have undermined confidence in their professional abilities.
- All members of staff are advised to safeguard themselves and their privacy when using social media sites. Advice will be provided to staff via staff training and by sharing appropriate guidance and resources on a regular basis. This will include (but is not limited to):
 - Setting the privacy levels of their personal sites.
 - Being aware of location sharing services.
 - Opting out of public listings on social networking sites.
 - Logging out of accounts after use.
 - Keeping passwords safe and confidential.
 - Ensuring staff do not represent their personal views as that of the school.
- Members of staff are encouraged not to identify themselves as employees of The Appleton School on their personal social networking accounts; this is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the school, and to safeguard the privacy of staff members.
- All members of staff are encouraged to carefully consider the information, including text and images, they share and post online and to ensure that their social media use is compatible with their professional role and is in accordance our policies and the wider professional and legal framework.
- Information and content that staff members have access to as part of their employment, including photos and personal information about learners and their family members or colleagues will not be shared or discussed on social media sites.
- Members of staff will notify the Leadership Team immediately if they consider that any content shared on social media sites conflicts with their role.

Communicating with learners and parents and carers

- All members of staff are advised not to communicate with or add as 'friends' any current or past learners or their family members via any personal social media sites, applications or profiles.
- Any pre-existing relationships or exceptions that may compromise this, will be discussed with DSL (or deputies) and/or the Headteacher.
- If ongoing contact with learners is required once they have left the school, members of staff will be expected to use existing alumni networks or use official school provided communication tools.
- Staff will not use personal social media accounts to contact learners or parents, nor should any contact be accepted, except in circumstance whereby prior approval has been given by the Headteacher.
- Any communication from learners and parents received on personal social media accounts will be reported to the DSL (or deputies).

Students Personal Use of Social Media

- Safe and appropriate use of social media will be taught to learners as part of an embedded and progressive education approach, via age appropriate sites and resources.
- Any concerns regarding students' use of social media will be dealt with in accordance with existing policies, including anti-bullying and behaviour.
- Concerns will be shared with parents/carers as appropriate, particularly when concerning underage use of social media sites, games or tools.
- Students will be advised:
 - To consider the benefits and risks of sharing personal details on social media sites which could identify them and/or their location.
 - To only approve and invite known friends on social media sites and to deny access to others, by making profiles private.
 - Not to meet any online friends without a parent/carer or other responsible adult's permission and only when a trusted adult is present.
 - To use safe passwords.
 - To use social media sites which are appropriate for their age and abilities.
 - How to block and report unwanted communications.
 - How to report concerns both within the school and externally.

Communications between staff and students: Please refer to the following policy:

Staff Code of Conduct

Staff email

- The use of personal email addresses by staff for any official school business is not permitted.
- All members of staff are provided with an email address to use for all official communication.
- Members of staff are encouraged to have an appropriate work life balance when responding to email, especially if communication is taking place between staff, students and parents.

Reminders for staff

- All email language and content should follow professional etiquette standards at all times.
- Staff must follow all safeguarding and professional standards at all times in the actions and content within the emails.
- Staff can use the communication tools in any school sanctioned communication process, but must not engage in phone calls, social media platforms, etc directly with students.

If staff are concerned about any aspect of correspondence with any student, the Safeguarding Team should be contacted immediately.

If a student fails to follow the agreed protocols, staff **MUST** stop all email correspondence and inform the Safeguarding Team that you have done so.

Further information regarding these protocols can be directed to: safeguarding@theappletonschool.org

Student email

- Students will use provided email accounts for educational purposes.
- Students will discuss the expectations and the 'Responsible internet and network usage' policy in their planner and will receive education regarding safe and appropriate email etiquette before access is permitted.

Staff 'Live Lesson' Video Conferencing with Students.

The Appleton School will use Microsoft Teams for 'live lesson' video conferencing, when remote learning provision is required. Staff should refer to the Remote Learning Policy, January 2021, for further information and advice on setting up and delivering lessons via Teams.

Safeguarding protocols for video conferencing

Teachers should adhere to all the staff protocols regarding the provision of live remote learning lessons, via either video or audio, for pupils.

Teachers are welcome to produce pre-recorded video or narrated Power Point/ audio clips for pupils, but should take note of the following guidelines:

Teachers should be dressed in professional attire, as **outlined in the staff dress code within the code of conduct policy.**

Ensure lessons are filmed on a plain background, which does not contain personal items, or identify the details or location of a teacher's property.

All content within videos should adhere to the Teachers' Standards, with particular consideration of Part Two: Personal and Professional Conduct.

Teachers should only communicate with pupils through Educational platforms such as TEAMS, google classrooms or school e-mail accounts. **Teachers should not open any other lines of communication with pupils.**

If, through communication or the school e-mail, teachers have any safeguarding concerns for a pupil, they should notify a designated safeguarding lead via CPOMS, as outlined in the school's Safeguarding Policy.

Live lessons

During a partial or whole school closure, it is beneficial to pupils' education to provide live lessons on Microsoft TEAMS to pupils. Staff are expected to provide live lessons if 50% or more of their class are absent. If the amount of students absent is less than this threshold, staff are still welcome to schedule a live lesson if they wish but staff are expected to provide work through an assignment on TEAMS.

Before any live video-based lessons are delivered to pupils, teachers should contact their class to notify them of the live lesson, via an invite to a meeting through their class TEAM in advance of the lesson. These invites should all be sent students by 8.30am before the school day begins.

Staff should schedule lessons through their class TEAMS only and **check the meeting options to ensure that only they have presenting rights and that attendees are only admitted through the lobby function.** All attendees should also be **muted to begin with** as staff have the facility to unmute students to answers questions as required.

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher should begin to record the lesson. At the end of the lesson, the recording will be saved to the teacher's account on Microsoft Stream.

During the lesson, pupils and staff should have their video capability disabled.

During the lesson, parents/carers have responsibility to ensure no language is used within their own homes, which it would be inappropriate for other pupils to hear.

At the end of the lesson, the recording of the live lesson will automatically upload to the Microsoft Teams' class stream and this then can be shared with the system administrator and the Safeguarding team as required.

All live lesson **meetings must be cancelled** at the end of every session.

If teachers have any safeguarding concerns for a pupil, they should immediately notify a designated safeguarding lead via CPOMS, as outlined in the school's Safeguarding Policy.

If a teacher is unable to set remote learning due to illness or any other legitimate reason, they should contact the school cover supervisor and the Head of Department/ Area Adviser as they normally would in line with the Sickness Management Policy.

If a teacher does not have the required access at home to set remote learning online, they should let their Head of Department/Area know straight away, regardless of whether the school is closed or open as usual. This will avoid any future issues.

- Remember GDPR at all times. Do not share information or data about students, their marks, targets, achievement etc. during a video conference session. Do not reference anything that might be personal data such as health issues.
- Data Controllers need to reassure themselves that any teaching/learning software and/or platforms are suitable and raise no privacy issues; or use cases against the providers terms and conditions (for example, no business use of consumer products)

Use of Personal Devices and Mobile Phones

The Appleton School recognises that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life for pupils, staff and parents/carers, but technologies need to be used safely and appropriately within the school.

Expectations

All use of personal devices (including but not limited to; tablets, games consoles and 'smart' watches) and mobile phones will take place in accordance with the law and other appropriate policies, such as anti-bullying, behaviour and child protection.

- Electronic devices of any kind that are brought onto site are the responsibility of the user.
- All members of The Appleton School community are advised to take steps to protect their mobile phones or devices from loss, theft or damage; we accept no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of such items on our premises.
- All members of The Appleton School community are advised to use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised calls or actions cannot be made on their phones or devices; passwords and pin numbers should be kept confidential and mobile phones and personal devices should not be shared.
- **Mobile phones and personal devices are not permitted to be used at any time during the school day, anywhere on the school site.**
- The sending of abusive or inappropriate messages or content via mobile phones or personal devices is forbidden by any member of the community; any breaches will be dealt with as part of our behaviour policy.
- All members of The Appleton School are advised to ensure that their mobile phones and personal devices do not contain any content, which may be offensive, derogatory or would otherwise contravene our behaviour or child protection policies.

Staff Use of Personal Devices and Mobile Phones

Members of staff will ensure that use of personal phones and devices takes place in accordance with the law, as well as, relevant policy and procedures, such as: confidentiality, child protection, data security and acceptable use.

- Staff will be advised to:
 - Keep mobile phones and personal devices in a safe and secure place during lesson time.
 - Keep mobile phones and personal devices switched off or switched to 'silent' mode during lesson times.
 - Ensure that Bluetooth or other forms of communication (such as 'airdrop') are disabled during the school day.
 - Not use personal devices during teaching periods, unless written permission has been given by the Headteacher, such as in emergency circumstances.
 - Ensure that any content brought onto site via mobile phones and personal devices are compatible with their professional role and expectations.
 - Members of staff are not permitted to use their own personal phones or devices for contacting pupils or parents and carers.
 - Any pre-existing relationships, which could undermine this, will be discussed with the DSL (or deputies) and/or Headteacher.
- Staff will not use personal devices:
 - To take photos or videos of learners and will only use work-provided equipment for this purpose.
 - Directly with learners and will only use work-provided equipment during lessons or educational activities.
- **If a member of staff breaches our policy, action will be taken in line with our code of conduct.**
- **If a member of staff is thought to have illegal content saved or stored on a mobile phone or personal device or have committed a criminal offence, the police will be contacted.**

Students Use of Personal Devices and Mobile Phones

Students will be educated regarding the safe and appropriate use of personal devices and mobile phones and will be made aware of boundaries and consequences.

- **The Appleton School expects learners' personal devices and mobile phones to be switched off and out of site during lessons, lesson changeovers, social times and at any time during the school day on the school site. All students are clear we operate on a 'Not seen, not heard, not taken away' policy.**
- *Sixth Form students are permitted to use their mobile phones in the Sixth Form block only during social time and their study periods which takes place throughout the school day. They may also be used in lessons but **only** at the teacher's discretion. Sixth Form students are expected to be role models and therefore should not have their phones out at any point in the main school building.*
- **If a student needs to contact his/her parents or carers they will be allowed to use a school phone through the school office or medical room only.**

- Parents are advised to contact their child via the school office; exceptions may be permitted on a case-by-case basis, as approved by the Headteacher.
- Mobile phones or personal devices will not be used by learners during lessons or formal educational time unless as part of an approved and directed curriculum-based activity with consent from a member of staff.
- The use of personal mobile phones or devices for a specific education purpose does not mean that blanket use is permitted.
- If members of staff have an educational reason to allow learners to use their personal devices as part of an educational activity, it will only take place when approved by the Senior Leadership Team.
- Mobile phones and personal devices must not be taken into examinations.
- Students found in possession of a mobile phone or personal device during an exam will be reported to the appropriate examining body. This may result in the withdrawal from either that examination or all examinations.
- If a student breaches the policy, the phone or device will be confiscated and will be held in a secure place.
- Staff may confiscate a student's mobile phone or device if they believe it is being used to contravene our behaviour or bullying policy or could contain youth produced sexual imagery (sexting).
- Searches of mobile phone or personal devices will only be carried out in accordance with our policy. (www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-andconfiscation)
- Students' mobile phones or devices may be searched by a member of the leadership team, with the consent of the student or a parent/ carer. Content may be deleted or requested to be deleted, if it contravenes our policies. (www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation).
- Mobile phones and devices that have been confiscated will be released to parents or carers.
- If there is suspicion that material on a learner's personal device or mobile phone may be illegal or may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence, the device will be handed over to the police for further investigation.

Visitors' Use of Personal Devices and Mobile Phones

- Parents/carers and visitors (including volunteers and contractors) must use their mobile phones and personal devices in accordance with our acceptable use policy and other associated policies, such as: anti-bullying, behaviour, child protection and image use.
- We will ensure appropriate signage and information is displayed and provided to inform parents, carers and visitors of expectations of use.
- Members of staff are expected to challenge visitors if they have concerns and will always inform the DSL (or deputies) or Headteacher of any breaches our policy.

Officially provided mobile phones and devices

- Senior members of staff will be issued with a work phone number and email address, where contact with students or parents/ carers is required.
- School mobile phones and devices will be suitably protected via a passcode/password/pin and must only be accessed or used by members of staff.
- School mobile phones and devices will always be used in accordance with the acceptable use policy and associated policies, such as: anti-bullying, behaviour, child protection and image use.

Section B Communication and Dealing with Abusive Parents

Statement of principles

This policy has been written taking into account the DfE Guidance 'Advice on school security: Access to, and barring individuals from school premises' December 2012, DfE Guidance 'Controlling Access to school premises' November 2018 as well as NAHT guidance on dealing with abusive parents.

At The Appleton School, we value the positive relationships forged with parents and visitors to the school. We encourage close links with parents and the community and believe that students benefit when the relationship

between home and school is a positive one. We also strive to make our school a place where as adults we model for students the behaviour we teach and expect. In general, we place a high importance on good manners, positive communication and mutual respect.

Almost all parents, carers and visitors to The Appleton School are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. However, on very rare occasions the behaviour of a small number of parents falls short of what we expect. This sometimes manifests itself in aggression or abuse towards members of the school community. This can be in written communication (including social media), on the telephone or in face-to-face incidents.

In these situations, we expect members of staff to behave professionally, attempting to diffuse the situation where possible and seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues. Staff who face these situations have licence to end any conversation (face to face or on the telephone). They should then refer the incident to a senior manager who will take appropriate action or invoke the provisions of this policy.

The overriding principle is, however, that all members of the school community have the right to work or be in school without fear of aggression or abuse from parents. The board of governors has a requirement to protect staff and students from such aggression.

The progress and well-being of the parent's child(ren) will be fully considered. Actions taken against the parent will be reasonable and proportionate. The parent will have the opportunity to put their views forward at every stage. In the case of the imposition of conditions or a ban from school, robust review processes, involving the Chair of Governors and then the Governing Body are in place to ensure fairness.

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated:

We consider that aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language from a parent presents a risk to staff or students. Unacceptable behaviour is such that makes a member of staff or student feel threatened. This can be through face-to-face contact, on the telephone or in written communication (including social media). The following is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour:

- Any kind of insult as an attempt to demean, embarrass or undermine
- Raising of voice (so as to be intimidating)
- Shouting at members of the school staff, either in person or over the telephone
- Physically intimidating a member of staff, e.g. standing very close to the member of staff
- The use of aggressive hand gestures
- Any kind of threat or threatening behaviour
- Shaking or holding a fist or finger towards another person
- Swearing/use of foul or abusive language
- Pushing
- Hitting, e.g. slapping, punching and kicking
- Any kind of physical abuse
- Spitting
- Discriminatory comments
- Allegations which turn out to be vexatious or malicious
- Breaching the school's security procedures
- Aggressive and threatening phone calls or emails.
- Aggressive or threatening behaviour towards staff or their families via social media

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

Please note that unacceptable behaviour may result in the Local Authority and the police being informed of the incident.

Procedure to be followed

If a parent/carer behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the Headteacher or appropriate senior member of staff will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If necessary, the school's complaints procedures should be followed. Where all procedures have been exhausted, and aggression

or intimidation continue, or where there is an extreme act of violence, a parent or carer may be banned by the Headteacher from the school premises for a period of time, subject to review.

In imposing a ban, the following steps will be taken:

1. The parent/carers will be informed, in writing, that she/he is banned from the premises, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, e.g. 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 authority and the police will be included.
3. The Chair of Governors will be informed of the ban
4. Where appropriate, arrangements for students being delivered to, and collected from the school gate will be clarified.

The length of a ban

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.

Even where a parent/carers 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).

Options for the Headteacher

After evaluating all available information, and any other relevant factors, there are several actions the Headteacher may wish to take. These can include:

Inviting the parent to a meeting to discuss events

This could be helpful where a planned and structured meeting has either not been held before or has previously been productive. Skilled facilitators may need to be used. A full restorative meeting may be considered, but if it is not safe to bring all the parties together at a meeting, a restorative process can still take place through the exchange of information. The safety and well-being of those attending such a meeting must be carefully considered. It is strongly recommended that members of school staff should be accompanied by at least one other colleague at any such meeting. Consideration should be given to the seating arrangements, and care taken to ensure exits cannot be blocked by a parent who could potentially become aggressive. The main points of discussion and any agreed actions should be noted, and a follow-up letter sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions. Parents will be made aware that if they covertly record meetings, then seek to use the information obtained to support their case, that such information obtained without permission will not be permissible.

Clarifying to the parent what is considered acceptable behaviour by the school

In some instances, it may be appropriate simply to ensure the parent is clear about behaviour standards expected by the school. This could be explained at a meeting, or by letter, however any verbal explanation should be followed by a written confirmation of the discussion and the standards of behaviour outlined.

Forming strategies to manage future situations of potential conflict

It is sometimes possible to identify situations of potential conflict and to plan for these in a way that minimises potential risks. For example, where a parent persistently engages in arguments with staff in corridors at the beginning or end of the school day, the parent could be informed that any discussions with school staff must be held by prior appointment. Alternatively, the parent may be asked not to approach the class teacher, but should instead arrange to meet the headteacher (or other member of the senior leadership team), who will deal with their concerns. In more serious cases a further option may be to advise the parent that in future their concerns should be dealt with by written communication. Any such arrangements should be confirmed in writing to the parent.

Withdrawing permission for the parent to enter the school site and/or buildings

In more serious cases of actual or threatened aggression/violence, or persistent abuse/intimidation, the Headteacher may need to consider whether it is safe for the parent to continue to come onto the school site or enter the buildings. **In such circumstances, it is strongly recommended that the Headteacher first consult with the CEO.**

Cases of actual assault should be also reported to the local authority by completing a health and safety event report.

Calling for police assistance

In an emergency, police assistance should be sought. In cases where a ban is in place but is ignored and the person comes onto the school site, the police should be notified immediately. (Staff will need to be aware of the ban and have agreed procedures in place should the person come onto the school site).

In situations where there is no immediate threat to staff, pupils, other members of the school community or the school's property, the Headteacher may still wish to make their local community police officer (e.g. neighbourhood support team, youth intervention officer) aware of the situation.

The police could give consideration to warning the offender of formal action, which may include legal proceedings.

Legal proceedings

Where individuals persist in coming onto the school site even when permission to do so has been withdrawn, it is possible for legal proceedings to be pursued. The options include:

Prosecution under section 547 of the Education Act 1996

This requires substantial evidence to be gathered and presented by the police. Clearly it is not a quick process, and whilst in most cases the threat may prove to be a sufficient deterrent, prosecution can only be seen in the last resort as a punitive measure.

Appropriate behaviour contracts

These are voluntary agreements made between people involved in anti-social behaviour, and the agency/school concerned. They are flexible in terms of content and format, and can be an effective means of encouraging young adults, children and parents to take responsibility for unacceptable behaviour. The person named does not always agree with the contract, but it can be used as evidence at a later stage for an application for an anti-social behaviour order. Conditions can be put on the contract, e.g. not to enter school grounds.

Anti-social behaviour orders (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

These are most likely to be used where the offender (aged over 10) has acted in a manner which causes harassment, alarm or distress, and is needed to protect others in the same area from similar behaviour. Anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) may be sought by the local authority or the chief officer of police. ASBOs are designed to deal with persistent bad behaviour, and the police will need to show that other options have been tried, or are unsuitable.

Restraining orders (Protection from Harassment Act 1997)

Section 2 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 provides for criminal or civil prosecution, for cases where someone causes alarm or distress to another person on more than two occasions. Section four provides for criminal or civil prosecution where people have been put in fear of violence on at least two occasions. In each case the sanctions include both criminal penalties (fines, imprisonment or community sentences) and a restraining order. These orders are generally quicker and easier to obtain, but are part of a criminal conviction.

Prosecution for criminal damage/assault

Prosecutions for causing deliberate damage or injury may occasionally be the most appropriate course of action. If the police are called, the option to make criminal allegations is readily available, and they may arrest suspected offenders there and then. Official allegations should only be made if there is no intention of later withdrawing the complaint. Criminal proceedings can be initiated at a later date. All possible steps should be taken to prevent the loss of evidence. In particular witnesses should be asked to make a record of exactly what they saw and heard at the earliest opportunity.

Legal advice is available under the legal buy back scheme for schools that are members, or can be arranged at an hourly fee for schools that are not.

Individual cases should always be discussed with the The Appleton Schools Officer, who will work with the Headteacher and Legal Services to decide the most appropriate response.

Whilst the emphasis will usually be on ensuring safety and security of persons and property, and therefore the injunction route is likely to be the most effective deterrent legal action, it does not necessarily guarantee against the behaviour of the more persistent offender.

Record keeping

There will be clear and detailed records of all events which must be kept up to date. Any witness statements (where appropriate) and notes of any subsequent meetings held to discuss the events should also be retained. Notes should be signed and dated.

Any physical evidence should be bagged and labelled, and witnesses should be asked to make a record of exactly what they saw and heard at the earliest opportunity.

It is also advisable to ensure that in every case, even where a formal letter is not required, parents receive a written confirmation of the events and the Headteacher's response.

If the police are asked to deal with an incident as a criminal investigation, there are a number of actions that may thwart this process. Witness details should not be made known to suspected offenders or their families. Groups of witnesses or suspects should not be left together, or allowed to discuss what happened, before the police interview them. If in doubt always seek the advice of the police officer first.

Support for employees

If a member of staff is unfortunate enough to be one of the very small, minority subject to serious physical and/or verbal abuse there are a variety of sources of potential support available to them.

In such circumstances the immediate and ongoing support of colleagues will be invaluable.

Dealing with abusive telephone calls

Sometimes staff may have to deal with challenging, abusive, aggressive or threatening telephone calls. It is unacceptable for any member of staff to be subjected to such abuse but staff may not know how to handle such a telephone call. This guidance has been produced to assist staff if they are faced with such a situation.

To reduce the likelihood of callers becoming abusive staff should conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner and make every attempt to meet the needs of the caller. Staff should also have the confidence that it is acceptable to end an abusive telephone call.

Always:

- Remain calm and polite
- Stay in control of the situation
- Actively listen – repeat information back to the caller to test understanding of the issue and gain their agreement
- Inform the caller they are trying to help them
- Be positive and say what you can do
- Be clear and avoid using jargon
- If necessary, apologise for an error and take action to put it right
- If you have to go and get some information, let the caller know why you are putting them on hold and do not leave them on hold for a long time. Update them as necessary
- Make notes of the conversation
- Follow the procedure below if appropriate
- Refer to the caller to the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher etc.

Never:

- Respond in the same manner as an abusive caller
- Take it personally
- Allow yourself to be bullied
- Slam the phone down

Script for abusive telephone calls

When the caller starts to raise their voice/be abusive:

Mr/Mrs/Ms... please don't raise your voice/swear at me, I am not raising my voice/being rude to you. If you continue to raise your voice/be rude to me then I will be forced to terminate the call.

When the caller continues to raise their voice/be abusive:

Mr/Mrs/Ms..... I understand you are upset/frustrated however I am not prepared to continue to be shouted/sworn at so you can either call back when you have calmed down or if you prefer you can put your views in writing.

If, despite the two warnings above, the caller continues to raise their voice/be abusive: Mr/Mrs/Ms.... I advised you earlier during this call about raising your voice/swearing and you have continued to do this, so I am afraid I am going to have to terminate this call. **Hang up.**

Further actions:

Make a written note of the telephone call or use the incident report form and report the incident to the SLT link.

Abuse/bullying using cyber technology

Staff in schools may become targets of cyber abuse/bullying and, like other forms of bullying, it can have a significant impact on their health, well-being and self-confidence. Protecting staff from abuse is best done within a prevention framework, including whole school policies and appropriate practices.

Cyber abuse/bullying may consist of threats, harassment, embarrassment, humiliation, defamation or impersonation. It may take the form of general insults, or prejudice-based abuse, e.g. homophobic, sexist, racist or other forms of discrimination. It may involve email, virtual learning environments, chat rooms, websites, social networking sites, mobile and fixed-point phones, digital cameras, games and virtual world sites.

Abuse using cyber technology can occur at any time and incidents can intrude into the victim's private life. The audience for such messages can be very large and can be reached rapidly. The content of electronically forwarded messages is hard to control and the worry of content resurfacing can make it difficult for the victim to move on.

The Appleton School operates a zero-tolerance policy towards direct or indirect harassment or assault against any member of staff, volunteers and governors. This includes the use of social media and other forms of electronic communications to facilitate the act.

Cyberbullying and the law

While there is not a specific criminal offence called cyberbullying, activities can be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including:

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997

The Malicious Communications Act 1988

Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003

Public Order Act 1986

The Defamation Acts 1952 and 1996

It is the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees. Incidents that are related to employment, even those taking place outside the hours or place of work may fall under the responsibility of the employer.

Effectively tackling abuse using cyber technology

School behaviour policies and procedures should explicitly refer to and outline how the school will deal with cyber abuse/ bullying of both staff and pupils. They should include:

rules on the use of equipment, software and network access provided by the school, the use of staff and pupil owned equipment and internet access routes, where they are used on school premises and within school hours, e.g. mobile phones, digital cameras and laptops acceptable behaviour including behaviour outside of school e.g. use of social networking services and other sites, with regard to harming others and bringing the school into disrepute.

Responding to incidents

Staff should never retaliate i.e. personally engage with cyberbullying incidents.

Keep any records of abuse – texts, emails, voice mails, or instant messages. Take screen prints of messages or web pages. Record the time, date and address of the site.

Inform the appropriate person e.g. Headteacher, or head of year at the earliest opportunity.

Where the perpetrator is known to be a current pupil or co-worker, this should be dealt with through the school's own behaviour management / disciplinary procedures.

Monitoring and confiscation must be appropriate and proportionate - parents, employees and learners should be made aware in advance of any monitoring (for example, of email or internet use) or the circumstances under which confiscation might take place.

A designated member of the leadership team should contact the police where it appears that a law has been broken – for example, where death threats, assault, or racially motivated criminal offences are involved. Where a potential criminal offence has been identified, the school should ensure that any internal investigation does not interfere with police inquiries. School staff are of course able to report incidents directly to the police.

If a potential criminal offence has been committed and the school is not able to identify the perpetrator, the police may issue a Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) request to a service provider, enabling them to disclose the data about a message or the person sending it.

Getting offensive content taken down

Where online content is upsetting / inappropriate and the person(s) responsible for posting is known, the quickest way to get material taken down is likely to be to ensure that the person who posted it understands why the material is unacceptable and to request that they remove it.

If the person responsible has not been identified, or will not take the material down, the school will need to contact the host (i.e. the social networking site) to make a request to get the content taken down. The material posted may breach the service provider's terms and conditions of use and can then be removed.

It is important to be clear about where the content is – for example by taking a screen capture of the material that includes the URL or web address. If you are requesting they take down material that is not illegal, be clear how it contravenes the site's terms and conditions.

In cases of actual/suspected illegal content, the school should contact the police.

Incident report form

Relevant incidents include trespass, nuisance or disturbance on school premises, verbal abuse, sexual or racial abuse, threats, aggression, physical violence and intentional damage to property.

Where possible, the form should be completed before any discussion between witnesses is possible, as this might lead to allegations of collusion.

This form should be completed as fully as possible please, using a continuation sheet, if necessary. For any incident involving or witnessed by a pupil or parent/carer/visitor, a member of staff should complete the form on their behalf.

The completed incident report form Appendix A should be passed to the Headteacher, for appropriate action and recording.

Conclusion

In implementing this policy, the school will, as appropriate, seek advice from the School's legal representatives as well as the Local Authority, to ensure fairness and consistency.

This Policy is based on the NAHT Model Policy and guidance and will be reviewed annually.

Appendix A Incident report form

Date of incident	
Time of incident	
Name of person reporting incident	
Date incident reported	
Member of staff recording incident	
Date incident recorded	
Name(s) of person(s) causing incident (where name(s) is/are unknown, provide other details of which may allow their identification)	
Status(es) (parents/carers/visitors/trespassers)	
Full description of incident (e.g. names of persons involved; location; nature of any injuries; attendance of emergency services)	
Witnesses to the incident:	

Appendix B Letter to be sent to violent and abusive visitors

Dear

At The Appleton School, all members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse. We expect parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards members of school staff. Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated:

- * Shouting at members of the school staff, either in person or over the telephone
- * Physically intimidating a member of staff, e.g. standing very close to her/him
- * The use of aggressive hand gestures
- * Threatening behaviour
- * Shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- * Swearing
- * Pushing
- * Hitting, e.g. slapping, punching and kicking
- * Spitting
- * Breaching the school's security procedures.

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

I am writing to advise you that 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, and other parents.)

I must inform you that the Governing Body will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to protect its staff and pupils. Therefore, I am writing to advise you that an incident log has been completed and will be kept on record should further episodes of this type be reported and further action be necessary.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Cc Chair of Governors

Appendix C Withdraw permission, pending review (sent by Chair of Governors)

Dear

I have received a report from the Headteacher of The Appleton School about your conduct onat
.....

(add summary of incident and its effect on staff and pupils) (optional reference to first letter from Headteacher)

I must inform you that the governors, in line with our policy, will not tolerate conduct of this nature on the school premises and will act to defend school staff and pupils. On the advice of the Headteacher, I am therefore instructing you that until I have reviewed this incident, you are not to enter the school premises. If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises. If you cause a nuisance or disturbance on the premises you may be prosecuted under section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of £500.

For the duration of this decision you may bring your child(ren) to school and collect them at the end of the school day, but you must not go beyond the school gate.

Special arrangements can be made for you to meet with the Headteacher, if necessary, but this may only be with the written permission of the governors.

The withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises takes effect immediately and will be in place for 15 school days in the first instance. 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 that I have received from the Headteacher. These comments may be to challenge or explain the facts of the incident, to express regret and give assurances about your future good conduct.

To enable me to take a decision on this matter, please send me any written comments you wish to make by **(date 10 school days from date of letter)**. If on receipt of your comments, I consider that my decision should be confirmed, you will be supplied with details of how to pursue a review of your case.

Yours Sincerely

Chair of Governors

cc: Headteacher

Appendix D Withdrawal of permission confirmed (sent by Chair of Governors)

Dear

On I wrote to inform you that on the advice of the Headteacher I had withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of The Appleton School. To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision should apply for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated, the contents of which I have carefully considered.

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Headteacher's report, I have determined that the decision to withdraw permission for you to come onto school premises should be confirmed. I am therefore instructing that, until further notice, you are not to come onto the premises of the school without the prior knowledge and approval of the Headteacher.

If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises of the school. If you cause a nuisance or disturbance on the premises, you may be prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

Even though we have taken this decision, the Headteacher and staff at The Appleton School remain committed to the education of your child(ren), who must continue to attend school as normal.

This decision will be reviewed again**(insert review date which should be within a reasonable period and no longer than six months)**. When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the withdrawal of permission to come onto the school premises, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from you; and any evidence of your co-operation with the school in other respects.

If you wish to pursue the matter further you have a right to complain to a panel of school governors who have not been involved previously and who will consider the circumstances of the decision to withdraw permission for you to come on to the school site. You can make your complaint by writing to the Clerk to the Governors, c/o The Appleton School.

(Where the incident has arisen in the context of a parental complaint against the school, the following may be inserted) Finally, I would advise you that I have asked the headteacher to ensure that your complaint is considered under the appropriate stage of the school's parental complaints procedure. The school will contact you about this in due course.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

cc: Headteacher

Appendix E Restore permission after review by Chair of Governors (sent by Chair of Governors)

Dear

On I wrote to inform you that on the advice of the Headteacher I had temporarily withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of The Appleton School. To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated, the contents of which I have carefully considered.

In the circumstances, and after consulting further with the Headteacher, I have decided that it is not necessary to confirm the decision and I am therefore restoring to you, your permission to come onto the school premises, with immediate effect.

(Optional) I must warn you, however, that if it should become necessary in the future I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the school premises once again.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

cc: Headteacher

Appendix F Continue ban after second review (sent by Chair of Governors)

Dear

I wrote to you on confirming that permission for you to come onto the premises of The Appleton School had been withdrawn until further notice. I also advised you I would take steps to review this decision by

I have now completed the review. However, after consultation with the Headteacher, I have determined that it is not yet appropriate for me to withdraw my decision. **(Add brief summary of reasons).**

I therefore advise that the instruction that you are not to come onto the premises of The Appleton School without prior knowledge and approval of the Headteacher remains in place until further notice. If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises and you may be prosecuted under section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

I shall undertake a further review of this decision by _____ **(insert review date, which should be within a reasonable period and no longer than six months).**

In the meantime, you can write to me with a statement of your views, which I will consider.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

cc: Headteacher



We welcome visitors to our school.

We will act to ensure it remains a safe place for pupils, staff and all other members of our community.

If you have concerns, we will always listen to them and seek to address them.

Please be aware, however, that abusive, threatening or violent behaviour will not be tolerated in this school.

Visitors behaving in this way are likely to be removed from premises.