



# **Culcheth Primary School**

## **Vexatious Parent Policy**

### **2025-2026**

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## **1. Introduction**

Culcheth Community Primary School is committed to fostering positive and productive relationships with parents and carers. We recognise that parents/carers may have concerns or complaints from time to time, and we will address these in a fair, consistent, and timely manner, as outlined in our Complaints Policy.

However, in a small minority of cases, the behaviour of a parent/carer may become challenging, unacceptable, and/or 'vexatious'. This policy sets out how the school will respond in such situations.

The policy aims to:

- Uphold the standards of courtesy and reasonableness that should characterise all communication between the school and parents/carers.
- Support the well-being of pupils, staff, and all other members of the school community.
- Ensure that the school's ability to provide a high-quality education to its pupils is not compromised.
- Deal fairly, honestly, and transparently with parents/carers whose behaviour is deemed to be unacceptable.

## **2. Definition of Vexatious Behaviour**

Vexatious behaviour is characterised by actions that are persistent, repetitive, and unreasonable, and that:

- Are obsessive, harassing, prolific, and/or repetitious.
- Place unreasonable demands on school staff time and resources, to the detriment of the school's efficient operation and the well-being of staff and pupils.
- Are aimed at causing disruption, annoyance, or distress.
- Involve pursuing complaints or grievances without merit or insisting on unrealistic outcomes.
- Involve introducing trivial or irrelevant information that the parent/carer expects to be taken into account and responded to.
- Involve making excessive demands for information or responses.
- Use aggressive, intimidating, or abusive language (verbal or written).

It is important to note that a parent/carer may have a genuine concern or complaint, but the manner in which they pursue it may become vexatious.

## **3. Examples of Vexatious Behaviour**

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of what may be considered vexatious behaviour:

- Persistent and repetitive phone calls, emails, or letters about the same issue, after the school has provided a full response.

- Refusing to accept that a complaint has been fully investigated and that the school's complaints procedure has been exhausted.
- Changing the basis of a complaint repeatedly.
- Submitting multiple complaints about different issues, both individually and combined, that could be viewed as an attempt to overwhelm the school.
- Insisting on seeing specific members of staff without reasonable cause.
- Making unreasonable demands regarding timescales, methods of communication, or the nature of the response.
- Using threatening, abusive, or offensive language or behaviour towards school staff, either in person, in writing, or electronically (including social media).
- Spreading malicious or unfounded allegations about the school or its staff.
- Recording meetings or conversations without the explicit consent of all parties involved.
- Persistent refusal to follow school policies and procedures.
- Unreasonably pursuing a complaint that is being, or has been, investigated by an external agency (e.g., the local authority, Ofsted).

#### **4. Procedure for Dealing with Vexatious Behaviour**

The following procedure will be followed when dealing with behaviour that is deemed to be potentially vexatious:

##### ***4.1 Initial Concerns***

Any concerns about a parent/carer's behaviour will be raised with the Headteacher (or designated senior member of staff) as soon as possible.

The Headteacher will review the situation, gather all relevant information, and determine whether the behaviour may be considered vexatious according to the criteria outlined in this policy.

##### ***4.2 Informal Resolution***

In many cases, it may be possible to resolve the situation informally. The Headteacher (or designated senior member of staff) will meet with the parent/carer to:

- Explain the concerns about their behaviour.
- Remind them of the school's expectations regarding communication and conduct.
- Seek to find a way forward that addresses the parent/carer's concerns while ensuring the well-being of pupils and staff.
- A clear written record of the meeting and any agreed outcomes will be kept.

##### ***4.3 Formal Warning***

If the informal approach does not resolve the situation, or if the behaviour is deemed to be serious, the Headteacher will send the parent/carer a formal written warning.

The warning letter will:

- Clearly identify the behaviour that is considered to be unacceptable and/or vexatious.
- Explain the impact of the behaviour on the school, staff, and/or pupils.

- State the actions the parent/carer is expected to take to modify their behaviour.
- Outline the consequences if the behaviour continues, which may include restricting communication with the school.
- Inform the parent/carer of their right to appeal the decision.

#### ***4.4 Implementation of Restrictions***

If the parent/carer's behaviour does not improve following the formal warning, the Headteacher, in consultation with the Chair of Governors, may implement restrictions on communication with the school.

The restrictions will be proportionate to the nature and severity of the behaviour and will be implemented for a specified period.

The parent/carer will be notified in writing of the restrictions, the reasons for them, the duration, and any review process.

Restrictions may include:

- Limiting contact to a specific mode of communication (e.g., written correspondence only).
- Requiring contact to be with a designated member of staff only.
- Requiring meetings to take place by appointment only, with a witness present.
- Refusing to respond to further communication on the specified matter (while continuing to provide information relating to the parent/carer's child).

In extreme cases, prohibiting the parent/carer from entering the school premises (except for essential purposes, such as dropping off or picking up their child), subject to any legal considerations.

#### ***4.5 Review of Restrictions***

The restrictions will be reviewed regularly by the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors, taking into account any changes in the parent/carer's behaviour.

- The parent/carer will be informed of the outcome of any review.
- Restrictions will be lifted as soon as it is deemed appropriate.

#### ***4.6 Record Keeping***

A detailed record of all incidents, correspondence, meetings, and actions taken under this policy will be maintained.

### **5. Support for Staff**

The school recognises the impact that dealing with vexatious behaviour can have on staff. The school will provide appropriate support to staff members involved, including:

- Providing advice and guidance on how to handle difficult situations.
- Offering access to employee assistance programmes or other support services.

- Ensuring that staff are not unfairly criticised as a result of actions taken to protect themselves.

## **6. Appeals**

A parent/carer has the right to appeal any formal decision made under this policy.

Appeals should be made in writing to the Chair of Governors within 5 school days of the date of the decision letter.

The Chair of Governors will consider the appeal and make a decision, which will be communicated to the parent/carer in writing.

## **7. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed biannually by the Governing Body to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant legislation and guidance.