



Co-operative interaction policy

Albany Academy

Approved by:	LGC	Date: October 2023
Last reviewed on:	2023	
Next review due by:	2026	



STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

At Albany Academy, we value the positive relationships forged with parents and visitors to the academy. We encourage close links with parents and the community and believe that pupils benefit when the relationship between home and academy is a positive one.

We also strive to make our academy a place where as adults, we model for children the behaviour we teach and expect.

As an academy we promote respect for all with whom we work, and celebrate differences in a positive manner.

We place a high importance on good manners, positive communication and mutual respect.

The vast majority of parents and visitors to Albany Academy are keen to work with us and are supportive of the academy.

However, on the rare occasions when a negative attitude towards the academy is expressed, this can result in aggression, verbal and/or physical abuse towards members of the academy community.

The trust board expects and requires 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.

We expect parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards members of academy staff.

This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

DEFINITION OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

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

- shouting at members of the academy staff, either in person or over the telephone;
- physically intimidating a member of staff, e.g. by 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 academy's security procedures.

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

IMPOSING RESTRICTIONS

a) In the first instance the headteacher will issue a warning to the person. They will contact the person either by phone, in writing or by email to explain why this behaviour is causing concern, and ask them to change this behaviour. The headteacher will explain the actions that the academy may take if the behaviour does not change.

b) If the disruptive behaviour continues, the headteacher will issue a reminder letter to the person advising them that the way in which they will be allowed to contact us in the future will be restricted. The headteacher will make this decision and inform the person in writing of what procedures have been put in place and for what period.

c) Any restriction that is imposed on the person's contact with us will be appropriate and proportionate and the person will be advised of the period of time the restriction will be in place for. In most cases restrictions will apply for between 3 and 6 months but in exceptional cases may be extended. In such cases the restrictions would be reviewed on a termly basis.

d) Restrictions will be tailored to deal with the individual circumstances of the person and may include:

- Banning the person from making contact by telephone except through a third party e.g. solicitor or friend acting on their behalf
 - Banning the person from sending emails to individual and/or all academy employees or Governors and insisting they only correspond by letter
 - Banning the person from using the academy premises
 - Banning the person from accessing any Academy building except by appointment
 - Requiring contact to take place with one named member of staff only
 - Restricting telephone calls to specified days / times / duration
 - Requiring any personal contact to take place in the presence of an appropriate witness
 - Letting the person know that we will not reply or acknowledge any further contact from them on the specific topic of that complaint (in this case, a designated member of staff should be identified who will read future correspondence)
- e) When the decision has been taken to apply this policy to a person, the headteacher will contact the person in writing to explain:
- Why the decision has been taken
 - What action is being taken
 - The duration of that action
 - The review process of this policy
- f) The headteacher will enclose a copy of this policy in the letter to the person.
- g) Where a person continues to behave in a way that is unacceptable, the headteacher, in consultation with the Chair of Governors, may decide to refuse all contact with the person and stop any investigation into his or her complaint.

Where the behaviour is so extreme or it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff, we will consider other options, for example reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases, we may not give the person prior warning of that action.

REVIEW

- a) The status of a person judged to be abusive, unreasonably persistent or vexatious will be reviewed by the headteacher after three months and at the end of every subsequent three months within the period during which the policy is to apply.
- b) The person will be informed of the result of this review if the decision to apply this policy them has been changed or extended.

REFERRING ABUSIVE, UNREASONABLY PERSISTENT OR VEXATIOUS PERSONS TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

In some cases, relations between organisations and abusive, unreasonably persistent or vexatious persons break down completely while complaints are under investigation and there is little prospect of achieving a satisfactory outcome. In such circumstances, there may be little purpose in following all the stages of the complaints procedure. Where this occurs the Department for Education may be prepared to consider a complaint before the procedure has run its course.

RECORD KEEPING

Adequate records will be retained by the academy the details of the case and the action that has been taken. The Headteacher will retain a record of:

- The name and address of each person who is treated as abusive, vexatious or persistent
- When the restriction came into force and ends
- What the restrictions are
- When the person and departments were advised

The Governing Body will be provided with an annual report giving information about persons who have been treated as abusive, persistent or vexatious as defined by this policy.

BARRING FROM THE ACADEMY PREMISES

Although fulfilling a public function, schools and academies are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. We will therefore act to ensure our academy remains a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of the community.

To maintain a peaceful and safe academy environment the academy cannot tolerate parents and visitors who:

- Behave in a disruptive manner which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of a classroom, an employer's office, office area or any other area of the academy grounds including team matches at home or away
- Use loud / or offensive language, swearing, cursing, using profane language or displaying temper
- Threaten to do actual bodily harm to a members of academy staff, Governor, visitor, fellow parent / guardian or student regardless of whether or not the behaviour constitutes a criminal offence.
- Damage or destroying academy property
- Transmit abusive or threatening messages to a members of academy staff / Governor / fellow parent / guardian or student via e-mails or text / voicemail / phone messages or any other form of written communication.
- Make defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the academy or any of the students / parents / staff at the academy via social media (See **Appendix**). Any concerns you may have about the academy must be made in accordance with the academy's complaints policy, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.
- Smoke on the academy premises or consume alcohol, or take drugs whilst on academy property.
- Act in a manner, which is deemed inappropriate, as a result of inebriation or intoxication.

Should any of the above behaviour occur on academy premises parents or visitors will be asked to leave the premises. In serious cases, the headteacher can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on academy premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the parent may wish to make. The academy will always give the parent the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing.

The decision to bar will be then be reviewed, taking into account any representations made by the appellant, and either confirmed or lifted. If the decision is confirmed the parent will be notified in writing, explaining how long the bar will be in place.

Anyone wishing to complain about being barred can do so, by letter or email, to the headteacher or Chair of Governors. However, complaints about barring cannot be escalated to the Department for Education.

Once the academy's own complaints procedure has been completed, the only remaining avenue of appeal is through the courts; independent legal advice must therefore be sought.

APPENDIX- INAPPROPRIATE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORK SITES

Social media websites and forums are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools and academies, Headteachers, academy staff, and in some cases other parents or students. The Governors consider the use of social media websites and forums in this way as unacceptable and not in the best interests of the children or the whole academy community. Any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, the headteacher or the Chair of Governors, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

In the event that any student or parent of a child being educated in the academy is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on social network sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report 'abuse' section of the website. All social network sites have clear rules about the content, which can be posted, on the site and they provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity, which breaches this. The academy will also expect that any parent or student removes such comments immediately. Where a student fails to comply this will be dealt with as a behavioural issue, in line with our behaviour policy. Where a parent fails to comply, this will be considered unacceptable behaviour as defined above and restrictions in this policy may be applied.

In serious cases the academy will also consider its legal options with any such misuse of social networking and other sites. Additionally, and perhaps importantly, is the issue of cyberbullying and its use by one child or a parent to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social network entry. We will deal with this as a serious incident of academy bullying. Thankfully, such incidents are extremely rare.