



**The Westminster
School**

Safe, Happy and Learning Together

www.thewestminsterschool.co.uk

2022/2023

Managing Aggressive Behaviour from Visitors to School

Building foundations and providing opportunities to create confident, aspirational, and independent members of our community.

Approved by Governing Body on:	10/11/2022
Signed by Chair of Governors:	<i>P. A. Evans</i>
Head Teacher:	O M Flowers
Lead Personnel:	A Gibson
Date of Review:	10/11/2025

Introduction

The Westminster School is a welcoming, supporting and caring school which aims to create a safe, happy and learning together environment that offers a broad and balanced curriculum, whilst meeting the individual needs of our pupils.

We value the strong relationships that we have with parents and carers and aim to work together to achieve the very best for our pupils in a mutually supportive partnership. To enable our partnership to achieve the best outcomes for the pupils, the relationship between home and school needs to be based on the principles of care, integrity, trust and mutual respect.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a reminder to all parents, carers and visitors about expected conduct to ensure a safe, happy and learning environment for our children.

Abuse, threatening behaviour or violence are not considered to be an acceptable part of any job, nor is it part of the duties of any employee to accept such behaviour. Throughout this document where the term 'visitor' is used it covers any abusive visitor to the school and is not confined to adults.

The Governing Board is committed to reducing the risks of its school staff from acts of violence and aggression by:

- Demonstrating to staff that the potential for violence at work is recognised
- Issuing clear procedures/guidelines, which include preventative and protective measures
- Providing adequate training to staff who may be subject to violence or abuse to develop their ability to anticipate violent incidents and deal with them
- Providing appropriate equipment where applicable
- Clarifying violent incident reporting and monitoring procedures
- Encouraging proper reporting of incidents and near misses and ensuring that school staff do not avoid reporting violent incidents in the belief that an assault may suggest a failure on the part of the member of staff concerned
- Supporting staff who have been subject to violent, threatening or abusive behaviour and offering counselling where appropriate
- Allocating adequate resources to support this Policy
- Reviewing this Policy statement and procedures and guidelines regularly.

In order to support the ethos of our school, we will not tolerate any of the following on School premises (this list is not exhaustive):

- disruptive behaviour which interferes with teaching, learning or administration within the school
- using loud and/or offensive language or displaying temper;
- threatening, intimidating or aggressive behaviour towards another adult or child; some actions may constitute an assault with legal consequences.
- actions/comments causing mental & emotional abuse of staff
- derogatory racial or sexual remarks
- abusive, threatening or damaging emails, phone, text or social network messages relating to the school;
- using tobacco, vaping equipment, or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs on the school premises;
- damaging or destroying school property.

Summary

Day to day access to a school is within the control of the Head Teacher.

Normally parents and those with parental responsibility are granted “limited licence” to visit the grounds and buildings of a school.

Most schools will establish procedures which set out: the acceptable purposes for such visits; the areas of the school that may be entered at particular times; the standard of behaviour expected etc.

Where there is a breach of such procedures the school needs to respond in a measured way, depending on the seriousness of any inappropriate conduct e.g.:

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

It is possible for a Head Teacher to initiate any of these actions on their own authority.

As a general rule, schools are orderly, safe places, where relationships between staff and visitors, especially parents/carers, demonstrate mutual respect and recognition of shared responsibility for pupils’ welfare and educational progress. Parental involvement is an important factor in educational success and in dealing with emerging problems at an early stage.

Abusive or Violent Behaviour

This school operates a “Zero Tolerance” policy and any visitors or pupils who commit an act of violence against any member of staff, pupils or visitor, or behave such a way that any such person fears for their safety, will be reported to the police and relevant authorities immediately. This includes contact to the staff via telephone.

Whilst we appreciate at times parents may have been presented with challenging circumstances, Westminster staff are there to assist with enquiries and violent, threatening or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated.

Unacceptable behaviour may result in the local authority and the police being informed of the incident.

Procedures for Visitors Coming into School

All visitors must report to Reception on arrival, where the necessary safeguarding checks will be undertaken. A member of staff will come to collect the visitor(s) and they will be accompanied throughout the duration of their visit unless they have evidence of a valid DBS check.

If a parent/carer wishes to speak to a member of staff, they should make an appointment by ringing the school on 0121 561 6884. Unfortunately, staff will be unable to see any visitors who come into school without an appointment.

Should a parent/carer wish to see the Head Teacher, they should ring 0121 561 6884 or email headteacher@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk to make an appointment. The Head Teacher will be unable to see parents/carers without an appointment.

Procedures for Staff in dealing with Incidents involving Violent, Threatening or Abusive Visitors Avoiding an Incident

Visitors may arrive in a tense, agitated state and how they are initially dealt with might well make the difference between a minor exchange of words and a violent confrontation.

Members of staff are entitled to support from their line manager in handling a potentially difficult parent interview. Sensitivity towards parental difficulties is an asset. Many adults are still influenced by their own schooling and other childhood experiences, as well as their consequent expectations for their own children. Over anxious, or even ambitious, parents can feel very vulnerable.

Preparation is an essential ingredient in ensuring that meetings prove constructive rather than confrontational.

Prepare in advance by:

- Ensuring there is enough space in the room. People can need greater personal space than normal when upset or angry and the proximity of others can be more threatening
- Having an alarm readily available (a member of staff nearby/door open/mobile phone next to you switched on)
- Considering having a colleague present, or pre-arranging with a colleague to check that all is well, if you have reason to believe that the visitor has a previous history of aggression or violence or appears to be aggressive or violent.
- Ensuring the layout of the room is not intimidating for visitors and allows you to leave quickly; if possible, position your chair/desk with the door behind you
- Positioning seating at equal height so that the parent does not feel patronised, and, if possible, at a 45-degree angle as this is less threatening. Avoid barriers if it is safe to do so.
- Remove an angry or upset person from an audience, or, if easier, remove the audience and don't leave them waiting unnecessarily.
- Keep the discussion as calm and friendly as possible, paraphrasing what has been said and using sympathy and empathy where appropriate.
- Summarise what has been said and follow through. This will help to build trust and respect.

If someone becomes abusive or threatening, you should seek help from SLT immediately.

Warning Signs

Someone who is potentially, or about to become, violent can give out signs and signals that constitute a recognisable warning:

- Agitation
- Tapping the table
- Loud speech/shouting
- Muscle tension in face, hands, limbs; fidgeting, hand-wringing; clenching fists
- Drawing breath in sharply
- Finger- wagging or jabbing

- Inability to be still, even pacing about
- Swearing
- Staring eyes
- Sweating
- Oversensitivity to ideas, suggestions
- Rapid mood swings.

Over the Telephone

If a parent, carer or member of the public begins to exhibit aggressive or abusive behaviour, e.g. use of foul language or verbal threats) towards any member of staff during a telephone call, the member of staff should:

- Calmly state that the language used is unacceptable and that they will end the call if it continues.
- Try to establish the name and contact details of the complainant (and the nature of the complaint if possible) and state that a member of SLT will return their call as soon as possible.
- End the call. Make notes of what was said immediately on termination of the call and then report the incident to SLT.

A member of SLT will contact the complainant to establish the nature of the complaint and try to resolve the issue.

Written Abuse

If a member of staff receives written correspondence, e.g. letter, e-mail or text of a threatening or abusive nature from a parent, carer or member of the public, this shall be reported immediately to SLT and a copy retained as evidence.

Whilst the School will make every effort to resolve any issue raised by the complainant, consideration may also be given to involving the police, especially where threats of violence have been made.

Banning a Visitor from the School

The school reserves the right to impose a temporary or permanent ban from the school premises on any parent/carers or member of the public who has demonstrated aggressive or abusive behaviour towards any member of staff, student, visitor or volunteer at the school.

This decision shall be made by the Head Teacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors and the length of any ban shall be proportionate to the nature and circumstances of the incident. In the case of a parent/carers, prior to a ban being imposed (except in urgent situations), the Head Teacher/Chair of Governors shall write to the individual indicating that a ban from the premises is being considered, stating the reasons for this and the date by which any written representations by the individual should be received by the school before the decision is made. In urgent situations, the Head Teacher may impose an immediate **temporary** ban in writing and provide the parent/carers the opportunity to make written representations prior to formalising any extension to the ban.

Letter templates for communicating with visitors are attached as Appendix 1.

A warning letter may be sent before a ban is considered.

Where the decision to impose a ban is made, notification of the ban shall be in writing and shall clearly state:

- The reason for the ban being imposed
- The date of commencement of the ban
- A date by which any written representations by the individual should be received by the School
- A date for review of the ban and how this will be arranged (including any reparation that may be required by the School, e.g. a written apology)
- Provision to be made (if a parent or carer) for access to their child during the school day, e.g. should an emergency occur and the process to be followed should the parent/carer wish to contact the school or need to attend meetings at the School
- What action will be taken to remove the individual from the premises should the ban be breached

The banned individual will be invited to make written representations which will be reviewed by the Governing Board who will review the ban and consider whether to lift it, make it permanent or continue it for a specified period.

The Head Teacher may remove the ban at any time prior to the review date if appropriate resolution has been achieved.

Any ban imposed will not prevent or affect the outcome of the school's investigation into any complaints raised by the individual concerned. These will be handled as per the school's Complaints Policy.

Parental Rights

Every attempt should be made to maintain normal communications with parents/carers who have received a ban from the school site.

Even where a parent/carer 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).

The interests of the child should continue to be paramount.

Appendix 1

Warning letter, from the head teacher: to parent/carer with child/ren at the school)

Recorded delivery

Dear

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, other parents.)

I must inform you that the Governing Board will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to protect its staff and pupils.

Therefore if, in the future, I receive any reports of conduct of this nature I will be forced to consider removing your licence to enter the school grounds and buildings. If you do not comply with that instruction I will be able to arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

Nevertheless, I wish to give you an opportunity to give me in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to the report which I have received about your conduct. These comments may include any expressions of regret on your part and any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct. To enable me to take a decision on this matter at an early point, you are asked to send me any written comments you wish to make by **(state date ten working days from the date of letter)**.

Yours sincerely

O M Flowers
Head Teacher

(Banning Letter, from the Governing Board to parent/carer with child/ren at the school)

Recorded delivery

Dear

I have received a report from the Mr Flowers, Head Teacher about your conduct on **(enter date and time)**.

(Add factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils, other parents.)

I must inform you that the Governing Board will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to protect its staff and pupils. On the advice of the head teacher I am therefore instructing that until you are not to reappear on the premises of the school. If you do not comply with this instruction I may arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

In the case of pupils not on SEN transport also insert

Arrangements have been made for your child (insert child/rens names) to be collected, and returned to you, at the school gate by a member of the school's staff.

The withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises takes effect straightaway.

However, 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 which I have received from the head teacher. These comments may include any expressions of regret on your part and any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct. To enable me to take a decision on this matter at an early point, you are asked to send me any written comments you wish to make by **(state date ten working days from the date of letter)**.

If on receipt of your comments I consider that my decision should be confirmed, or extended, you will be supplied with details of how to pursue a review of the circumstances of your case.

In any event, the decision to withdraw your licence to enter the school premises will be reviewed by (complete as appropriate). That review will take account of any representations that you may have made and of your subsequent conduct.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

(Banning Letter, from Governing Board: to member of the public)

Recorded delivery

Dear

I have received a report from the Mr Flowers, Head Teacher about your conduct on **(enter date and time)**.

(Add factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils, other parents.)

I must inform you that the Governing Board will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to protect its staff and pupils. On the advice of the Head Teacher I am therefore instructing that you are not to reappear on the premises of the school. If you do not comply with this instruction I may arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

(Letter updating a banning letter, from the Governing Board, confirming ban: to parent/carer with child/ren at the school)

Dear

On **(give date)** I wrote to you informing you that on the advice of the Head Teacher, I had withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of The Westminster School until **(insert date)**. To enable the Governing Board to determine whether to confirm this decision, or to impose it for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by **(give date)**.

I have not received a written response from you / I have now received a letter from you dated **(insert the date)**, the contents of which I have noted. **(delete either sentence as appropriate)**

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Head Teacher's report, I have determined that the decision to withdraw permission for you to come onto school premises should be confirmed/extended. **(delete as appropriate)** I am therefore instructing that until **(insert date)** you are not to come onto the premises of the school without the prior knowledge and approval of the head teacher. If you do not comply with this instruction I may arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

Notwithstanding this decision the Head Teacher and staff at The Westminster School school remain committed to the education of your child/children **(delete as appropriate)**, who must continue to attend school as normal.

The Governing Board **(delete as appropriate)** will take steps to review the continuance of this decision by **(give date)**. When deciding whether it is necessary to extend the withdrawal of permission to come onto the school's premises, the governing board will take into account the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurances of future good conduct received from yourself and any evidence of your co-operation with the school in other respects.

(Include where the incident has arisen within the context of a parental complaint against the school:)

Finally I would advise you that I have asked the head teacher to ensure that your complaint **(give brief details)** is considered under the appropriate school procedure. You will be contacted about this by the school in due course.

If you wish to pursue the matter further, you have a right to a review of the circumstances of this case by the school's governing board.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

The Westminster School

(Letter updating a banning letter, withdrawing ban: to parent/carer with child/ren at the school)

Dear

On **(insert date)** I wrote to you informing you that, on the advice of the head teacher,

I had temporarily withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of The Westminster School. To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to let me have your written comments on this incident by **(insert date)**

I have not received a written response from you / I have now received a letter from you dated **(insert date)**, the contents of which I have noted. **(delete either sentence as appropriate)**

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

Nevertheless I remain very concerned at the incident which occurred on **(insert date)**, and I must warn you that if there is any repetition of your behaviour on that occasion, I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the premises.

Yours sincerely,

Chair of Governors

(Letter, following formal review of a banning letter, extending ban: to parent/carer with child/ren at the school)

Dear

I wrote to you on **(insert date)** withdrawing permission for you to come onto the premises of **(insert name)** School until **(insert date)**. In that letter I also advised you that I would take steps to review this decision by **(insert date)**.

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

I therefore advise that the instruction that you are not to come onto the premises of **(insert name)** school without the prior knowledge and approval of the head teacher remains in place until **(insert date)**.

I shall undertake a further review of this decision on **(insert date)**.

If you are dissatisfied with this decision, you have a right to request a review of the decision by the Governing Board.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors

(Letter, following formal review of a banning letter, ending ban: to parent/carer with child/ren at the school)

Dear

I wrote to you on (**insert date**) informing you that I had withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of (**insert name**) School until (**insert date**). In that letter I also advised you that I would take steps to review this decision by (**insert date**).

I have now completed the review. After consultation with the Head Teacher, I have decided that it is now appropriate to change that decision and I am therefore restoring to you the permission to come onto the school premises, with immediate effect.

I trust that you can now be relied upon to act in full co-operation with the school and that there will be no further difficulties of the kind which made it necessary for me to prevent you entering the premises.

I should point out that if there is any repetition of your behaviour, I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the premises once more.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors