



Thurlstone Primary School

Policy for Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints or Contact

As recommended by, and based upon, Department for Education guidance.

This policy applies to unreasonable or persistent contact associated with formal and informal complaints.

Thurlstone Primary School is committed to dealing with all complaints and concerns fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain or contact school to share their concerns. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour from anyone, and will take action to protect staff from such behaviour, including that which is excessive, repetitive, abusive, offensive or threatening.

Thurlstone Primary School defines 'unreasonable behaviour' as that which hinders our consideration of complaints or concerns because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or concern, or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance.
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process.
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure.
- insists on the complaint or concern being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice.
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on.
- makes allegations against the school, or a member of staff, without making a formal complaint.

- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and/or insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced.
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.
- repeatedly makes the same or similar complaint or contacts the school to repeatedly express the same concern (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint or concern is groundless or has been addressed or explained).
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education.
- seeks an unrealistic outcome.
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint or concern in person, in writing, by email and/or by telephone while the complaint or concern is being dealt with.
- uses threats to intimidate.
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence.
- knowingly provides false information.
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Whenever possible, the headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an '*unreasonable*' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and will ask them to stop.

If the unreasonable behaviour does not stop, then a plan will be implemented which may include the following:

- inform the complainant that, except in emergencies, all routine communication with the school should be via letter or email only and to only one specified person.
- take advice from the appropriate body (Local Authority, Police, Human Resources).
- the school reserves the right to stop responding to contact; however, the decision to stop responding will never be taken lightly.
 - These points will apply when making the decision to stop responding
 - the school has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns.
 - the complainant has been given a clear statement regarding their options and the school's position
 - the complainant contacts the school repeatedly, making substantially the same points each time.

- pursue a case under Anti-Harassment legislation.
- the school will resume the process identified above at an appropriate level at any point when unreasonable behaviour restarts

In response to any incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from Thurlstone Primary School, as per the Barring of People for the School Premises Policy.

Adopted by the Governing Body: January 2021

To be reviewed: January 2022