

Confrontational Conduct Policy

Review Date: May 2025

Review By: Senior Leadership Team

Final Approval: Pastoral, Safeguarding, Wellbeing Committee

1. Academy Context

The Core Values of the academy which relate specifically to this policy state that we are working together to form relationships based on:

- **Compassion** – everyone is encouraged to be generous in their concern for others
- **Justice** – everyone is entitled to be treated fairly and to promote the self-esteem of others.
- **Responsibility** – everyone is expected to understand the consequences of their actions.
- **Truth** – everyone is required to be honest and to communicate in a positive manner.

Such values contribute to the academy’s common purpose of ‘striving for high quality education with a strong Christian ethos’.

2. Introduction

Bishop Stopford School aims to be a calm and orderly environment, operating under its core values. We expect appropriate levels of courtesy to characterise all interactions, living out our Bible verse: “Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly with your God”. While there may be differences of opinion from time to time or even conflict, the Academy will never tolerate confrontational conduct directed towards any member of its community either in person or in other forms of communication. (Confrontational conduct of students is addressed under the Behaviour Policy.)

3. Definitions

- i. ‘Unacceptable behaviour’: behaviour which is abusive, offensive, threatening and unreasonably persistent and therefore can be considered vexatious. Any behaviour from a complainant which impacts negatively on the day-to-day running of the academy and directly or indirectly on the wellbeing of students or staff. (See Appendix 1 for specific examples.)
- ii. ‘Harassment’: the unreasonable pursuit of actions so that they appear to be targeted at member/s of the academy’s community and cause ongoing distress by being perceived as intimidating or oppressive by the recipient. This behaviour can also be considered to be vexatious.
- iii. ‘Members of the academy’s community’: members of staff, governors, students, parents¹.
- iv. ‘Communications’: all forms of interaction – written, spoken via technology etc.

4. Objectives of the policy

- To ensure the safety of all in the Academy community
- To resolve conflict wherever possible
- To ensure that responses to any confrontational event are proportionate
- To deal fairly and fully with any complaint or concern
- To uphold standards of courtesy and reasonableness in all communications with persons who wish to express a concern or pursue a complaint;
- To deal fairly, honestly, openly and transparently with those who make persistent or vexatious complaints or who harass members of staff;
- To maintain adequate records of actions taken in line with this policy;

¹ Parent denotes any adult or organisation with parental responsibility for a student at the Academy

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- To review as appropriate, and at a minimum once a year, any sanctions applied in the context of this policy.

5. Procedure

On the Academy Premises

Any member of staff who encounters inappropriate behaviour, must complete the Incident Report Form (Appendix 2).

If someone exhibits aggressive or abusive behaviour towards a member of the academy community, a senior leader must be contacted as soon as possible. Where possible the Senior Leader will attend and take charge of further actions. If the aggressor is seeking a particular person/s, they must not be allowed access to that person/s. They will be instructed to leave the premises in line with this policy after being told

- To follow up their concern in writing;
- That any information they have provided has been taken seriously and will be passed to the appropriate person, who will investigate and respond.

If the person refuses to leave the site, or threatens or commits actual physical violence, the area will be cleared of others who could be at risk from harm. The police will be called immediately.

Over the Telephone

If someone exhibits aggressive or abusive behaviour (e.g. use of foul language, verbal threats) during a telephone call, the member of staff will

- State that the language used is unacceptable and that they will end the call if it continues
- Seek to establish the name and contact details of the contact and the nature of the concern if possible and state that the appropriate member of staff 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 a member of the Leadership Team.

Written Abuse

If a member of staff receives written correspondence of a threatening or abusive nature, this will be reported to a member of the Leadership Team and a copy retained as evidence.

The receiving member of staff will not reply without first agreeing the response with the Leadership Team member or let someone else respond. The response will explain that the correspondence will not be answered due to its nature. If the written correspondence is deemed overwhelmingly abusive or offensive, the Academy may choose to not respond. Whilst the Academy will make every effort to resolve any concern raised, consideration may also be given to involving the Police, and always where threats of violence have been made.

6. Responses to Unacceptable Behaviour

There are a range of responses the Academy may take. The following is an illustrative, not exhaustive, list:

- Issue a warning
- Require further contact to take place in the presence of an appropriate witness
- Conduct business through a third party
- Allow only one form of communication eg written.
- Assign one employee as a sole contact
- Where the behaviour is so extreme or it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of anyone in the academy's community, report the matter to the police and/or take legal action.
- Take action of another kind which is proportionate to the behaviour and advised by HR.
- Impose a temporary or permanent ban from its premises (Appendix 3)

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Appendix 1 – Characteristics of Unreasonable Behaviour

Unreasonable behaviour may be characterised by:

- a) Physical intimidation;
- b) Verbal abuse/shouting/failure to respond to reasonable requests;
- c) Threat of violence;
- d) Filming or recording members of the academy community without consent;
- e) Prolific correspondence or excessive e-mail or telephone contact about a concern or complaint;
- f) An insistence upon pursuing matters in an unreasonable manner;
- g) An insistence on only dealing with the Headteacher irrespective of the issue and the level of delegation in the academy to deal with such matters;
- h) Excessive use of Freedom of Information requests;

Specific behaviours include:

- Using loud, offensive and/or discriminatory language, swearing, cursing or displaying temper;
- Threatening to do actual bodily harm to a member of the academy's community, regardless of whether or not the behaviour constitutes a criminal offence;
- Damaging or destroying the academy's property;
- Transmitting abusive or threatening messages to a member of the academy's community via e-mails or text / voicemail / phone messages or any other form of written communication;
- Making defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the academy or any members of its community in the public arena;
- Acting in an inappropriate manner, as a result of inebriation or intoxication;
- Falsifying information or deliberately using falsehoods to support a complaint

Inappropriate use of Social Network Sites:

- Use of social media websites to fuel campaigns and complaints against the academy and/or members of its community
- Posting threatening, libellous or defamatory comments on social network sites;
- Participating in activity which can be considered as cyberbullying against a member of the academy's community.

The academy will report such examples to the 'Report Abuse' section of the website and will insist that the creator removes such comments immediately. The academy will also consider its legal options with any such misuse of social networking and other sites.

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Appendix 2 – Incident Report Form

To be used when reporting Confrontational Conduct.

Relevant incidents include trespass, nuisance or disturbance on Academy premises, verbal abuse, threats, aggression, physical violence and intentional damage to property. The form should be completed before any discussion between witnesses to avoid allegations of collusion. This form should be completed as fully as possible, using a continuation sheet, if necessary. The completed form should be passed to the Headteacher, for appropriate action and recording.

Date of incident
Time of incident
Name of person reporting incident
Date incident reported
Member of staff recording incident
Name(s) of person(s) causing incident. Where name(s) is/are unknown, provide other details of which may allow their identification
Status (parents/carers/visitors/trespassers)
Full description of incident (e.g. names of persons involved; location; nature of any injuries; attendance of emergency services)
Names and status of any witnesses
Initial action/outcome (e.g. Informal conciliation; police intervention; warning or banning letter issued)
Summary of subsequent actions taken by the Academy, including risk assessments Linked incidents (if any)

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Appendix 3 - Banning from the Academy Premises

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Bishop Stopford School will therefore act to ensure it remains a safe place for its community.

If confrontational conduct is a cause for concern, Bishop Stopford School will ask person to leave the academy's premises. In serious cases, the Headteacher will notify the person in writing that their licence to be on academy premises has been revoked subject to any representation that they may wish to make. Bishop Stopford School will give the person the opportunity to formally express his/her views on the decision to bar in writing within 5 working days.

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

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

a. Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 states that any person unlawfully present on the premises and causing or permitting nuisance or disturbance to the annoyance of persons who lawfully use the premises is guilty of an offence, may be removed from the premises by a police constable or authorised person and is liable to be fined.

The **maximum** period before a review of a ban will be 20 Academy days. The banned individual will be invited to attend a review meeting (accompanied by a friend or relative if required) with the Headteacher and a panel of governors. (This may take place away from the Academy site if appropriate.) The Panel will review the ban and consider whether to lift it, make it permanent or continue it for a specified period.

Anyone wishing to complain about being barred can do so, by letter or email to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

The Headteacher 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 Academy's investigation into any complaints raised by the individual concerned. These will be handled as per the Academy's Complaints Procedure.

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