Staff Protection Policy

Berkhamsted Schools Group

Berkhamsted Prep
Berkhamsted Pre-Prep
Berkhamsted Boys
Berkhamsted Girls
Berkhamsted Sixth
Heatherton
Berkhamsted Day Nursery Ltd.
Berkhamsted Enterprises Ltd.

Revision and Terminology

Please refer to the School Policies' Policy (Terminology Detail Style)

<table>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contents

Contents .............................................................................................................................. 2
Scope of this policy ........................................................................................................... 3
2 Definition of behaviour which causes distress .......................................................... 3
3 Rationale .................................................................................................................. 3
4 Context .................................................................................................................... 3
5 Aims of this policy .................................................................................................... 3
6 General Principles on the Tone and Content of Communication ............................. 4
7 Procedure for BSG Employees dealing with behaviour by parents and/or visitors which causes distress .......................................................................................................................... 4
8 Senior Management Procedure ............................................................................... 7
9 Sanctions .................................................................................................................. 8
Scope of this policy

1.1 This policy outlines the School’s approach to protecting its staff from all behaviour from any non-employee which causes distress.

2 Definition of behaviour which causes distress

Behaviour may take the form of

2.1 verbal or physical abuse of an employee of Berkhamsted Schools Group (BSG).
2.2 behaviour causing concern to an employee of Berkhamsted Schools Group (BSG).

Abuse or behaviour causing concern may take place in various contexts:

2.3 In person (both one-to-one or in public)
2.4 On the telephone
2.5 In writing (including emails, texts and Instant Messaging)
2.6 Online (including posting malicious comments on websites and Social Media sites and other acts of “internet trolling”.)

3 Rationale

3.1 Berkhamsted Schools Group has a legal responsibility to take reasonable steps to protect its employees from all forms of abuse and behaviour causing concern whilst carrying out their day-to-day duties.

4 Context

4.1 Regrettably, although this is not the norm, BSG is experiencing a rise in verbal abuse of its employees in a range of contexts.

5 Aims of this policy

5.1 To improve understanding between parents, visitors and staff by providing parameters and guidelines for all.
5.2 To protect all employees of BSG from behaviour which causes distress.

5.3 To outline the procedures for how the School will handle examples of such behaviour.

6 General Principles on the Tone and Content of Communication

All communications between parents and school (and vice versa) should be:

6.1 Polite and courteous (in tone and content)

6.2 Respectful of professional integrity

6.3 Illustrative of our common purpose

6.4 Mindful of the time pressures under which teachers and parents operate.

7 Procedure for BSG Employees dealing with behaviour by parents and/or visitors which causes distress

7.1 Introduction

We recognise that in our community (as in life) there will be times when frustration about what may have been said or done can occur. School staff understand the pressure that pupils and parents feel at times and are committed to helping resolve difficulties when they arise in a sensitive and helpful manner. Just as we demand the very highest standards of courtesy and professionalism from our staff, we also expect pupils, parents and visitors to follow the general principles listed above with regard to the tone and content of communications, be they in person, on the telephone, or in writing.

7.2 Physical Abuse and Threatening Behaviour

7.2.1 All incidents of assault on staff must be reported in writing to the Principal who will in discussion with the member of staff. The police will be contacted if it is deemed necessary.

7.2.2 Staff should be aware that no physical attack or injury needs to have occurred for a common assault to have taken place. It is sufficient
for a person to have been threatened with immediate violence and put in fear of a physical attack for an offence to have been committed.

7.2.3 The Police expect to be involved where there is clear evidence of an injury (whether physical or emotional) and will take account of previous behaviour of the offender and the likelihood of a repetition if action is not taken.

7.2.4 The Principal will write to the parent and will initiate the Senior Management procedure set out in paragraph 6 below. If the alleged offender is a visitor to the School, a member of staff should ask them to leave the premises immediately.

7.3 Verbal Abuse in a one-to-one situation

7.3.1 All incidents of verbal abuse on staff must be reported in writing to the relevant member of the Senior Management Team (Headteacher, Line Manager) at the earliest possible opportunity. The Senior Management procedure set out in paragraph 6 below will be implemented.

7.3.2 Staff should terminate the conversation if they deem it to have become abusive.

7.3.3 Staff should record the nature of the conversation and examples of the alleged abuse.

7.3.4 The relevant member of the Senior Management Team will reply to the parent and will initiate the Senior Management procedures set out in paragraph 6 below.

7.4 Verbal Abuse in a public situation

7.4.1 All incidents of alleged verbal abuse against staff must be reported in writing to the relevant member of the Senior Management Team (Headteacher, Line Manager) at the earliest possible opportunity. The
Senior Management procedure set out in paragraph 6 below will be implemented.

7.4.2 If a teacher is subject to verbal abuse by parents or visitors when refereeing a sports fixture, the teacher should:

7.4.2.1 Stop the game

7.4.2.2 Warn the parent/visitor

7.4.2.3 (where possible) send for a member of the Senior Management Team (or another colleague) to observe the rest of the match.

7.4.3 Staff should record the nature of the incident and examples of the alleged abuse.

7.4.4 The relevant member of the Senior Management Team will initiate the Senior Management procedure set out in paragraph 6 – Below.

7.4.5 In the case of visitors from other schools, the Principal (or Prep Headteacher) will write to the Headteacher of the visiting school to inform them of the incident and any action that the School is taking (see paragraph 7 below).

7.5 Correspondence

7.5.1 All correspondence that is unacceptable in tone or content must be passed immediately to the relevant member of the Senior Management Team (Headteacher, Line Manager) at the earliest possible opportunity without reply to the parent.

7.5.2 The relevant member of the Senior Management Team will reply to the parent and will initiate the Senior Management procedure set out in paragraph 6 below.
7.6 Vexatious, malicious or defamatory behaviour

7.6.1 The school takes very seriously any action [by a parent and or visitor, [after full and fair consideration], which is deemed vexatious, malicious, defamatory, or which sets out to undermine the reputation of the individual and/or of the School.

7.6.2 All behaviour deemed vexatious, malicious or defamatory must be reported immediately to the relevant member of the Senior Management Team (Headteacher, Line Manager) at the earliest possible opportunity without discussion with the parent or visitor.

7.6.3 The employee or teacher concerned should provide the relevant member of the Senior Management Team with the evidence (e.g. screenshots from Social Networking sites etc.)

7.6.4 The relevant member of the Senior Management Team will reply to the parent and will initiate the Senior Management procedure set out in paragraph 6 below.

8 Senior Management Procedure

The Senior Management **Five Step Procedure** for following up on alleged abusive behaviour towards staff is as follows:

8.1 Step One - Phone call/ Meeting with Relevant Head.
8.2 Step Two - Phone call/ Meeting with Vice Principal - Education, followed by a formal warning letter.
8.3 Step Three - Meeting with Principal, followed by a formal warning letter.
8.4 Step Four - Phone call/ Meeting with the Chairman of Governors.
8.5 Step Five - Required Removal of pupil (under the terms of our Expulsions and Required Removal Policy).
8.6 Serious abusive behaviour (such as Physical Abuse or making career-threatening malicious and defamatory comments about teachers) will
be dealt with at Stage Three, Four or Five of the procedure, without going through the prior stages.

9 Sanctions

The following sanctions may be applied to [parents and visitors].

9.1 Warning letters to parents or visitors

9.2 Permission to attend School functions may be withdrawn, including (but not limited to):

9.2.1 Sports matches.

9.2.2 Cultural activities.

9.2.3 Permission to attend parent-teacher meetings.

9.2.4 Restrict all communication with the School through a member of the Senior Management Team.

9.3 Permission to be on School premises may be withdrawn.

9.4 Required removal of the pupil from the School.