



AMBITIONS

Academies Trust

**EXPECTATIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR
HOME / ACADEMY COMMUNICATION AND VISITS**

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Home Academy Communication

The academy actively encourages close links with parents/carers and the community. We know that students benefit when the relationship between home and academy is a positive one and we welcome visitors to our academy and encourage parents/carers to communicate with us by phone or via email. If a parent or carer has concerns we will always listen to them and seek to address them as quickly and positively as possible. We will always act to ensure the academy remains a safe place for students, staff and all other members of our community and therefore abusive, threatening or aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated. If such behaviour occurs we will follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and which will not be tolerated in relation to members of staff, and all members of the community are:

- shouting, either in person or over the telephone
- swearing, either in person or over the telephone
- emails which are sarcastic, combative or aggressive in tone and language
- constant emails and/or phone calls which amount to harassment and intimidation
- inappropriate electronic activity including publishing abusive or inappropriate content with regards to the academy, teachers, students or their families on social networking or in any other communication
- any form of physical violence, such as pushing or hitting
- physical intimidation
- the use of rude or aggressive hand gestures, including shaking or holding a fist towards another person

Acceptable Communication

Communication between home and academy should always been carried out in a respectful and calm manner, even when relating to a grievance. It is not appropriate for anyone to have to deal with challenging, abusive, aggressive or threatening telephone calls.

It is unacceptable for any member of staff to be subjected to abuse or personal insults and this guidance has been produced to assist parents to understand conduct which the academy expects parents to follow during phone calls and to staff if they are faced with a difficult situation.

All parties must always:

- remain calm and polite
- stay in control of the situation
- explain the reason for the call in a calm and controlled manner

- actively listen and, if necessary, repeat information back to ensure understanding of the issue
- be clear and avoid using jargon

Never:

- respond in a manner which is abusive, threatening or rude,
- use bad language
- slam the phone down
- raise your voice
- Make inappropriate personal references or comments

Parties may:

- make a note of the conversation, including full details, dates and time
- (Staff) if appropriate refer the caller/email to a Line Manager or relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- Confirm that they will be ending the conversation should the call become abusive, threatening or rude

Communication by Telephone

When parents/carers telephone the Academy they will speak initially to our Reception/Main Office staff. They will do their very best to connect you with the person you wish to speak to, but given the vast majority of our staff will be teaching, it is most likely that they will take a message for that member of staff. Please allow staff to listen to your concerns and afford them reasonable time to investigate a matter should this be necessary. Staff will conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner and make every attempt to meet the needs of the caller.

Communication by Email

- Always use formal and courteous language in the message
- Do not use bold text or capitalisation to emphasise concerns
- (parents/carers) Only expect a response from the member of staff to whom you have directly sent the email, not those who you have included in the circulation
- Do not expect an instant response. The majority of staff will be teaching for most of the day or have pre-arranged appointments and do not have the opportunity to check their emails until the conclusion of meetings and training which take place after the children have gone home

Use of Cyber Technology

The Academy generally or individual staff may become targets of cyber abuse or bullying which can have a significant impact on health, well-being and self-confidence. Protecting staff from abuse is best done within a prevention framework, including whole academy policies and appropriate practices.

Cyber abuse/bullying may consist of threats, harassment, embarrassment, humiliation, defamation or impersonation. It may take the form of general insults, or prejudice based abuse, e.g. homophobic, sexist, racist, or other forms of discrimination. It may involve email, virtual learning environments, chat rooms, websites, social networking sites, mobile and fixed-point phones, digital cameras, games and virtual world sites.

Abuse using cyber technology can occur at any time and incidents can intrude into the victim's private life. The audience for such messages can be very large and can be reached rapidly. The content of electronically forwarded messages is hard to control and the worry of content resurfacing can make it difficult for the victim to move on.

Cyberbullying And The Law

While there is not a specific criminal offence called cyberbullying, activities can be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including:

- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003
- Public Order Act 1986
- The Defamation Acts 1952 and 1996

It is the duty of the academy to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees. Incidents that are related to employment, even those taking place outside the hours or place of work may fall under the responsibility of the employer

Effectively Tackling Abuse Using Cyber Technology

Academy behaviour policies and procedures identify the consequences of abuse of Cyber Technology.

Bullying Using Cyber Technology

Where online content is upsetting / inappropriate and the person(s) responsible for posting is known, the quickest way to get material taken down is likely to be to ensure that the person who posted it understands why the material is unacceptable and to request that they remove it.

Responding to Incidents

If the person responsible has not been identified, or will not take the material down, the academy will contact the host (i.e. the social networking site) to make a request to get the content taken down. The material posted may breach the service provider's terms and conditions of use and can then be removed.

It is important to be clear about where the content is – for example by taking a screen capture of the material that includes the URL or web address. If the academy requests they take down material that is not illegal, it will be clear how it contravenes the site's terms and conditions

A designated member of the leadership team will contact the police where it appears that a law has been broken – for example, where death threats, assault, or racially motivated criminal offences are involved. Where a potential criminal offence has been identified, the academy should ensure that any internal investigation does not interfere with police inquiries. Academy staff are of course able to report incidents directly to the police. If a potential criminal offence has been committed and the academy is not able to identify the perpetrator, the police may issue a Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) request to a service provider, enabling them to disclose the data about a message or the person sending it.

*Parents/carers refers to anyone with Parental Responsibility or day to day care of pupils

Other Policies to be referred to where relevant :

Behaviour for Learning Policy / Complaints Policy / Equality Policy / Home Academy Agreement /
Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Staff / Staff Code of Conduct / Violence at Work /
Whistleblowing