



# **CANTRELL PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL**

## **Persistent Complaints and Harassment Policy**

**Issued: Summer Term 2024**

**Next review date: Summer Term 2026**

## **Introduction**

At Cantrell Primary and Nursery School the Headteacher and all staff deal with specific complaints as part of the day-to-day management of our school. This is in accordance with our Complaints Procedure and Policy.

The majority of these complaints are resolved quickly, however there are occasions where complainant's behaviour can result in an unreasonable manner in the pursuit of their concerns and/or their actions can impact negatively on the school and well-being of staff and pupils. In this exceptional circumstance the school may take action in accordance with this policy.

## **Aims**

Support the well-being of all stakeholders in our school community.

Deal fairly and honestly with those who make persistent complaints and those who harass members of staff/stakeholders in the school community ensuring other stakeholder suffer no detriment.

Uphold the standards of courtesy and reasonableness that should characterise all communication between school stakeholders and those people /persons who will to express and/or pursue a complaint.

## **What can parents/carers expect from school?**

Parents/Carers who raise either informal or formal complaints or concerns can expect the school to:

- Respond within a reasonable time
- Make time for consultation within reasonable time limits – bearing in mind the needs of the pupils within the school and nature of complaint
- Respond with courtesy and respect
- Communicate how parents can raise issues they have with the school- sign posting to the Complaints Procedure
- Make all possible attempts to resolve complaints or concerns in line with existing school policies, procedures and practice.
- Keep complaints informed of progress towards the resolution of the concern – within reasonable time limits.

## **Our expectations of parents/carers/members of the public**

When a parent/carer/family member or member of the public wish to raise a concern or complain either formally or informally we expect-

- All school staff and stakeholders to be treated with courtesy and respect at all times.
- Respect to be shown to the needs and well-being of all stakeholders including pupils and staff.
- Complaints or concerns to be raised without aggression, verbal abuse, threats or threatened use of violence to people or property.
- Complaints to recognise time constraints staff in school work under and allow school reasonable time to respond.
- Follow the complaints procedure.
- Complaints to recognise that resolving concerns and complaints may take some time.

## Who is a persistent complainant?

At Cantrell Primary and Nursery School we define a persistent complainant as a parent/carer/family member or member of the public who-

- Complains about issues either formally or informally on a frequent basis which is deemed unreasonable.
- Frequently and consistently complains about issues they consider to be within the remit of the school.
- Shown behaviour that is unreasonable in that their complaints or actions are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific and repetitious.
- Have prolific correspondence including phone calls or emails.
- Use the freedom of information act to make consistent request which are excessive and unreasonable.
- Have an insistence on pursuing unsubstantial complaints/and or unrealistic or unreasonable outcomes.
- An insistence on pursuing complaints in an unreasonable manner
- Insist on only dealing with the Headteacher on all occasions irrespective of the issue and level of delegation.
- Insist on only dealing with specific members of school staff on all occasions irrespective of the issues and delegation.
- Insist on repeatedly pursuing a complaint when the outcome is not to their satisfaction but cannot be changed
- Harasses school staff and any stakeholder in that – they appear to target over a significant period of time one or more members of the school stakeholders and cause ongoing distress. This also includes having a significant adverse effect on the school community.
- Harasses school staff and any stakeholder in that they pursue complaints in a manner which can be perceived as intimidating and oppressive- this could include – persistent demands, criticisms, and undermining decisions.

## Action against Persistent Complainants

- In the first instance school will verbally inform the complainant that their behaviour is considered to be unacceptable/unreasonable and if not modified action will be taken in accordance with this policy.
- This will be confirmed in writing.
- If behaviour does not change the school will take actions – some detailed below. This will depend on what is necessary, having regard for the nature of the complainant's behaviour and the effect this is having on the school community:
- Inform the complainant in writing the behaviour is now considered to be unreasonable and unacceptable so therefore falls under the terms of this policy.
- Inform the complainant that all meeting with a staff member of stakeholder will be conducted with a second person present and notes of meetings will be taken.
- Inform the complainant that except in emergencies all routine communication to the school should be via letter only.
- In the case of verbal and physical aggression take legal advice and consider warning the complainant about being banned from the school site.
- Consider a temporary school site ban.
- Consider taking legal advice on pursuing a case under the Anti-Harassment legislation.
- Consider taking legal advice about putting in place specific procedures for dealing with complaints from the complainant – for example not dealing directly with the head teacher or specified member of staff.

- Legitimate new complaints may still be considering even if the person making them is or has been subject to the actions in this policy. However, school may take legal advice.
- If a complainant's behaviour is modified and then resume at a later date and within a reasonable time period school may resume the process identified above at the level which school, see as appropriate. Legal advice may be sought.

**Review**

This will be reviewed at least annually and when appropriate.

To be reviewed Summer term 2026