

Dealing with Abusive Adults Policy



Review Date

December 2025

Ratified

January 2026

Next Review Date

December 2026

Responsible Directorate

Education

About ATT

Our Values



ATT2030 sets a values-driven culture that is explicit about how we work and lead:

Belonging & Becoming: we meet each child where they are and refuse to leave them there - giving them both roots and wings.

Integrity & Excellence: we act ethically, celebrate excellence, and pursue high standards in all that we do.

High Trust, High Accountability: decision-making sits close to pupils and communities; principals are trusted as strategic leaders; the central team acts as expert partner; accountability is professional, dialogic, and focused on learning and improvement.

Our Three Goals

Everything in ATT2030 is organised around three interlinked goals that describe the kind of people - pupils and adults - that we are forming:

Capable: equipped with the knowledge, skills, and emotional readiness to perform to a high standard, adapt to change, and contribute meaningfully.

Competent: possessing the knowledge, habits, and judgement to get things done – well, reliably, and independently – handling setbacks and making steady progress.

Confident: feeling safe, happy, and known – secure enough to take risks, speak up, and grow with purpose and integrity.

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1.0 Statement of Intent

- 1.1 At Academy Transformation Trust we value the positive relationships forged with parents, carers and visitors to the academy. We encourage close links with parents and the community and believe that students benefit when the relationship between home and the academy is a positive one.
- 1.2 We also strive to make our academies a place where, as adults, we model for students the behaviour we teach and expect. In general, we place a high importance on good manners, positive communication, and mutual respect.
- 1.3 Almost all parents, carers and visitors to our academies are keen to work with us and are supportive of the academy. However, on very rare occasions the behaviour of a small number of adults falls short of what we expect. This sometimes manifests itself in aggression or abuse towards members of the academy community. This can be in written communication (including social media), on the telephone, or in face-to-face incidents.
- 1.4 In these situations, we expect members of staff to behave professionally, attempting to defuse the situation where possible and seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues. Staff who face these situations have licence to end any conversation (face to face or on the telephone). They should then refer the incident to a senior manager who will take appropriate action or invoke the provisions of this policy.
- 1.5 The overriding principle is that all members of the academy community have the right to work or be in the academy without fear of aggression or abuse from adults. The Trust has an obligation to protect staff from intimidation, abuse and violence as part of our Health and Safety Duty obligation.
- 1.6 Actions taken against the adult will be reasonable and proportionate. We will meet our Public Sector Equality Duty and make reasonable adjustments where appropriate before deciding restrictions. The adult will have the opportunity to put their views forward at every stage. In the case of the imposition of conditions or a ban from school, robust review processes involving the Chair of Governors and then the Local Governing Body are in place to ensure fairness.
- 1.7 This policy has been written considering the DfE guidance on school security: Access to, and barring individuals from school premises, 27 November 2018. This guidance makes it clear that the trust can delegate power to principals to impose provisional conditions/ bans through the scheme of delegation. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/controlling-access-to-school-premises>

2.0 Definition of Unacceptable Behaviour

- 2.1 This policy covers unacceptable behaviour which is committed by a parent/ carer or adult :
 - in any Trust or Academy buildings or site
 - by telephone to the Trust or an Academy
 - by email to the Trust or an Academy
 - on social media and any other public electronic media platforms (e.g. websites) referring to the Trust or an Academy or a member of staff of the Trust or Academy
- 2.2 We consider that aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language from an adult presents a risk to staff or students. Unacceptable behaviour is such that makes a member of staff or student feel threatened. This can be through face-to-face contact, on the telephone or in written communication (including social media). The following is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour:

- verbal or written threats of violence or harm
- swearing or the use of other abusive, offensive or threatening language
- intimidation, coercion or humiliation
- aggressive or disruptive behaviour
- harassment, bullying or causing distress
- physical violence, including damage to property or injury to individuals
- discriminatory conduct or use of discriminatory language (sexist, racist, other)
- frequent, unwarranted and/or unnecessary correspondence which is hindering the proper running of the Trust or its Academies
- making deliberately false, malicious or vexatious accusations
- consumption of alcohol (unless alcohol has been allowed at a specific event) or use of illegal drugs on the Trust or an Academy's premises, or accessing the Trust or an Academy's premises whilst intoxicated
- any behaviour that violates the law or school policies
- incitement of others to do any of the above

2.3 This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such conduct. It will ultimately be for the Trust to determine whether conduct is deemed to be unacceptable.

2.4 Any form of communication that threatens the safety or well-being of staff or pupils will be taken seriously and addressed immediately, with the goal of protecting the safety and well-being of all members of our Trust and academy communities.

2.5 **Covert recordings:** Unless explicitly agreed in writing, the Trust does not consent to audio/video recording of staff, governors or volunteers during meetings or calls. Staff may terminate a meeting/call if a recording is made or suspected. While purely personal recordings may fall outside data protection law, publishing or sharing recordings (e.g. on social media) may breach data protection, harassment or defamation laws. Breaches may lead to a restricted communication plan, site restrictions, or legal action.

2.6 **Inappropriate use of social media:** The Trust encourages parents to approach staff with concerns and to make use of the Trust's Complaints Procedure to escalate matters where necessary. We urge parents to refrain from expressing concerns about the Trust, its academies or its staff on social media sites. Expressing concerns on social media may damage the reputation of the Trust and/or its academies and the integrity of its staff may be unnecessarily called into question. Negative comments posted on social media can cause upset and is often counter-productive to the overall aim of educating pupils. Furthermore, comments made about individual members of staff may be considered defamatory or amount to cyber-bullying.

2.7 Section 141F of the Education Act, 2002 as amended by s.13 Education Act 2011 states that "It is a criminal offence to publish information likely to identify a teacher who is the subject of an allegation by or on behalf of a pupil until the teacher is charged, or the Secretary of State publishes related disciplinary information" Publication contrary to this restriction is a summary offence punishable by a fine.

2.8 Should the Trust become aware that a parent is using social media to target the Trust, any Academy or its staff, it may (or it may authorise an Academy to):

- report the post(s) to the relevant social networking site
- contact the parent or social media page owner to require the post be edited or removed
- issue the parent with a restricted communication plan (see below)
- where appropriate, inform the police or other relevant agencies

- 2.9 The academy's approach to dealing with incidents if a parent/carer/visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the academy community is for the Principal or appropriate senior leader to assess the level of risk before deciding on a future course of action. The course of action will be reasonable and commensurate with the assessed level of risk. In assessing risk and proportionality, leaders will consider any relevant vulnerabilities and reasonable adjustments.

3.0 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 The Principal will carry out a risk assessment to help determine the level of response. In all cases the response will be reasonable and proportionate. The Principal will consider the following issues:

- What form did the abuse take?
- What evidence is there?
- What do witnesses say happened?
- Are there previous incidents to take into consideration?
- Do members of staff/students feel intimidated by the adult's behaviour?
- Is there any evidence of provocation?
- How high is the assessed risk that this will be repeated, or will there be retaliation at the academy's action? (low, medium, high)?
- Any digital evidence (emails, messages, social posts, recordings); any adjustments offered; risk to named individuals; whether police advice has been sought.

3.2 Recording of incidents

- Staff or students subject to abuse and witnesses will make written statements about the incident(s), which will be kept in a file with subsequent letters.
- Depending on an assessment of the risk of retaliation to witnesses or individuals, statements made by adults may be made available to the parent upon request.
- Following the completion of the risk assessment, the Principal will decide the level of action to be taken.
- Records will be kept in line with the Trust retention schedule; lawful basis: public task/legitimate interests; special or criminal offence data processed only where permitted by law. We may share evidence with police or courts when necessary.

4.0 Actions following an incident

- 4.1 Principals will ensure that they fulfil the expectations of the Public Sector Equality Duty and make a reasonable adjustment when dealing with adults. This might include, but is not limited to: language used, translation, trauma informed approaches.

4.2 Clarify to the adult what is considered acceptable behaviour by the academy.

In some instances, it may be appropriate simply to ensure the adult is clear about behaviour standards expected by the academy. This could be explained in a letter from the Principal. This letter may contain a warning about further action if there are further incidents. The parent will be invited to write to the Principal with his/her version of events within 10 working days. Depending on the adult's response a meeting may then be held to discuss the situation and how this can be avoided in future.

4.3 Invite the adult to an informal meeting to discuss the event(s)

- This could be helpful to discuss and diffuse the situation.

- The safety and well-being of those attending such a meeting must be carefully considered. Members of academy staff will always be accompanied by at least one other colleague at any such meeting.
- Consideration should be given to the seating arrangements, and care taken to ensure exits cannot be blocked by an adult who could potentially become aggressive.
- The main points of discussion and any agreed actions should be noted, and a follow-up letter or e-mail sent to confirm the academy's expectations and any agreed actions

4.4 **Impose conditions on the adult's contact with the academy and its staff**

- Although fulfilling a public function, academies are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Parents of enrolled students have an implied licence to come onto academy premises at certain stated times, but it is for academies to define and set out the extent of such access. Adults exceeding this would be trespassing. The trust in this situation is the proprietor and delegates the ability to improve conditions to the Principal of the academy.
- Depending on the type, level or frequency of the unacceptable behaviour, the academy may consider imposing conditions on the adult's contact with the academy.

4.5 These conditions may include (but are not exclusively):

- Being accompanied to any meeting with a member of academy staff by a member of senior leadership team.
- Restricting contact by telephone to named members of the senior leadership team or at a specified time
- Requiring contact in a particular form (e.g. in writing only)
- Restricting written communications to named members of the senior leadership team
- Restricting attendance at academy events to those where the adult will be accompanied by a member of the senior leadership team of the academy
- Any other restriction as deemed reasonable and proportionate by the Principal.

4.6 In this case the adult will be informed by letter by the Principal of the details of the conditions that are being imposed. The adult would then be given 10 working days from the date of that letter to make representations in writing about the conditions to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors would then decide whether to confirm or remove the conditions. This would be communicated to the adult in writing within 10 working days of the date of the parent's letter.

- If the decision is to confirm the conditions imposed, this decision will be reviewed by the Local Governing Body (LGB) after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The adult will be invited to make written representation to the governors. This and the evidence from the Principal will be considered at a meeting of the LGB. Governors may decide to maintain, extend or remove the conditions. The decision of the review will be communicated to the parent by the clerk to the governors within 10 days of the date of the meeting.
- When deciding whether it will be necessary to maintain, extend or remove the conditions, governors will consider the extent of the adult's compliance with the conditions, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from him/her, and any evidence of the adult's cooperation with the academy in other respects

5.0 Imposing a ban

- 5.1 Where other procedures have been exhausted and aggression or intimidation continues OR where there is an extreme act of violence, the academy may consider banning the individual from the academy premises. This will include banning an adult from accessing academy staff by written communication or telephone. In these circumstances, the individual would be advised in writing by the Principal that a provisional ban is being imposed. The parent would then be given 10 working days from the date of that letter to make representations about the ban in writing to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors would then decide whether to confirm or remove the ban. This would be communicated to the parent in writing within 10 working days of the receipt of their letter. If the Chair's decision is to confirm the ban, adults in these circumstances will be offered an annual meeting about their child's progress, usually with a member of senior staff.
- 5.2 A decision to impose a ban will be reviewed by the LGB after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The adult will be invited to make written representation to the governors; this and the evidence from the Principal will be considered at a meeting of the LGB. Governors may decide to remove the ban, extend the ban or impose conditions on parent's access to the academy. The decision of the review will be communicated to the parent by the clerk to the governors within 10 days of the date of the meeting.
- 5.3 In deciding whether to remove or extend the ban or impose conditions, governors will consider the extent of the adult's compliance with the ban, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from him/her and any evidence of the parent's co-operation with the academy in other respects.
We will always leave a lawful contact route (e.g., a single mailbox) for statutory matters (complaints, subject access, safeguarding). Conditions are notified "on behalf of the Trust (proprietor)" and that the review is conducted under the Scheme of Delegation.
- 5.4 An injunction under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 - The Trust may seek an injunction requiring the parent to desist from behaving in the manner in question.

6.0 Removal from the academy

- 6.1 In academies, the Trust (as proprietor) controls access. The Principal may impose a provisional ban on behalf of the Trust pending review by the Chair and LGB. We may also seek an injunction for harassment in serious or persistent cases. Adults who have been banned from the academy premises and continue to cause a nuisance will be deemed to have committed an offence under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996, i.e. for a person who is on school premises without lawful authority to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance. They will be considered as trespassers. In these circumstances the offender may be removed from the academy site. This may be carried out by a police officer or person authorised by the LGB. Legal proceedings may be brought against the parent.

7.0 Complaints Procedure

- 7.1 Any parental complaint that arises from incidents of abusive behaviour will be dealt with under the Complaints Procedure. Where a Restricted Communication Plan is in place, complaints will be accepted via the nominated route and timelines continue to apply.