Tunstall CofE Primary School

Policy for Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints (or Contact)

Tunstall CEP Vision

‘Thinking deeply, loving abundantly, serving graciously, for the Glory of God’

‘We believe that God’s abundance is for everyone, nurturing a servant heart for the local community of Tunstall and beyond. Learning opportunities are broad, inclusive and inspiring where creativity is nurtured and harnessed at every opportunity through our unique, Discovery Curriculum. Children and staff are safe, secure and empowered to be risk takers. We are a culturally diverse school who value each other's uniqueness with dignity and respect. We think deeply, love abundantly and serve graciously for the Glory of God and thus uphold our biblical underpinning of John10:10 being: ‘A place where everyone can flourish’.

Signed: D Jones and K Fleckney

Date: April 2026

Review Date: April 2027

FRIENDSHIP, KINDNESS, SERVICE, FORGIVENESS, PERSEVERANCE, TRUTHFULNESS

Scope and applicability

This policy applies to all contacts (in person, by telephone, email, social media, third-party representatives and public forums) from parents, carers, members of the public or other stakeholders that relate to complaints, concerns, enquiries or repeated matters about the school. It applies to contacts about historic and current matters. Where relevant, it applies to staff and governors' reasonable correspondence with each other when contact becomes serial or unreasonable.

Tunstall CofE School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Tunstall CofE School defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information

- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an '*unreasonable'* marking.

If the behaviour continues, the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Tunstall CofE School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from Tunstall CofE School.

Serial and Unreasonable Contact

Tunstall CofE also reserves the right to apply this policy to people who persist in making serial and unreasonable contact with the school even when it may not be related to a formal complaint. For example if multiple different queries, concerns or issues are raised within a short period or over a sustained period of time [or if abusive, offensive or discriminatory language is used against staff]. The criteria for assessment will remain as above.

Restriction from the School Premises

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Schools will therefore act to ensure they remain a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of their community.

Schools can bar someone from the premises if they feel that their aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language is a risk to staff or pupils. It's enough for a member of staff or a pupil to feel threatened.

If an adult's behaviour is a cause for concern, a school can ask him/her to leave school premises (barring). In serious cases, the Headteacher, or the local authority can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the person may wish to make. Tunstall CofE School will give the person the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing. The decision to bar will then be reviewed, taking into account any representations made by the person, and either confirmed or lifted. If the decision is confirmed the person will be notified in writing, explaining how long the bar will be in place.

Anyone wishing to complain about being barred can do so, by letter or email, to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. However, complaints about barring cannot be escalated to the Department for Education. Once the school's own complaints procedure has been completed, the only remaining avenue of appeal is through the Courts; independent legal advice must therefore be sought.

Definitions

- Serial/unreasonable contact: repeated contact raising the same or similar matters that hinder the school's ability to consider the issue, create disproportionate workload, or use abusive or threatening behaviour.
- Communication plan: a formally agreed, written plan between the school and the individual specifying the single named point of contact, permitted methods and times for contact, maximum number of contacts per week/month and expected behaviour standards. A copy will be shared with the individual, and recorded on the complaint file.
- Bar (temporary or permanent): a written notice revoking the individual's implied permission to enter school premises for a stated period (pending representations or indefinitely if confirmed).