

Schools' responses to persistent complaints or harassment

This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the school's complaints procedure. Taken together, these documents set out how each school will always seek to work with parents, carers and others with a legitimate complaint to resolve a difficulty.

However, in case of persistent complaints or harassment, the school may take the following steps:

- Inform the complainant informally that her / his behaviour is now considered by the school to be unreasonable or unacceptable, and request a changed approach.
- Inform the complainant in writing that the school considers her / his behaviour to fall under the terms of the schools complaints procedure.
- Require all future meetings with a member of staff to be conducted with a second person present. In the interests of all parties, notes of these meetings may be taken.
- Inform the complainant that, except in emergencies, the school will respond only to written communication.

Physical or verbal aggression

Neither Norfolk County Council nor the school will tolerate ANY form of physical or verbal aggression against school staff. If the staff are subject to this type of aggression the school may:

- Ban the individual from entering the school site, with immediate effect.
- Request an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO).
- Prosecute under Anti-Harassment legislation.

Legitimate new complaints will always be considered, even though the person making them is (or has been) subject to the schools complaints procedure.

This information can be made available upon request in large type, audio tape, Braille or alternative languages.

For further information visit our website:

Website: www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/HR



NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL SCHOOL'S PERSISTENT COMPLAINTS / HARASSMENT POLICY

INFORMATION AND ADVICE FOR PARENTS / CARERS



Introduction

Headteachers and Governing Bodies are committed to the improvement of their schools and all schools welcome feedback from parents and carers and will always try to resolve any complaints as quickly as possible.

Sometimes, however, parents or carers pursuing complaints or other issues treat staff in a way that is unacceptable. Whilst we recognise that some complaints may relate to serious and distressing incidents, headteachers and governing bodies will not accept threatening or harassing behaviour.

What do we mean by a 'persistent complaint'?

A persistent complainant may be anyone who engages in unreasonable behaviour when making a complaint, including parents and carers who pursue complaints in an unreasonable manner.

Unreasonable behaviour may include:

- Actions which are out of proportion to the nature of the complaint.
- Persisting with complaints – even when the complaints procedure has been exhausted.

- Personal harassment.
- Using abusive or threatening language.
- Making complaints in public.
- Refusing to attend appointments to discuss the complaint.

What is 'harassment'?

Harassment is the unreasonable pursuit of issues or complaints, particularly if the matter appears to be pursued in a way intended to cause personal distress rather than seek a resolution.

Behaviour will fall within the scope of this policy if:

- It appears to be deliberately targeted over a significant period of time at one or more members of school staff, without good cause.
- The way in which a complaint or other issues is pursued causes ongoing distress to school staff.
- It has a significant and disproportionate adverse effect on the school community.

What can you expect of the school?

Anyone who raises informal or formal issues and complaints with a school can expect the school to:

- Keep in touch regularly in writing.
- Respond within a reasonable time.
- Be available for consultation within a reasonable time limit, bearing in mind the need of the pupils at the school.
- Respond with courtesy and respect.
- Attempt to resolve problems using reasonable means in line with the school's complaints procedure and advice from Norfolk County Council.
- Full details relating to how schools will respond to complaints are set out in each school's complaints procedure.

What the school expects of you

Norfolk County Council and the school expect anyone who wishes to raise problems with the school to:

- Treat all school staff with courtesy and respect.
- Respect the needs of pupils and staff.
- Avoid the use of violence.
- Recognise the time constraints under which members of staff in schools work and allow the school a reasonable time to respond to a complaint.
- Follow the school's complaint procedure and accept its outcome.