

## Unacceptable communication – guidance to staff

### **Disrespectful or abusive behaviour or communication**

Disrespectful or abusive behaviour/communication towards a member of staff is not tolerated at Maiden Erlegh School.

### **Possible actions to deal with behaviour or communication which is unacceptable**

1. Any member of staff who directly experiences aggressive or abusive behaviour from a stakeholder, has the authority to deal immediately with that behaviour in a reasonable and proportionate manner which they consider appropriate to the situation and which is in line with this guidance.
2. The threat or use of physical violence, verbal abuse or harassment towards our staff may result in a termination of all direct contact with the stakeholder.
3. Such incidents may also be reported to the police (eg: if physical violence is used or threatened).
4. Where written correspondence is abusive or contains allegations that lack substantive evidence, it will be passed to a senior member of staff. They will inform the sender that we consider their language to be offensive, unnecessary and unhelpful and ask them to stop using such language.
5. We may ask that the sender edit their correspondence to remove any offensive text and resend it, otherwise it will not receive a response.
6. Our staff have the right to make the decision that a telephone call is disrespectful or that the language/tone is abusive or offensive. Where this is the case they will say:  
-“I am sorry but what you are saying is unacceptable/offensive please will you moderate your language”  
If the behaviour persists they will say:  
-“I am sorry you are still being unacceptable/offensive and I am ending this conversation”.
7. This will then be reported to the Headteacher.
8. In extreme situations, we will tell the person in writing that we will not permit any personal contact from them. This means that we will limit contact with them to either written communication or through a named person or through a third party.

### **Unreasonable demands on individual members of staff**

It is also not acceptable to make unreasonable demands on individual members of staff. Unreasonable demands are ones which impact excessively on the work of our staff such that it puts in jeopardy the efficient running of the school or the efficient education of students. Examples are:

- repeatedly telephoning, emailing, writing
- frequently arriving at reception and asking to see members of staff
- repeated requests for meetings with no clear agenda
- raising repeatedly the same issues
- sending large numbers of documents about which the relevance is not clear

Where a stakeholder’s demands are deemed to unreasonable, the matter is reported initially to the colleague’s Standards Manager.

### **Possible outcomes**

1. Limit contact to telephone calls from the person at set times on set days
2. Restrict contact to a nominated member of staff who will deal with future calls or correspondence
3. See the person by appointment only
4. Restrict contact to “hard” written correspondence only
5. Refuse to deal with further correspondence and return any documents or, in extreme cases
6. Advise the person that further irrelevant documentation will be destroyed
7. Where we consider continued correspondence on a wide range of issues to be excessive, we may tell the person that only a certain number of issues will be considered in a given period and ask them to limit or focus their requests accordingly.
8. Where someone repeatedly demands a response on an issue on which they have already been a given a clear answer, we may refuse to respond to further enquiries from the person.

Taking any action of this kind is hugely regrettable and will only be necessary in extreme circumstances. Where we take a decision to restrict a stakeholder’s contact with the school, we will inform them in writing what action we are taking and why.

**Maiden Erlegh School staff**

Maiden Erlegh School staff will remain calm, respectful and courteous at all times, whether in person, on the telephone or in writing. Any stakeholder who does not feel a member of our staff has behaved appropriately is entitled to make a complaint in line with our Complaints Policy.