YSGOL Y LAWNT

Policy For Handling Unreasonably Persistent, Harassing Or Abusive Complainants

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The headteacher and governing body are fully committed to the improvement of our school. We welcome feedback from parents/carers and will always try to resolve any concerns as quickly as possible. There is a procedure for parents to use if they wish to make a formal complaint.

Sometimes, however, parents or carers pursuing complaints or other issues treat staff and others in a way that is unacceptable. Whilst we recognise that some complaints may relate to serious and distressing incidents, we will not accept threatening or harassing behaviour towards any members of the school community.

The aim of this policy is to provide information about our school policy on unreasonably persistent complainants or harassment of staff.

What do we mean by 'an unreasonably persistent complainant'?
An unreasonably persistent complainant may be anyone who engages in unreasonable behaviour when making a complaint. This will include persons who pursue complaints in an unreasonable manner.

Unreasonable behaviour may include:
actions which are out of proportion to the nature of the complaint, or
persistent – even when the complaints procedure has been exhausted or already dealt with by the school, or
personally harassing, or
unjustifiably repetitious

an insistence on pursuing unjustified complaints and/or
an expectation of unrealistic outcomes to justified complaints,
an insistence on pursuing justifiable complaints in an unreasonable manner (eg using abusive or threatening language; or
making complaints in public (e.g. via social media); or
refusing to attend appointments to discuss the complaint.

What is 'harassment'?
We regard harassment as 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 to seek a resolution.

Behaviour may fall within the scope of this policy if:

- it appears to be deliberately targeted at one or more members of school staff or others, without good cause;
- the way in which a complaint or other issues is pursued (as opposed to the complaint itself) causes undue distress to school staff or others;
- it has a significant and disproportionate adverse effect on the school community.
- It requires an unreasonable amount of school resources or staff time, disproportionate to the issue or matter raised.

What does the school expect of any person wishing to raise a concern?
The school expects anyone who wishes to raise concerns with the school to:
• treat all members of the school community with courtesy and respect;
• respect the needs of pupils and staff within the school;
• avoid the use of violence, or threats of violence, towards people or property;
• 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 and respect the school's complaints procedure.

School's responses to unreasonably 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 we will always seek to work with parents, carers and others with a legitimate complaint to resolve a difficulty.

However, in cases of unreasonably persistent complaints or harassment, the school may take some or all of the following steps, as appropriate:
• inform the complainant informally that his/her 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 his/her behaviour to fall under the terms of the Unreasonably Persistent Complaints/ Harassment Policy;
• 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 and that these may be required to be channelled through the Local Authority.

Physical or verbal aggression
The governing body will not tolerate any form of physical or verbal aggression against members of the
school community. If there is evidence of any such aggression the school may:
• ban the individual from entering the school site, with immediate effect;
• request an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (AS BO);
• prosecute under Anti-Harassment legislation.
• call the police to remove the individual from the premises, under powers provided by the Education Act 1996.

Legitimate new complaints will always be considered, even if the person making them is (or has been) subject to the Unreasonably Persistent Complaints/ Harassment Policy. The school nevertheless reserves the right not to respond to communications from individuals subject to this policy.

Signed: **(Chair of Governors)**

Date: