

08 February 2023

Dear Families

I hope this letter find you well. This half term seemed to have passed in the blink of an eye and we break up for half term on Friday. School finishes at the usual time for everyone and we return on Monday 20th February 2023.

My main reason for writing is a sad one and I know the vast majority of you will find what I say quite shocking, but I feel I need to write to all families so my message is clear.

Unfortunately, we are having an increasing number of issues with parents being verbally abusive with staff either face to face, or most commonly over the telephone. As other providers of service/care, such as the NHS, make clear, we will not accept this attitude and behaviour.

The verbal abuse often begins when my reception or admin staff answer the telephone. They may immediately be sworn at and/or threatened that if the caller is not phoned back immediately then they are going to come down to school, at times making various threats.

The above abuse also takes place when members of my attendance/pastoral team phone to check up on absences or report issues in school. They can be sworn at or threatened for simply asking questions around absence or explaining a situation which has occurred.

If a child has been removed from a class for poor behaviour, the teacher is expected to phone home to discuss this. This again has led to swearing/belittling or threatening language from some adults towards teaching staff.

This is not acceptable.

As a consequence, we are taking the following actions:

- When you contact the school by phone/email or in person we will be in touch within 24 hours. If your issue relates to a child being in immediate danger you will be put through to safeguarding for immediate advice and/or advised to contact the police.
- You will not be able to see staff without a prior appointment, unless it is a safeguarding emergency.
- If you threaten to come down here and give a staff member a piece of your mind/tell Ofsted/go to 'Education' or the Local Authority this will not get you a quicker response. In fact, if you are rude or abusive to reception they will end the call immediately. You will then need to call back and be polite, or contact us via email. It will then take longer for your query to be dealt with.

When any member of staff contacts you directly about any aspect of your child's life here; attendance, behaviour etc. they will be polite and respectful and deserve the same in return. Again, if you swear or are verbally abusive in any way they will immediately end the call.

Your name will then be passed on to a senior member of staff. They will contact you to give a chance for reflection, for example you may have been caught off guard/under stress at the time/there may have been a misunderstanding.

If the follow up call is also abusive we will then take measures to limit the contact you have with us; this can include:

- Banning from site
- Refusing to take phone calls from you, and only engaging via email
- Limiting contact to senior staff only

To be clear this does not relate in any way to the many families who email or phone us in distress or upset and need urgent support. This just relates to our response to abusive behaviour. We will always try to support you in whatever ways we can.

I also ask that you pass on your concerns to Miss Pennington (years 7-9), Mr Al Khatab (years 10 and 11), or myself if you have worries about how we are dealing with something in relation to your child. Like any organisation, we do make mistakes or sometimes something is missed by a member of staff. We will always act quickly to resolve any issues.

As I said at the beginning of the letter this is a small minority of people. Can I thank the vast majority of you for your ongoing support in all we do.

Many thanks



Ruth England
Headteacher