



WEST GRANTHAM

Church of England Secondary Academy

SAFE WORKING PLACE POLICY

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Reviewed by:	Operations Manager
Approved by:	Interim Executive Board

VERSION	DATE	AUTHOR	CHANGES
2	17 March 2023	Julie Swatton	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Title changed from Safe Place Policy to Safe Working Place PolicyPage 4 – Record Keeping amended to Logging and Record Keeping and the requirement to fill in an incident form and forward to the Operations Manager added
3	14 March 2025	Julie Rickerby	No changes

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1. Introduction

Staff and pupils have a right to expect their academy to be a safe place in which to work and learn. The Academy will not tolerate threatening, abusive or aggressive behaviour towards any members of the Academy community.

This policy aims to assist the Executive Principal and governing body in cases where the behaviour of parents and other visitors to the academy gives cause for concern.

In addition, the policy sets out procedures for dealing with difficult or abusive telephone calls as well as abuse using cyber technology.

2. Risk Assessment

In the event of a parent behaving in an inappropriate way, each situation will need to be considered individually by the Executive Principal or a designated member of staff. The following factors should be taken into account as a risk assessment, before deciding on the most appropriate course of action:

- Has the parent been verbally aggressive/threatening/intimidating?
- Has the parent been physically aggressive/threatening/intimidating?
- What evidence is there? What do witnesses say happened?
- Does the parent have a known previous history of aggression/violence? (Information can only be sought from the police when an official complaint has been made).
- Do members of the academy staff/community feel intimidated by the parent's behaviour?
- Have students witnessed aggressive/threatening/intimidating behaviour from the parent?
- Have students been approached inappropriately by the parent?
- Has the parent been abusive to academy staff, students or visitors?
- Has the parent been persistently abusive to academy staff, pupils or visitors?
- Was the parent provoked in **any** way prior to their behaviour and/or does the parent claim to have been provoked? Is there evidence of provocation?
- How frequently has the behaviour occurred? Is there a risk (low, medium or high) that the behaviour may be repeated?

3. Options for the Executive Principal

After evaluating all available information, and any other relevant factors, there are several actions the Executive Principal may wish to take. These can include:

- Inviting the parent to a meeting to discuss events:
This could be helpful where a planned and structured meeting has either not been held before or has previously been productive. Skilled facilitators may need to be used. A full restorative meeting may be considered, but if it is not safe to bring all the parties together at a meeting, a restorative process can still take place through the exchange of information. The safety and well-being of those attending such a meeting must be carefully considered. It is strongly recommended that members of school staff should be accompanied by at least one other colleague at any such meeting. Consideration should be given to the seating arrangements, and care taken to ensure exits cannot be blocked by a parent who could potentially become aggressive. The main points of discussion and any agreed actions should be noted, and a follow-up letter sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions. Some parents may covertly record meetings and then seek to use the information obtained to support their case, and therefore schools should state explicitly that information obtained without permission will not be permissible.
- Clarifying to the parent what is considered acceptable behaviour by the school:
In some instances, it may be appropriate simply to ensure the parent is clear about behaviour standards expected by the school. This could be explained at a meeting, or by letter, however any verbal explanation should be followed by a written confirmation of the discussion and the standards of behaviour outlined.
- Forming strategies to manage future situations of potential conflict:
It is sometimes possible to identify situations of potential conflict and to plan for these in a way that minimizes risks. For example, where a parent persistently engages in arguments with staff, the parent could be informed that any discussions must be held by prior appointment. Alternatively, the parent may be asked not to approach other members of staff, but should instead arrange to meet the Executive Principal (or other member of the senior leadership team), who will deal with their concerns. In more serious cases a further option may be to advise the parent that in future their concerns should be dealt with by written communication. Any such arrangements should be confirmed in writing to the parent.

4. Withdrawing permission for the parent to enter the school site and/or buildings

In more serious cases of actual or threatened aggression/violence, or persistent abuse/intimidation, The

Executive Principal may need to consider whether it is safe for the parent to continue to come onto the school site or enter the buildings. In such circumstances, it is strongly recommended that The Executive Principal first consult with their legal advisers and local authority.

NB: A legal case in 1999, involving Wandsworth London Borough Council, established:

- That the parent of a child has a license to enter the child's educational premises.
- That the license may be terminated, but that public law requires that the parent must first be given an opportunity to make representations about this.
- That failure to afford an opportunity to make representations would provide defence against any subsequent proceedings for trespass (if the ban is breached).

Model letters are attached as Appendix A to this document and are provided for the Executive Principal and governors to adapt as necessary.

5. Calling for police assistance

In an emergency, police assistance should be sought. Cases of actual assault should always be reported directly to the police.

In cases where a ban is in place but is ignored and the person comes onto the school site, the police should be notified immediately. (Staff will need to be aware of the ban and have agreed procedures in place should the person come onto the school site).

In situations where there is no immediate threat to staff, pupils, other members of the school community or the school's property, The Executive Principal may still wish to make their local community police officer (e.g. neighbourhood support team, youth intervention officer) aware of the situation.

The police could give consideration to warning the offender of formal action, which may include legal proceedings.

6. Legal Proceedings

Where individuals persist in coming onto the school site even when permission to do so has been withdrawn, it is possible for legal proceedings to be pursued. The options include:

Prosecution under section 547 of the Education Act 1996

This requires substantial evidence to be gathered and presented by the police. Clearly it is not a quick process, and whilst in most cases the threat may prove to be a sufficient deterrent, prosecution can only be seen in the last resort as a punitive measure.

Restraining orders (Protection from Harassment Act 1997)

Section 2 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 provides for criminal or civil prosecution, for cases where someone causes alarm or distress to another person on more than two occasions. Section four provides for criminal or civil prosecution where people have been put in fear of violence on at least two occasions. In each case the sanctions include both criminal penalties (fines, imprisonment or community sentences) and a restraining order. These orders are generally quicker and easier to obtain, but are part of a criminal conviction.

Prosecution for criminal damage/assault

Prosecutions for causing deliberate damage or injury may occasionally be the most appropriate course of action. If the police are called, the option to make criminal allegations is readily available, and they may arrest suspected offenders there and then. Official allegations should only be made if there is no intention of later withdrawing the complaint. Criminal proceedings can be initiated at a later date. Witnesses should be asked to make a record of exactly what they saw and heard at the earliest opportunity.

7. Logging and Record Keeping

Staff should log incidents on the online f45 incident form. There should be clear and detailed records of all events which must be kept up to date. Any witness statements (where appropriate) and notes of any subsequent meetings held to discuss the events should be forwarded to the Operations Manager. Notes should be signed and dated.

Any physical evidence should be bagged and labelled, and witnesses should be asked to make a record of exactly what they saw and heard at the earliest opportunity.

If the police are asked to deal with an incident as a criminal investigation, there are a number of actions that may thwart this process. Witness details should not be made known to suspected offenders or their families. Groups of witnesses or suspects should not be left together, or allowed to discuss what happened, before the police interview them. If in doubt always seek the advice of the police officer first.

8. Support for Employees

If a member of staff is unfortunate enough to be one of the very small, minority subject to serious physical and/or verbal abuse there are a variety of sources of potential support available to them, accessible via consultation with the bursar. In such circumstances the immediate and ongoing support of colleagues will be invaluable. The staff associations/trade unions are also likely to be a source of assistance.

Appendix A: Model Letters

Model letter 1:

This is an initial warning letter which can be sent by the Executive Principal when it is felt that further serious incidents will warrant a ban.

Model letter 2:

It is suggested that this letter is sent by the Chair of Board of Governors when, after full consideration, it is felt a ban is necessary.

Normally this would follow from a warning (letter 1), **though there may be occasions where it is appropriate to move directly to a ban – it is strongly recommended that legal advice is taken in such cases.**

At this point consideration should also be given to any practical issues, in particular to ensure that the student(s) concerned can be properly accompanied to and collected from school, and to ensure there can be an effective exchange of necessary information between the school and parent.

At this stage, the ban takes effect immediately, but as the letter indicates, the parent must be enabled to make representations. A period of a week is recommended to allow for this, at the end of which the Chair of Board of Governors should consider any representations made, then make a decision to either confirm the ban or discontinue it (see model letters 3a and 3b).

Model letters 3a/b:

These letters confirm the outcome of the review of the ban by the Chair of Board of Governors. In the event that the decision is made to confirm the ban, a date should be included for a further review. This should be for a reasonable period, possibly extending up to three months, but preferably not longer than six months.

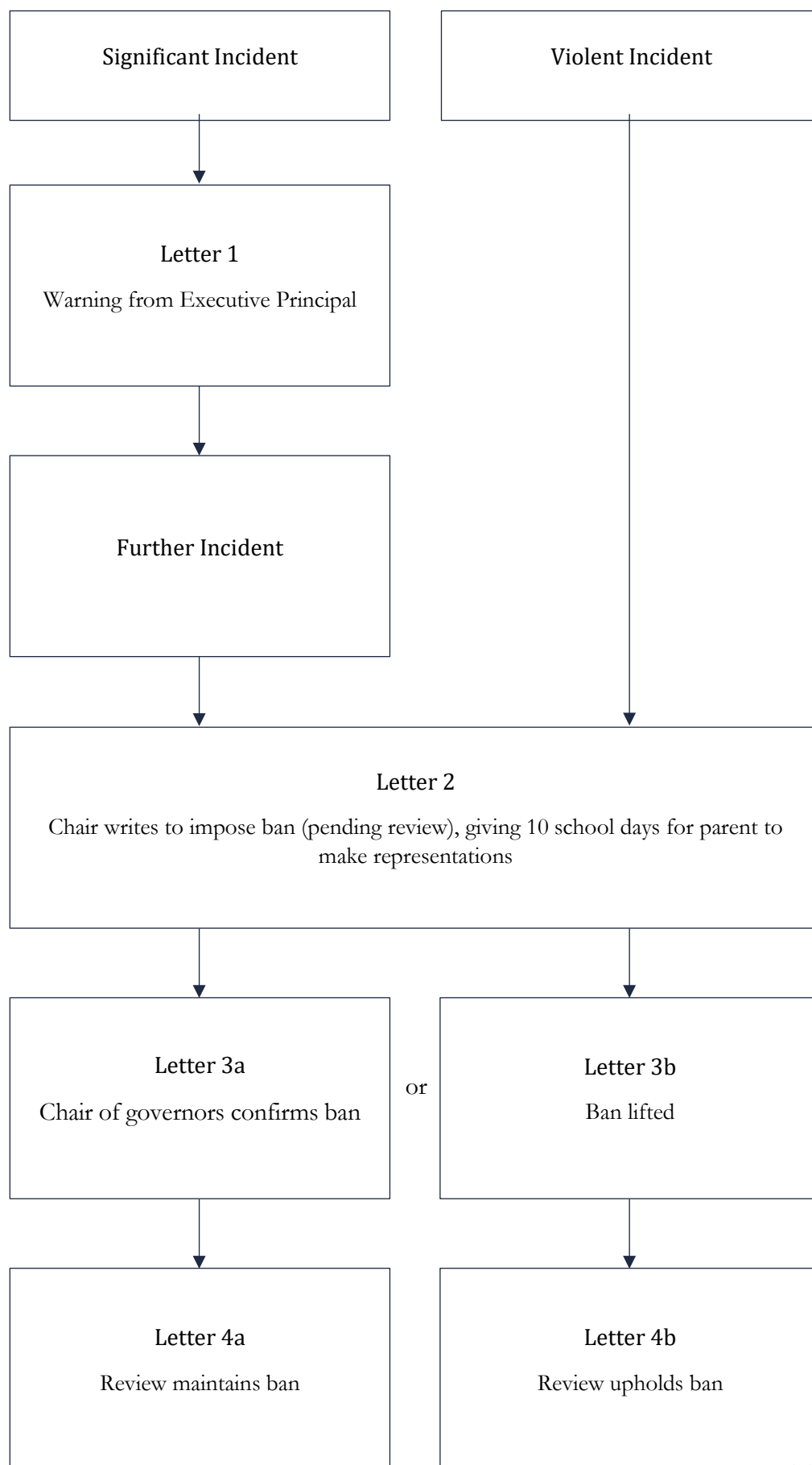
If the parent is dissatisfied with this decision, it is suggested in the model letter that the matter is then appropriately considered by a panel of governors.

Model letter 4a/b:

These letters can be used to confirm the outcome of further reviews of decisions where the ban has been extended. When a review is due to take place it is advisable to notify the parent in advance and invite them to make any representations.

A flowchart below shows the process to be followed for a ban:

Flowchart for Process to Ban a Parent from the School Premises



Letter I

Dear

In line with expectations of adult visitors to the academy, as outlined in our policy, I am writing to advise you formally that your behaviour towards **[staff member(s)]** on **[date(s)]** was totally unacceptable and I have taken advice on how to proceed.

Or

I am very concerned about the unsatisfactory nature of our meeting/telephone conversation on **[date(s)]** and I have taken advice on how to proceed.

(Include summary of incident and its effect on staff and pupils)

I have now been able to investigate the incident further and I understand that

Or

As I witnessed your behaviour myself there is no need for me to investigate the incident further.

Optional

I am not prepared to continue to accept such behaviour. If parents are unhappy about any aspect of their child's education they can arrange to have a meeting with me at an appropriate place and time.

Optional

In the circumstances I must ask you not to approach any of my staff directly until further notice, though you will still be able to make contact through me.

For the future I must inform you that any repetition of such behaviour towards any of the academy staff, students or others connected with the school will be followed by an immediate withdrawal of permission for you to enter the academy premises.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of Board of Governors. Should you wish to discuss the contents of this letter please make an appointment to see me via the academy office.

Yours sincerely

Executive Principal

cc: Chair of Board of Governors

Letter 2

Dear

I have received a report from the Executive Principal at **[academy]** about your conduct on **[date(s)]**.

(Include summary of incident and its effect on staff and pupils with reference to first letter from Executive Principal)

I must inform you that the governors, in line with our policy, will not tolerate conduct of this nature on the academy premises and will act to defend academy staff and pupils. On the advice of the Executive Principal, I am therefore instructing you that until I have reviewed this incident, you are not to reappear on the academy premises. If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises. If you cause a nuisance or disturbance on the premises you may be prosecuted under section 547 of the Education Act 1996.

For the duration of this decision you may bring your **child(ren)** to school and collect them at the end of the academy day, but you must not go beyond the school gate.

For infant children – arrangements have been made for your **child(ren)** to be collected and returned to you at the school gate by a member of the academy staff.

Special arrangements can be made for you to meet with the Executive Principal if necessary, but this may only be with the written permission of the governors.

The withdrawal of permission for you to enter the academy premises takes effect immediately and will be in place for 15 academy days in the first instance. I still need to decide whether it is appropriate to confirm this decision. Before I do so, I wish to give you an opportunity to give me in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to the report that I have received from the Executive Principal. These comments may be to challenge or explain the facts of the incident, to express regret and give assurances about your future good conduct. To enable me to take a decision on this matter, please send me any written comments you wish to make by **[date 10 days from date of letter]**.

If on receipt of your comments I consider that my decision should be confirmed, you will be supplied with details of how to pursue a review of your case.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Board of Governors

Letter 3a

Dear

On **[date]** I wrote to inform you that on the advice of the Executive Principal I had withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of **[academy]**. To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by **[date]**.

I have not received a written response from you.

Or

I have received a letter from you dated **[date]**, the contents of which I have carefully considered.

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Executive Principal's report, I have determined that the decision to withdraw permission for you to come onto academy premises should be confirmed. I am therefore instructing that, until further notice, you are not to come onto the premises of the academy without the prior knowledge and approval of the Executive Principal.

If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises of the academy. If you cause a nuisance or disturbance on the premises, you may be prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

Even though we have taken this decision, the Executive Principal and staff at **[academy]** remain committed to the education of your **child(ren)**.

This decision will be reviewed again on **[review date should be within a reasonable period and no longer than six months]**. When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the withdrawal of permission to come onto the academy premises, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from you, and any evidence of your co-operation with the academy in other respects.

If you wish to pursue the matter further you have a right to complain to a panel of academy governors who have not been involved previously and who will consider the circumstances of the decision to withdraw permission for you to come on to the academy site. You can make your complaint by writing to:

The Clerk to the Governors
C/o The West Grantham Church of England Secondary Academy
The Avenue
Dysart Road
Grantham
NG31 7PX

Where the incident has arisen in the context of a parental complaint against the school, the following may be inserted:

Finally, I would advise you that I have asked the Executive Principal to ensure that your complaint that **[nature of complaint]** is considered under the appropriate stage of the school's parental complaints procedure. The school will contact you about this in due course.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Board of Governors

Letter 3b

Dear

On **[date]** I wrote to inform you that on the advice of the Executive Principal I had temporarily withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of **[academy]**. To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by **[date]**.

I have not received a written response from you.

Or

I received a letter from you dated **[date]**, the contents of which I have carefully considered.

In the circumstances, and after consulting further with the Executive Principal, I have decided that it is not necessary to confirm the decision and I am therefore restoring to you permission to come onto the academy premises with immediate effect.

(Optional) I must warn you, however, that if it should become necessary in the future I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the school premises once again.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Board of Governors

Letter 4a

Dear

I wrote to you on **[date]** confirming that permission for you to come onto the premises of **[academy]** had been withdrawn until further notice. I also advised you I would take steps to review this decision by **[date]**.

I have now completed the review. However, after consultation with the Executive Principal, I have determined that it is not yet appropriate for me to withdraw my decision. **[Add brief summary of reasons]**.

I therefore advise that the instruction that you are not to come onto the premises of **[academy]** without the prior knowledge and approval of the Executive Principal remains in place until further notice. If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises and you may be prosecuted under section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

I shall undertake a further review of this decision by **[review date should be within a reasonable period and no longer than six months]**.

In the meantime you can write to me with a statement of your views, which I will consider.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Board of Governors

Letter 4b

Dear

I wrote to you on **[date]** confirming that permission for you to come onto the premises of **[academy]** had been withdrawn until further notice. I also advised you I would take steps to review this decision by **[date]**.

I have now completed the review. After consultation with the Executive Principal I have decided that it is now appropriate to restore permission for you to come onto the academy premises with immediate effect.

I Academy that you will now work together with the academy and there will be no further difficulties of the kind which made it necessary to restrict your access to the school premises.

(Optional) I must warn you, however, that if it should become necessary in the future I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the school premises once again.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Board of Governors

Appendix B: Handling Abusive Telephone Calls

Sometimes staff may have to deal with challenging, abusive, aggressive or threatening telephone calls. It is unacceptable for any member of staff to be subjected to such abuse but staff may not know how to handle such a telephone call. This guidance has been produced to assist staff if they are faced with such a situation.

To reduce the likelihood of callers becoming abusive staff should conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner and make every attempt to meet the needs of the caller. Staff should also have the confidence that it is acceptable to end an abusive telephone call.

Always:

- Remain calm and polite
- Stay in control of the situation
- Actively listen – repeat information back to the caller to test understanding of the issue and gain their agreement
- Inform the caller they are trying to help them
- Be positive and say what you can do
- Be clear and avoid using jargon
- If necessary, apologise for an error and take action to put it right
- If you have to go and get some information, let the caller know why you are putting them on hold and do not leave them on hold for a long time. Update them as necessary
- Make notes of the conversation
- Follow the procedure below if appropriate
- Refer to the caller to the Executive Principal, deputy etc.

Never:

- Respond in the same manner as an abusive caller
- Take it personally
- Allow yourself to be bullied
- Slam the phone down.

Suggested script for abusive telephone calls:

When the caller starts to raise their voice/be abusive:

Mr/Mrs/Ms. [name] please don't raise your voice/swear at me, I am not raising my voice/being rude to you. If you continue to raise your voice/be rude to me then I will be forced to terminate the call.

When the caller continues to raise their voice/be abusive:

Mr/Mrs/Ms. [name] I understand you are upset/frustrated however I am not prepared to continue to be shouted/sworn at so you can either call back when you have calmed down or if you prefer you can put your views in writing.

If, despite the two warnings above, the caller continues to raise their voice/be abusive:

Mr/Mrs/Ms. [name] I advised you earlier during this call about raising your voice/swearing and you have continued to do this, so I am afraid I am going to have to terminate this call.

Hang up.

Further actions:

Log a record of your call on an incident form as a verbal abuse incident.

Appendix D: Abuse/Bullying using Cyber Technology

Staff in schools may become targets of cyber abuse/bullying and, like other forms of bullying, it can have a significant impact on their health, well-being and self-confidence. Protecting staff from abuse is best done within a prevention framework, including whole school policies and appropriate practices.

Cyber abuse/bullying may consist of threats, harassment, embarrassment, humiliation, defamation or impersonation. It may take the form of general insults, or prejudice based abuse, e.g. homophobic, sexist, racist or other forms of discrimination. It may involve email, virtual learning environments, chat rooms, websites, social networking sites, mobile and fixed-point phones, digital cameras, games and virtual world sites.

Abuse using cyber technology can occur at any time and incidents can intrude into the victim's private life. The audience for such messages can be very large and can be reached rapidly. The content of electronically forwarded messages is hard to control and the worry of content resurfacing can make it difficult for the victim to move on.

The Academy operates a zero tolerance policy towards direct or indirect harassment or assault against any member of staff, volunteers and governors. This includes the use of social media and other forms of electronic communications to facilitate the act.

Responding to Incidents:

- Staff should never retaliate i.e. personally engage with cyberbullying incidents.
- Keep any records of abuse – texts, emails, voice mails, or instant messages. Take screen prints of messages or web pages. Record the time, date and address of the site.
- Inform the appropriate person e.g. Executive Principal, the earliest opportunity.
- Where the perpetrator is known to be a current pupil or co-worker, this should be dealt with through the school's own behaviour management / disciplinary procedures.
- Monitoring and confiscation must be appropriate and proportionate - parents, employees and learners should be made aware in advance of any monitoring (for example, of email or internet use) or the circumstances under which confiscation might take place.
- A designated member of the leadership team should contact the police where it appears that a law has been broken – for example, where death threats, assault, or racially motivated criminal offences are involved. Where a potential criminal offence has been identified, the school should ensure that any internal investigation does not interfere with police inquiries. School staff are of course able to report incidents directly to the police.
- If a potential criminal offence has been committed and the school is not able to identify the perpetrator, the police may issue a Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) request to a service provider, enabling them to disclose the data about a message or the person sending it.

Getting offensive content taken down

Where online content is upsetting / inappropriate and the person(s) responsible for posting is known, the quickest way to get material taken down is likely to be to ensure that the person who posted it understands why the material is unacceptable and to request that they remove it.

If the person responsible has not been identified, or will not take the material down, the school will need to contact the host (i.e. the social networking site) to make a request to get the content taken

down. The material posted may breach the service provider's terms and conditions of use and can then be removed.

It is important to be clear about where the content is – for example by taking a screen capture of the material that includes the URL or web address. If you are requesting they take down material that is not illegal, be clear how it contravenes the site's terms and conditions.

In cases of actual/suspected illegal content, the school should contact the police.