Sunningwell C of E Primary School

Harassment policy

Sunningwell School prides itself on good relations between staff, on the one hand, and parents, guardians and carers (hereafter 'parents'), on the other. These rest on and consolidate the good behaviour which we seek to maintain and support among pupils. Issues of inappropriate and unacceptable conduct by children are covered in our policies (available on the school website) on Behaviour and Bullying. We are open to all reasonable comments and criticisms from parents and other interested parties. We have a formal Complaints Procedure (also on the website) which details the recourse available to parents who feel the need to pursue a grievance against the School or a member of its staff.

Staff, however, also have their rights. We will not tolerate vexatious and unreasonable behaviour directed at them by parents and other interested parties. Such behaviour may take the form of physical threats, bullying, or insulting and slanderous talk*: it is defined for the purposes of this document as harassment.* The procedure to be followed in such cases is as follows.

1/ Any staff concern which cannot be resolved by direct discussion among the parties concerned should be referred to the headteacher. He/she will seek to resolve the matter informally by mediation.

2/ If this fails, one or more member(s) of staff may lodge a formal complaint with the headteacher. The latter may wish to consult with the LEA and should inform the chair of governors, but they have the authority to issue sanctions against any parent.

3/ These sanctions may take the form of requiring the parent not to speak to the member(s) of staff involved. In more serious cases the headteacher, in consultation with the LEA, may ban any parent from school premises or take other appropriate action to protect the School. Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 (which can be viewed at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/547>) and relevant sections of the Local Government Act 1972, the Public Order Act 1986, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 may be invoked to this purpose.

4/ Any parent affected by these sanctions has the right of formal objection, through Level 4 of the school Complaints Procedure (as detailed elsewhere), which covers all legitimate avenues of grievance with the School and its staff. This may result in a hearing before a panel of governors. The conclusions of that panel are final. If the complainant remains dissatisfied and tries to reopen the same issue, the chair of governors shall inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

5/ The Complaints Procedure itself can be abused in ways that constitute harassment as here defined. Parents are requested to bear in mind that protracted complaint about Page | 2 relatively small matters, to which the School has already done its best to respond, places unnecessary strain upon staff and governors, and demands an unreasonable amount of their time, to the detriment of the interests of other pupils. For an official statement by government on this issue see link below.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-complaints-procedures/best-practice-advice-for-school-complaints-procedures-2019#serialandpersistentcomplaints