



TO CARE
TO LEARN
TO ACHIEVE

BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL
A Specialist Business and Enterprise College
with Applied Learning
Headteacher: Mrs H J Phillips

March 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians

It is with disappointment that I feel it necessary to write this letter, but equally it is important that everyone understands that certain behaviours are expected and that abusive behaviour is never acceptable.

At Bedford High School, we value the positive relationships forged with parents/guardians and visitors to the school. We encourage close links with parents/guardians and the community and believe that students benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one. We also strive to make our school a place where, as adults, we model for students the behaviour we teach and expect. In general, we place a high importance on good manners, positive communication and mutual respect.

Most parents, guardians and visitors to Bedford are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. However, sadly, we are receiving an increasing number of phone calls from parents and guardians demanding to speak immediately to a particular member of staff and when that is not possible becoming aggressive, threatening and verbally abusive towards the person answering the phone. We are also experiencing some parents and guardians calling into reception, without an appointment, and when it isn't possible for them to see the member of staff they wish to, this can sometimes manifest itself in aggression or abuse towards members of the school community or a refusal to leave until they are seen.

Often, parents/guardians are phoning or calling into school as a result of their child contacting them, using their mobile, during the school day. Whilst we understand that parents/guardians will sometimes be anxious about their child when this happens, only one side of the story is being heard and school may well be unaware of the issue and certainly will not have had a chance to investigate what has happened.

The overriding principle is that all members of the school community have the right to work or be in school without fear of aggression or abuse from parents/guardians. Alongside the board of governors, I as Headteacher have a requirement to protect everyone in school from such aggression.

Consequently, I am setting out below the protocol we will follow when receiving such phone calls and visitors to reception, bearing in mind that we have more than 1000 students on roll and, as a result, significant demands on our time to ensure all receive a good education and appropriate attention.

We will take details from the caller and 'triage' the issue; dealing with things in order of urgency and having due regard to the wellbeing of the parent's/guardian's child(ren) involved. We will endeavour to call a parent/guardian back the same day wherever possible and always when a child is at any perceived risk. Depending on the nature of the issue this may be a holding call, to advise next steps. When it is not possible to call back the same day, for example when staff time is taken up with a safeguarding issue, contact will be made the next working day.

We expect staff to behave professionally, attempting to diffuse the situation where possible but notwithstanding the above, in the event that parents/guardians remain aggressive or abusive, staff who face these situations have licence to end any conversation (face to face or on the telephone).

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We will talk to students in assembly and would appreciate you reinforcing this at home, about following the correct procedure when contacting their parents/guardians during the school day which is to report to The Hive, speak to their PGO or Pastoral Manager and make the call from there. This way, the pastoral team are aware of the issue, can alleviate any unnecessary anxiety parents/guardians may feel and investigate what has happened.

This is also an opportune time to remind you that external calls are recorded for training and safeguarding purposes.

I hope that I can rely on your support in ensuring that Bedford remains a safe place for the whole school community.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. J. Phillips', written in a cursive style.

Mrs H J Phillips
Headteacher