



ABU DHABI

# Unacceptable Behaviour Policy

## B – School Administration Policies & Procedures

<b>Key author</b>	Deputy Head (Primary)
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## **Unacceptable Behaviour Policy**

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### **Introduction**

The British School Al Khubairat (BSAK) is committed to providing appropriate and fair services for students, parents and customers, but this has to be balanced with our responsibilities to safeguard students and staff. This includes providing a safe working environment and operational practices for our staff.

BSAK is committed to a violence-free and harassment-free work environment and will not tolerate any level of violence or the threat of violence in the workplace.

### **Definitions**

This policy sets out our intent and approach to managing those parents and customers whose actions or behaviour are considered unacceptable and are either having a harmful impact on our staff or their ability to provide a consistent and appropriate service to all.

For the purposes of this policy the term "staff" is used to describe any person that represents BSAK and covers all areas of work undertaken by the school and its staff. The term parents and customer is used to describe parents, guardians, caregivers, drivers, maids, visitors, and "BSAK" means the school, its providers, contractors and suppliers of goods or services to BSAK.

### **Harassment**

The definition of harassment is any inappropriate conduct which has the effect of:

- Creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment
- Unreasonable interfering with an individual's work performance
- Affecting an individual's employment opportunity

This could include, but is not limited to; unwelcome verbal or physical behaviour and sexually, racially or otherwise derogatory or discriminatory materials, statements or remarks.

Any individual who believes they have been subjected to, or who observe or become aware of, harassment should immediately refer to the Complaints Resolution Policy. All complaints will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. No employee should assume that the School is aware of a problem and employees can raise concerns without fear of reprisal.

### **Aggressive, abusive or offensive language or behaviour**

BSAK is committed to providing the best professional experience possible for all employees where individuals are treated with respect and courtesy. We are aware however, that occasionally employees may have concerns about an aspect of school life which, if unaddressed, could lead to unnecessary worries and/or affect an employee's happiness and progress. All of our staff have the right not to be subjected to aggressive, abusive or offensive language or behaviour, whilst they are at work, regardless of the circumstances.

Examples of this behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- Threats of physical violence, harassment and bullying,
- Swearing, inappropriate language and word choices
- Inappropriate cultural, racial, sexual or religious references
- Rudeness, including derogatory remarks.

We note that violence is not restricted to acts of aggression that may result in physical harm. It also includes behaviour or language (written or spoken) that may cause staff to feel distressed, threatened or abused.

On occasions, parents and other customers may make unreasonable or persistent demands that could affect the service we provide to others, or communicate with us in a manner which causes offence to our staff. BSAK reserves the right when this happens to manage parent and customer communication and contact with our school. We will take appropriate steps to safeguard and protect our staff and students in order to maintain the effectiveness of our service for all.

What is deemed to be unacceptable behaviour will often differ depending upon the individual(s) involved and the particular circumstances they find themselves in. Examples of unacceptable behaviour that we are taking measures against can be grouped under two broad headings:

- Aggressive, abusive or offensive language or behaviour
- General unreasonable behaviour – including malicious and vexatious.

### **General unreasonable behaviour**

On occasions, our parents and customers may make what we consider to be unreasonable demands through the amount of, and nature of, information and attention they seek, and / or the nature and scale of service they expect or the number of approaches they make to us.

Some of our customers may not, or cannot, accept that BSAK is unable to assist beyond the level of service that has already been provided. For example, parents or customers may persist in disagreeing with the action or decision taken in relation to a complaint, or contact BSAK repeatedly about the same issue. The method or tone in which these communications are received may not in itself be unreasonable - it may be that the *persistent* behaviour in continuing to do so that is considered to be unacceptable.

What amounts to general unreasonable behaviour or demands will always depend on the circumstances surrounding the behaviour and the seriousness of the issues raised by the parent / customer. Each individual circumstance will be assessed on its severity and an assessment of its impact.

Examples of this behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- Demanding responses within an unreasonable time-scale or during our school email curfew
- Repeatedly contacting or insisting on speaking to a particular member of staff who is not directly dealing with the matter or who is teaching on timetable and cannot leave teaching and learning sessions.
- Excessive telephone calls, emails or letters (this also includes unsolicited marketing calls, letters and emails that are considered to be 'spam' or 'phishing') as well as contact via twitter and other social media platforms
- Sending duplicate correspondence requiring a response to more than one member of staff
- Persistent refusal to accept a decision
- Persistent refusal to accept explanations
- Continuing to contact BSAK without presenting new and relevant information.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

Dealing with harassment, aggressive, abusive or offensive language and / or behaviour

### **Telephone calls**

None of our staff members, individually or collectively, has to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and or abuse over the telephone. Where this occurs, all of our staff members have the right to place callers on hold or to end the call. However, before taking such action, it is reasonable to expect that the caller is warned that their conduct is considered to be offensive / unreasonable and to allow them the opportunity to moderate their behaviour. If they do not change their behaviour then the staff member will end the call.

Where a call is terminated by a member of staff, they must log the details on file - noting the reason for terminating the call. Hard copy must go to either PA to Head of Primary School or Head of Secondary School for their urgent attention. The matter must also be reported to their line manager in order to ensure fairness and consistency of approach. If a member of staff does not have access to the file they should inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team, who will log the details on their behalf.

Where there is evidence of multiple instances of offensive behaviour and this continues, a face to face meeting between the perpetrator (person with the offensive behaviour) and an appropriate SLT meeting should take place in order to discuss possible consequences (possible police involvement) of continued behaviour.

### **Emails, letters and Social Media**

As with telephone calls, none of our staff have to tolerate unacceptable behaviour communicated via email, text, twitter, social media or letter. Where there is a legitimate request for information contained within the communication, irrespective of the language used, it is reasonable to provide that information. But at the same time the parent / customer will be warned that their conduct is considered to be offensive, unwelcome and will not be tolerated in the future.

Where no legitimate information is being requested, BSAK staff members do not have to respond to an abusive communication. However, it would be good practice to issue a warning that the conduct is considered to be offensive, unwanted and will not be tolerated in the future.

It is appreciated that some staff may feel uncomfortable responding to abusive communications. Where this is the case SLT members may take matters forward on their behalf.

## **SAFEGUARDING**

### **Visits to premises**

Our staff should not have to tolerate unacceptable behaviour when visiting any part of BSAK premises for face to face meetings or activities. Staff should take all reasonable steps to ensure their health, safety and welfare safety whilst performing their duties.

### **Safeguarding of students**

In respect of safeguarding students the British School Al Khubairat's statement of intention and implementation reads:

*"The welfare and safety of children who attend the British School Al Khubairat is our paramount concern. We will promote the health, well – being and safety of the pupils in all we do. Our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, ability, race or social background. They have a right to be safe in our school. BSAK expects all its employees and volunteers to share this commitment. The school recognises and understands its responsibilities to work together in partnership with other agencies both here in UAE and the UK to help children to grow up in a healthy and safe environment. Appointments are subject to satisfactory checks including the enhanced DBS check, Prohibition check and references."*

# **The British School Al Khubairat Safeguarding Team**



**Ms. Priya Mitchell**  
School Counsellor



**Mrs. Ellaine Rawlings**  
Head of Primary



**Mr. Mark Leppard MBE**  
Headmaster



**Miss Teresa Woulfe**  
Head of Secondary



**Mr. Peter Church**  
Bursar

If any BSAK staff member(s) feel threatened by a parent / customer's behaviour and terminates the visit, they must log the details, noting the reason for terminating the visit. The matter must also be reported to their line manager in order to ensure fairness and consistency of approach. If a member of staff does not have access they should inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team who will log the details on their behalf.

Where there is evidence of multiple instances of offensive behaviour and this continues, a more permanent restriction may be considered necessary by, for example restricting visits to the school or "dual calling" where visits will only be conducted with two members of staff present. Those authorised to make a decision to restrict visits are detailed in the section entitled: Authorising contact restrictions.

### **Threats received to / by our staff**

We take any threat to our staff very seriously. In such circumstances, the matter must be immediately reported to a line manager, who will work with the staff member in question to ensure that all necessary steps to ensure their well-being are taken.

Any request to supply evidence of the threat (for example, copies of correspondence, voice recordings or surveillance records) to the third party or the police, must be directed to the relevant Senior Leadership Team member / Senior Manager, who should keep a full log of the incident for reporting purposes, and if need be, sent to the Designated Safeguarding Lead to administer in conjunction with the appropriate legislation.

### **Contact Restrictions**

#### **Available Restrictions**

If a parent / customer continues to communicate in an unacceptable manner, BSAK will exercise its right to restrict contact. The precise nature and action will be appropriate and proportionate to the nature of the unacceptable behaviour and the circumstances of our staff and the parent / customer.

Those authorised to make a decision to restrict contact are detailed in the section entitled: Authorising contact restrictions.

We may decide to, amongst other considerations:

- Cancel or refuse to arrange visits to the premises
- Block telephone calls and/or emails from being received
- Arrange for a single, named member of staff to deal with all future calls or correspondence from the parent / customer
- Limit future contact to a particular form and/or frequency - for example, emails or letters only - and these will be reviewed once per week/month
- Inform the parent / customer that their correspondence will be read to ensure no new issues have been raised, but then filed, without further acknowledgement
- If the parent / customer is a complainant, terminate all contact. This may mean we discontinue an investigation
- Refer the matter to the police where a criminal offence has been threatened or committed
- To terminate a customer's contract in extreme circumstances

### **Authorising contact restrictions**

Where customers continue to display unacceptable behaviour, the decision to place a temporary or permanent contact restriction can only be authorised by Headmaster. Wherever possible a reasonable degree of access to our service should be maintained, but at the same time give due regard to our staff and the safeguarding of all students. An example may be limiting customer contact to a specific internal email address and/or a specific internal telephone number.

In extreme circumstances, where **all** contact is being restricted, this can only be authorised by the Headmaster.

### **Letting the customer know about the restriction**

Where contact is being restricted, the parent / customer **must** be told of the decision. Wherever possible this should be by letter or email but may be done by telephone, confirmed in writing and supported by a suitable note in the File. Communication does not have to be from the authorising person. However, authorisation to implement the restriction must be obtained before telling the customer.

The communication should inform the customer of the following:

- The reason why we consider their behaviour to be unacceptable
- Details of any earlier warning(s) issued about their conduct
- The restriction(s) we are imposing; and, if appropriate
- How long the restriction(s) will last.

### **Record Management**

Where any decision has been taken to restrict access to our services, it is the responsibility of the person authorising the restriction to ensure the appropriate ... parent / customer record has been updated in the file.

### **Subsequent approaches to open a new complaint**

Should a customer with a current restriction contact BSAK with details of a new complaint, due regard must be given to the original decision to restrict access and any appropriate time limit applied to that restriction.

Only the Headmaster may make the decision to accept the new case, unless the parent / customer has a total restriction. In this circumstance, the decision to accept the new case may only be taken by Headmaster. The final decision whether or not to accept the new case, along with details of any amendment to the current restriction, must be issued to the customer in writing or by email. A copy of the correspondence to date must be forwarded to the Headmaster.

### **Continuous Improvement**

BSAK will monitor this policy from time to time to ensure that it is being applied in a fair, reasonable and consistent manner.

This policy shall be the subject of an at least annual review cycle or as necessary.