

Our parent/carers contact policy

October 2024

As a governing body, we do our best to make our school accessible to all and will make reasonable adjustments as necessary.

If you have a concern with our school, in the first instance, you should contact school staff directly to discuss your concern. We aim to resolve concerns through informal discussion, but if we cannot resolve the concern informally, we refer you to our complaints procedure.

This policy sets out how contact with parents/carers may be managed in the very small number of cases where the actions or behaviour of a parent/carers challenge our school's ability to deliver an effective education service.

The core aims of the policy are to ensure equity and fairness, improve efficiency, and manage risks to the health and safety of school staff and pupils.

All parents/carers will be treated with fairness and respect even if, as a Governing Body, we perceive actions or behaviour to be challenging. We will always separate the way we may need to manage inappropriate contact with a parent/carers from the way we deal with their regular contact with the school.

We are committed to upholding the principles outlined in the Welsh Government's 'Dignity at Work' policy, ensuring that all interactions with school staff reflect respect and dignity at all times.

Aggressive, abusive, or offensive behaviour

Our school staff have the right to work in an environment free from aggressive, abusive, or offensive language or behaviour at all times.

As a governing body, we consider such behaviour to include:

- swearing or abusive language
- over-bearing behaviour; refusing to give staff an opportunity to speak or repeated derogatory comments
- inappropriate sexual or gender-based remarks
- inappropriate cultural, racial, political, or religious references
- rudeness or shouting
- threatening behaviour
- emotional abuse or manipulative behaviour

In line with the Welsh Government's 'Dignity at Work' policy, all forms of bullying, harassment, and disrespectful behaviour will be dealt with firmly to ensure a safe working environment for school staff.

2.3 Threats of physical violence or harassment to any person are unacceptable and will be reported to the police.

Unreasonable Demands and Persistence

As a governing body, we are committed to providing a proportionate amount of time and resources to any parent/carer who has contact with the school. Unreasonable demands and persistence may prevent school staff from fulfilling this commitment.

We consider such behaviour to include:

- excessive telephone calls, emails, or letters
- sending duplicate correspondence
- persistent refusal to accept a decision or explanation
- continuing to contact schools after a decision, about the same or similar matters, without presenting new or relevant information
- demanding responses within an unreasonable timescale or information not relevant
- refusing to cooperate with the school's classroom rules and procedures
- raising matters that are immaterial to a request or complaint or repeatedly changing the substance of a request or complaint
- repeatedly contacting or insisting on speaking to a member of staff at school who is not directly dealing with a request or complaint

Terminating a Telephone Call

4.1 School staff may terminate a call if subjected to the behaviours outlined in sections 2 and 3. Before taking this action, the parent/carer will be warned once that their conduct is of concern, to allow them the opportunity to moderate their behaviour. If the behaviour persists, no further warnings will be given, and the call will be terminated.

4.2 School staff who terminate a call will report it to the Head Teacher. Following a terminated call, if the parent/carer makes further contact and the behaviour has not changed, the Head Teacher may restrict telephone contact for one day. This decision will be recorded and communicated at the earliest opportunity to our school staff who take frontline calls.

4.3 In the event that the parent/carer does not modify their behaviour, further consideration will be given to formally managing contact between the parent/carer and our school.

Considering When to Manage Contact

5.1 In the very small number of cases where the actions or behaviour of a parent/carer challenge our school's ability to deliver a safe and effective service to all, the Head Teacher will consider whether a warning should be given and if it is necessary to provide a copy of this policy. If the behaviour is sufficiently serious, or a warning has already been given, a decision may be taken to exercise statutory powers to restrict the parent/carer from school premises.

In addition, the school will consider the Welsh Government's 'Acceptable Use of Social Media' guidelines, particularly if the inappropriate behaviour extends to online platforms. Any abuse, harassment, or defamatory comments made through social media directed at school or school staff will not be tolerated and may result in further action, including formal restrictions or legal proceedings. Please see additional details outlined in Appendix 1.

5.2 During the process of considering the implementation of a restriction, the Head Teacher will be mindful that independent advocacy could be helpful for the parent/carer in terms of avoiding implementation of this policy. If that appears to be the case, the Head Teacher will advise the parent/carer of this and provide appropriate help and advice to that end.

Formal Decision to Manage Contact

The Governing Body may, through this policy (amongst other considerations), manage the contact by:

- limiting contact to a particular form, for example, the parent/carer may be limited to contacting school by email or letter only.
- limiting telephone calls to specific days and/or times
- arranging for a single point of contact for all future correspondence
- an agreed behaviour contract, setting out what is expected of the parent/carer, to be signed by the parent/carer
- advising the parent/carer that their correspondence will be read to ensure no new issues are raised, but will then be filed or destroyed without acknowledgment

Wherever possible, we will endeavour to ensure that at least one line of contact remains available.

Decisions on how to formally manage contact are made by the Head Teacher on a case-by-case basis. For example, where:

- school staff are struggling to be heard or feel upset, threatened, bullied, or belittled by the contacts.
- the contact is sexist, racist, culturally inappropriate, etc.
- a parent/carer demands disproportionate time is spent relative to the circumstances of the issue or makes unreasonable demands for action by the school.
- there is repetitive contact that is not merited in the circumstances of the case.
- there are disproportionate threats of school staff, legal action, etc.
- the parent/carer is highly needy, emotionally demanding, or appears to be becoming dependent on certain school staff.
- there are repeated challenges to decisions.

6.4 The Head Teacher will notify the parent/carer of a decision to manage their contact, the reasons why this decision has been taken, how long any restriction will

be in place, when it will be reviewed, and the right to appeal the decision. A copy of this policy will be enclosed with the decision.

Appealing a Decision

The parent/carer can appeal the Head Teacher's decision to manage contact within 20 working days of receiving it by writing to the Clerk to Governors c/o the school, who will arrange for the matter to be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints Procedure.

Appendix 1

Appendix 1

1. Introduction This policy sets out the expectations for parents' use of social media in relation to Ysgol Terrig and members of its wider community. It aims to ensure that social media is used in a positive, constructive manner that supports the school community while safeguarding the privacy, dignity, and safety of pupils, staff, and parents.

2. Key Principles

The school encourages respectful and responsible use of social media, in accordance with Welsh Government guidelines on safeguarding, data protection, and promoting well-being in schools.

3. Welsh Government Guidelines

This policy is underpinned by guidance from:

- **Keeping Learners Safe** (Welsh Government, 2023) which emphasizes the responsibility to safeguard children online.
- **Respect and Resilience: Developing Community Cohesion** (Welsh Government, 2016), which highlights the importance of promoting safe, respectful use of online spaces.
- **Data Protection and Online Safety in Schools** (Welsh Government), outlining legal obligations around the use of personal information online.

4. Expectations of Parents' Use of Social Media

4.1 Respectful Communication

- Parents should use social media to communicate in a manner that is respectful to all members of the school community.
- Disagreements or complaints should be addressed through the school's formal procedures and not aired on social media.

4.2 Safeguarding Pupils and Staff

- Parents are asked not to post photographs, videos, or other personal information of any pupils (other than their own children) without explicit permission.
- Any post or message that could potentially harm the reputation or safety of staff, pupils, or other parents will be taken seriously and may result in legal or disciplinary action.

4.3 Privacy and Data Protection

- In line with the UK Data Protection Act and Welsh Government guidance, parents should avoid sharing private or personal information about pupils or staff without consent.
- Social media should not be used to distribute confidential information regarding school matters, including decisions or events that have not been officially communicated by the school.

4.4 Addressing Issues

- If parents have concerns about the school or any member of its community, they should follow the school's complaints procedure, rather than posting complaints or grievances online.
- Criticism of pupils, teachers, or school policies should be directed to the appropriate authorities within the school, ensuring that dialogue remains constructive and private.

4.5 Promotion of Positive Engagement

- Parents are encouraged to use social media platforms to celebrate school events, achievements, and news, but to do so in a way that respects the rights and feelings of others.
- The school supports positive interaction on official school pages or groups and welcomes responsible sharing of posts that promote school activities and successes.

5. Breach of Policy

- Any breaches of this policy may result in the school requesting that posts be removed and, where necessary, further action may be taken in line with the school's disciplinary procedures or legal action.
- The school reserves the right to remove or report inappropriate content on its official social media channels or groups and block users who do not comply with this policy.

6. Conclusion

This policy aims to foster a safe, respectful, and positive online environment for the school community. We appreciate the support of parents in maintaining these values in their use of social media.

References:

- Welsh Government, **Keeping Learners Safe: Statutory Guidance for School and Colleges** (2023)
 - Welsh Government, **Respect and Resilience: Developing Community Cohesion** (2016)
 - Welsh Government, **Data Protection and Online Safety in Schools**
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This draft policy combines safeguarding, respect, and privacy while encouraging positive parental engagement online, all in line with Welsh Government recommendations.