

The Marlborough Science Academy	
Home School Communication and Managing Serial & Unreasonable Complaints Policy and Procedures	
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Complaints Policy and Procedures

SECTION A

Home School Communication and Managing Serial & Unreasonable Complaints Policy

1. Introduction and Core Values

The Marlborough Science Academy (the academy) is committed to providing a high-quality service to anyone who interacts with the school. We believe that parental involvement and support are vital, and we place significant emphasis on clear communication and collaboration. Our school community operates on the principles of good manners, positive communication, and mutual respect. We strive to deal with all issues fairly and impartially within the realms of our school values.

2. Professional Communication Standards

The academy recognises that while communication by email and Edulink is efficient, it must be structured to remain manageable for staff whose primary responsibility is to teach.

- All members of the academy community have the right to work or learn without fear of threat, aggression, or abuse.
- Staff are entitled to a personal life and must be protected from online harassment. Teachers are not expected to check emails during their personal time or holiday periods.
- Parents and carers are busy, but they must also recognise that teachers have full timetables and responses may not be immediate and may take 48 hours.
- Communication should be limited while a formal complaint is being progressed to avoid delaying outcomes.

3. Digital Conduct and Social Media

The academy uses social media to celebrate student achievements and share information.

- Parents should rely on official emails, the website, and verified social media channels for accurate information.
- It is unacceptable to post defamatory statements about staff or the academy on social media platforms.
- The academy does not endorse or post official messages on parent-led WhatsApp, Facebook or other social media groups.

4. Definition of Unreasonable and Unacceptable Behaviour

The academy defines unreasonable behaviour as conduct that hinders the consideration of complaints or daily operations due to its nature or frequency.

Unreasonable Complaint Conduct includes:

- Refusing to specify grounds of a complaint or the desired outcome despite assistance.
- Refusing to cooperate with the formal investigation process.
- Insisting on the complaint being dealt with in ways incompatible with school policy.
- Introducing trivial or irrelevant information or raising excessive numbers of detailed but unimportant questions.
- Making unjustified complaints about staff or seeking to have them replaced.
- Changing the basis of the complaint as it proceeds or repeatedly making the same groundless complaint.
- Refusing to accept findings where the procedure has been fully implemented and the findings of the complaint investigation have been shared..

Unacceptable Communication includes:

- Raising of the voice to be intimidating or using physical intimidation such as standing too close or aggressive hand gestures.
- Using foul, abusive, offensive, or discriminatory language.
- Knowingly providing falsified information or making malicious allegations.
- Repeated frequent, lengthy, and complicated contact via email, telephone, or in person.

5. Principles of Action

Any action taken by the academy toward a parent or visitor will be reasonable and proportionate. The parent will have the opportunity to put their views forward at every stage. Robust review processes involving the Chair of Governors and the Board of Governors are in place to ensure fairness.

SECTION B - Procedures for Communication and Unreasonable and Unacceptable Behaviour Management

This section details the specific methods and protocols The Marlborough Science Academy employs to communicate with parents and carers. These procedures are designed to ensure information is shared efficiently while respecting the professional boundaries and teaching commitments of staff.

Communication Procedures

Primary Communication Channels

Digital Platforms

- *Official Website:* This serves as the central hub for general information, including letters home, newsletters, the school calendar, and curriculum details.
- *EduLink:* The primary portal for parents to access live data regarding their child's attendance, rewards, consequences, and academic reports. It is also the platform used for booking parents' evening appointments.
- *SIMS In Touch and Attend Software:* Used by the academy to generate targeted emails for specific year groups, form groups, or the whole school community.
- *Official Academy Social Media Accounts (Instagram, Facebook, X):* Used strictly for promoting student achievements and key events. These feeds are not monitored for inbound messages, and parents should not use them for enquiries.

Direct Communication Methods

- *Email (Preferred):* For all new queries, the preferred method is emailing admin@marlborough.herts.sch.uk.
- *Telephone:* Parents may call the main reception at 01727 856874 for routine or urgent queries.
- *Face-to-Face Meetings:* Meetings must be pre-arranged via the admin email or reception; the academy does not permit meetings without a prior appointment.

Response Timeframes

- *Telephone:* Routine queries will be responded to within one working day.
- *Email:* The aim is to respond within three working days.
- *Meetings:* Non-urgent meeting requests aim to be fulfilled within five working days.

Parental Enquiries

To ensure queries are tracked and routed to the correct professional, the following "how-to" methods must be followed:

- *Subject-Specific Matters:* Emails should be sent to the academy admin address (admin@marlborough.herts.sch.uk) and clearly marked for the attention of the relevant subject teacher.
- *Pastoral and Welfare Issues:* Concerns regarding a child's progress, behaviour, health, or attendance should be directed to the child's tutor via the admin email (admin@marlborough.herts.sch.uk).
- *Ongoing Conversations:* If a staff member contacts a parent directly (e.g., via EduLink or personal email), the parent may respond directly. However, any **new** issues or questions must be restarted via the admin@marlborough.herts.sch.uk address to ensure they are properly routed and tracked.

Urgent Matters

- *Family Emergencies or Child Protection:* In cases of high urgency, parents should phone the school ahead of arrival. Reception staff will locate a senior member of staff to assist immediately.
- *Discretionary Urgency:* The academy reserves the right to determine the level of urgency for any matter to manage competing demands effectively.

Communication from the Academy

The academy will primarily contact parents using the following methods:

- *Phone calls:* Direct phone calls may be made to discuss significant matters with parents specifically related to their child.
- *Email and EduLink Messaging:* This is the standard method for individual and group notifications.
- *SIMs in Touch and Attend Software Messaging:* This will be used to share information related to individual and groups.

Trips and Events: Updates regarding school trips are shared via social media, email or Edulink on a "best efforts" basis, as the safety of students is the main priority of staff during trips.

On return legs of trips, students are encouraged to contact parents directly.

Professional Conduct and Boundaries

- *Teaching Priority:* Lessons cannot be interrupted for teachers to take telephone calls.
- *Staff Personal Time:* Staff are not expected to monitor or respond to communications during their personal time, evenings, or holiday periods.
- *Meeting Protocol:* Staff may be accompanied by at least one other colleague during face-to-face meetings with parents. Staff have the authority to end any conversation (telephone or face-to-face) if it becomes aggressive or inappropriate.

Parent and Carers Unreasonable and Unacceptable Behaviour Procedures

Incident Recording and Risk Assessment

- Staff, students, and witnesses will provide written statements about any inappropriate behaviour. These files are maintained by the Headteacher's PA.
- The Headteacher will carry out a risk assessment to determine the level of response based on the severity and frequency of the behaviour.
- Complaints regarding behaviour outside of school time or over a weekend are not the academy's responsibility unless they fall within the specific constraints of the behaviour policy.

Staged Response to Parental and Carers Vexatious behaviour and complaints

The academy follows a clear escalation path to manage unreasonable contact:

- **Stage 1: Informal Discussion/Clarification:** The Headteacher or deputy head will attempt to discuss concerns informally before applying an 'unreasonable' status. The academy will clarify what is considered acceptable behaviour.
- **Stage 2: Formal Warning:** If the behaviour continues, the Headteacher will write to the individual explaining why their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it.
- **Stage 3: Communication Plan:** For excessive contact, the academy may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts. These plans are reviewed after **six months**.
- **Stage 4: Imposing Conditions:** The academy may restrict contact to named senior leadership team (SLT) members or require that the individual be accompanied to any meeting by an SLT member.
- **Stage 5: Banning and Legal Action:** In cases of serious aggression or violence, the individual may be barred from the premises. The academy will inform the police immediately for serious incidents.

Review and Appeal Process

The academy ensures all restrictions are subject to formal oversight:

- Parents have **10 working days** from the date of a restriction letter to make written representations to the Chair of Governors.
- The Chair of Governors will decide to confirm or remove the conditions within **10 working days** of receiving the parent's letter.
- If conditions or a ban is confirmed, the Board of Governors will review the decision every **six months**.
- Governors will consider the parent's compliance with the conditions and any expressions of regret or assurances of future good conduct.

5. Trespass and Removal

Individuals who have been banned and continue to cause a nuisance will be deemed to have committed a **Section 547** offence. They will be considered trespassers and may be removed from the academy by a police officer or a member of staff.