



Edinburgh Primary School

# SAFER SCHOOLS POLICY

## **Purpose:**

This policy outlines the procedures Edinburgh Primary School will follow should abusive, threatening or violent behaviour occur.

**Date of Review:**

May 2016

**Approved by Governing Body:** [May](#)

[2016](#)

**Date of next Review:**

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## Introduction

**We welcome visitors to our school. We will act to ensure it remains a safe place for pupils, staff and all other members of our community. If a parent/carer has concerns we will always listen to them and seek to address them.**

**However, abusive, threatening or violent behaviour will not be tolerated. If such behaviour occurs we will follow the procedures outlined in this policy – ‘Keeping Schools Safe’.**

**NB Although this policy refers to parents it may also be used for other visitors to the school who behave inappropriately.**

## Risk assessment

In the event of a parent behaving in an inappropriate way, each situation will need to be considered individually by the head teacher or a designated member of staff. The following factors should be taken into account as a risk assessment, before deciding on the most appropriate course of action:

- Has the parent been verbally aggressive/threatening/intimidating?
- Has the parent been physically aggressive/threatening/intimidating?
- What evidence is there? What do witnesses say happened?
- Does the parent have a known previous history of aggression/violence? (Information can only be sought from the police when an official complaint has been made).
- Do members of the school staff/community feel intimidated by the parent's behaviour?
- Have pupils witnessed aggressive/threatening/intimidating behaviour from the parent?
- Have pupils been approached inappropriately by the parent?
- Has the parent been abusive to school staff, pupils or visitors?
- Has the parent been persistently abusive to school staff, pupils or visitors?
- Was the parent provoked in **any** way prior to their behaviour and/or does the parent claim to have been provoked?
- Is there evidence of provocation?
- How frequently have the behaviours occurred?
- Is there a risk (low, medium or high) that the behaviour may be repeated?

## **Options following an incident where a parent has behaved in an inappropriate way**

After evaluating all available information, and any other relevant factors, there are several actions the head teacher may wish to take.

These can include:

### **Inviting the parent to a meeting to discuss events**

This could be helpful where a planned and structured meeting has either not been held before or has previously been productive. Skilled facilitators may need to be used. A full restorative meeting may be considered, but if it is not safe to bring all the parties together at a meeting, a restorative process can still take place through the exchange of information. The safety and well-being of those attending such a meeting must be carefully considered. It is strongly recommended that members of school staff should be accompanied by at least one other colleague at any such meeting. Consideration should be given to the seating arrangements, and care taken to ensure exits cannot be blocked by a parent who could potentially become aggressive. The main points of discussion and any agreed actions should be noted, and a follow-up letter sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions. Some parents may covertly record meetings and then seek to use the information obtained to support their case, and therefore schools should state explicitly that information obtained without permission will not be permissible.

### **Clarifying to the parent what is considered acceptable behaviour by the school**

In some instances it may be appropriate simply to ensure the parent is clear about behaviour standards expected by the school. This could be explained at a meeting, or by letter, however any verbal explanation should be followed by a written confirmation of the discussion and the standards of behaviour outlined.

### **Forming strategies to manage future situations of potential conflict**

It is sometimes possible to identify situations of potential conflict and to plan for these in a way that minimises potential risks. For example, where a parent persistently engages in arguments with staff in corridors at the beginning or end of the school day, the parent could be informed that any discussions with school staff must be held by prior appointment. Alternatively, the parent may be asked not to approach the class teacher, but should instead arrange to meet the head teacher (or other member of the senior leadership team), who will deal with their concerns. In more serious cases a further option may be to advise the parent that in future their concerns should be dealt with by written communication. Any such arrangements should be confirmed in writing to the parent.

## **Withdrawing permission for the parent to enter the school site and/or buildings**

In more serious cases of actual or threatened aggression/violence, or persistent abuse/intimidation, head teachers may need to consider whether it is safe for the parent to continue to come onto the school site or enter the buildings

Cases of actual assault should be also reported to the local authority by completing a health and safety report form and will be reported to the police.

## **Legal proceedings**

Where individuals persist in coming onto the school site even when permission to do so has been withdrawn, it is possible for legal proceedings to be pursued. The options include:

### **Prosecution under section 547 of the Education Act 1996**

This requires substantial evidence to be gathered and presented by the police. Clearly it is not a quick process, and whilst in most cases the threat may prove to be a sufficient deterrent, prosecution can only be seen in the last resort as a punitive measure.

## **Appropriate behaviour contracts**

These are voluntary agreements made between people involved in anti-social behaviour, and the agency/school concerned. They are flexible in terms of content and format, and can be an effective means of encouraging young adults, children and parents to take responsibility for unacceptable behaviour. The person named does not always agree with the contract, but it can be used as evidence at a later stage for an application for an anti-social behaviour order. Conditions can be put on the contract, e.g. not to enter school grounds.

## **Anti-social behaviour orders (Crime and Disorder Act 1998) Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.**

These are most likely to be used where the offender (aged over 10) has acted in a manner which causes harassment, alarm or distress, and is needed to protect others in the same area from similar behaviour. Criminal Behaviour Orders Anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) may be sought by the local authority or the chief officer of police. ASBOs are designed to deal with persistent bad behaviour, and the police will need to show that other options have been tried, or are unsuitable.

## **Restraining orders (Protection from Harassment Act 1997)**

Section 2 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 provides for criminal or civil prosecution, for cases where someone causes alarm or distress to another person on more than two occasions. Section four provides for criminal or civil prosecution where people have been put in fear of violence on at least two occasions. In each case the sanctions include both criminal penalties (fines, imprisonment or community sentences) and a restraining order. These orders are generally quicker and easier to obtain, but are part of a criminal conviction.

## Prosecution for criminal damage/assault

Prosecution for causing deliberate damage or injury may occasionally be the most appropriate course of action. If the police are called, the option to make criminal allegations is readily available, and they may arrest suspected offenders there and then. Official allegations should only be made if there is no intention of later withdrawing the complaint. Criminal proceedings can be initiated at a later date.

A legal case in 1999, involving Wandsworth London Borough Council, established:

1. That the parent of a school child has a licence to enter the child's school premises.
2. That the licence may be terminated, but that public law requires that the parent must first be given an opportunity to make representations about this.
3. That failure to afford an opportunity to make representations would provide a defence against any subsequent proceedings for trespass (if the ban is breached).

Model letters are attached as **Appendix D** to this document.

## Calling for police assistance

In an emergency, police assistance should be sought. In cases where a ban is in place but is ignored and the person comes onto the school site, the police should be notified immediately. (Staff will need to be aware of the ban and have agreed procedures in place should the person come onto the school site).

In situations where there is no immediate threat to staff, pupils, other members of the school community or the school's property, head teachers may still wish to make their local community police officer (e.g. neighbourhood support team, youth intervention officer) aware of the situation.

The police could give consideration to warning the offender of formal action, which may include legal proceedings.

## Record keeping

There should be clear and detailed records of all events which must be kept up to date. Any witness statements (where appropriate) and notes of any subsequent meetings held to discuss the events should also be retained. Notes should be signed and dated.

Any physical evidence should be bagged and labelled, and witnesses should be asked to make a record of exactly what they saw and heard at the earliest opportunity.

It is also advisable to ensure that in every case, even where a formal letter is not required, parents receive a written confirmation of the events and the head teacher's response.

If the police are asked to deal with an incident as a criminal investigation, there are a number of actions that may thwart this process. Witness details should not be made known to suspected offenders or their families. Groups of witnesses or suspects should not be left together, or allowed to discuss what happened, before the police interview them. If in doubt always seek the advice of the police officer first.

A model form is attached as **Appendix E** to this document, and is provided for head teachers and governors to adapt as necessary.

## Support for employees

If a member of staff is unfortunate enough to be one of the very small minority subject to serious physical and/or verbal abuse there are a variety of sources of potential support available to them.

In such circumstances the immediate and on-going support of colleagues will be invaluable. If the school has chosen to buy in to the employee assistance service, staff can obtain confidential specialist support by calling the helpline on 0800 243458 (the service is provided by a company called Workplace Options). The helpline is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and can be called as often as needed.

The staff associations/trade unions are also likely to be a source of assistance.

## Appendix A – for inclusion in ‘Information for parents and carers’

We welcome visitors to our school. We will act to ensure it remains a safe place for pupils, staff and all other members of our community. If a parent/carer has concerns we will always listen to them and seek to address them.

However, abusive, threatening or violent behaviour will not be tolerated. If such behaviour occurs we will follow the procedures outlined in our policy – ‘Keeping Schools Safe’.

## Appendix B – for display in school office

We welcome visitors to our school.

We will act to ensure it remains a safe place for pupils, staff and all other members of our community.

If you have concerns we will always listen to them and seek to address them.

Please be aware, however, that abusive, threatening or violent behaviour will not be tolerated in this school.

Visitors behaving in this way are likely to be removed from the premises and prosecuted.

## Appendix C - Model letters

### Model letter 1

This is an initial warning letter which can be sent by the head teacher when it is felt that further serious incidents will warrant a ban.

### Model letter 2

It is suggested that this letter is sent by the chair of governors when, after full consideration, it is felt a ban is necessary.

Normally this would follow from a warning (letter 1), **though there may be occasions where it is appropriate to move directly to a ban – it is strongly recommended that the police/Safer Neighbourhood Team is consulted in such cases.**

At this point consideration should also be given to any practical issues, in particular to ensure that the pupil(s) concerned can be properly accompanied to and collected from school,

and to ensure there can be an effective exchange of necessary information between the school and parent.

At this stage, the ban takes effect immediately, but as the letter indicates, the parent must be enabled to make representations. A period of a week is recommended to allow for this, at the end of which the chair of governors should consider any representations made, then make a decision to either confirm the ban or discontinue it (see model letters 3a and 3b).

### **Model letters 3a/b**

These letters confirm the outcome of the review of the ban by the chair of governors. In the event that the decision is made to confirm the ban, a date should be included for a further review. This should be for a reasonable period, possibly extending up to three months, but preferably not longer than six months.

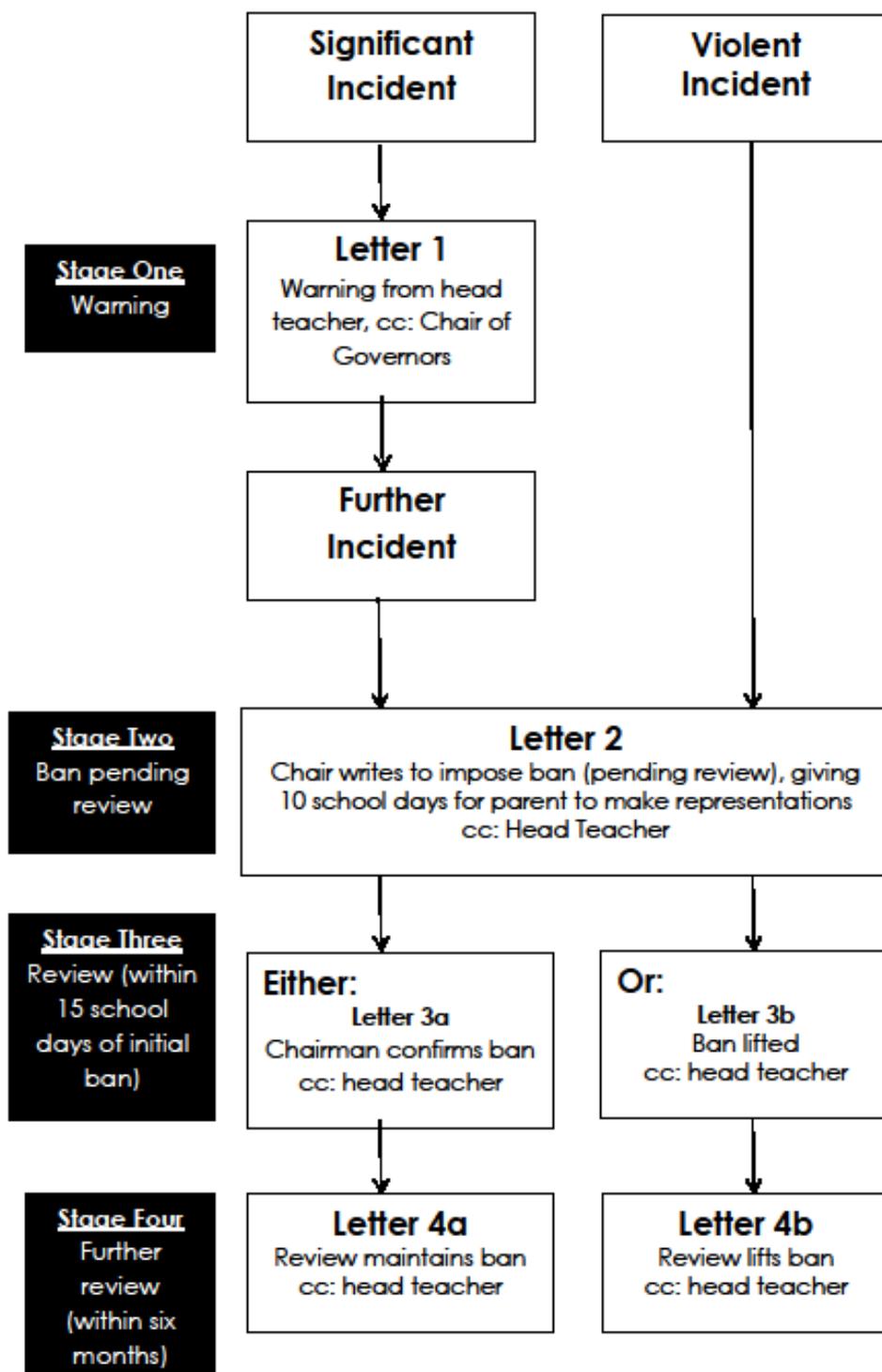
If the parent is dissatisfied with this decision, it is suggested in the model letter that the matter is then appropriately considered by a panel of school governors (as in the complaints procedure)

### **Model letter 4a/b**

These letters can be used to confirm the outcome of further reviews of decisions where the ban has been extended. When a review is due to take place it is advisable to notify the parent in advance and invite them to make any representations.

# FLOWCHART

## Flowchart for process to ban a parent from the school premises



## Appendix D

### Letter 1

#### Warning (sent by head teacher)

Dear

In line with expectations of adult visitors to the school, as outlined in our policy, I am writing to advise you formally that your behaviour towards ..... on ..... was totally unacceptable and I have taken advice on how to proceed.

**Or**

I am very concerned about the unsatisfactory nature of our meeting/telephone conversation on ..... and I have taken advice on how to proceed.

#### **(Add summary of incident and its effect on staff and pupils)**

I have now been able to investigate the incident further and I understand that .....

**Or**

As I witnessed your behaviour myself there is no need for me to investigate the incident further.

**Optional** I am not prepared to continue to accept such behaviour. If parents are unhappy about any aspect of their child's education they can arrange to have a meeting with me at an appropriate place and time.

**Optional** In the circumstances I must ask you not to approach any of my staff directly until further notice, though you will still be able to make contact through me. For the future I must inform you that any repetition of such behaviour towards any of the school staff, pupils or others connected with the school will be followed by an immediate withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of Governors. Should you wish to discuss the contents of this letter please make an appointment to see me via the school office.

Yours sincerely  
Head teacher  
cc: Chair of Governors

## Letter 2

### Withdraw permission pending review (sent by chair of governors)

Dear

I have received a report from the head teacher of .....School about your conduct on ..... at .....

**(Add summary of incident and its effect on staff and pupils)**

**(Optional reference to first letter from head teacher)**

I must inform you that the governors, in line with our policy, will not tolerate conduct of this nature on the school premises and will act to defend school staff and pupils. On the advice of the Head teacher, I am therefore instructing you that until I have reviewed this incident, you are not to reappear on the school premises. If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises. If you cause a nuisance or disturbance on the premises you may be prosecuted under section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of £500.

For the duration of this decision you may bring your child(ren) to school and collect them at the end of the school day, but you must not go beyond the school gate.

**For infant children** – arrangements have been made for your child(ren) to be collected and returned to you at the school gate by a member of the school staff).

Special arrangements can be made for you to meet with the head teacher, if necessary, but this may only be with the written permission of the governors.

The withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises takes effect immediately and will be in place for 15 school days in the first instance. I still need to decide whether it is appropriate to confirm this decision. Before I do so, I wish to give you an opportunity to give me in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to the report that I have received from the head teacher. These comments may be to challenge or explain the facts of the incident, to express regret and give assurances about your future good conduct. To enable me to take a decision on this matter, please send me any written comments you wish to make by **(date 10 school days from date of letter)**.

If on receipt of your comments, I consider that my decision should be confirmed, you will be supplied with details of how to pursue a review of your case.  
I am copying this letter to the head teacher.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors  
cc: Head teacher

## Letter 3a

### Withdrawal of permission confirmed (sent by chair of governors)

Dear

On ..... I wrote to inform you that on the advice of the head teacher I had withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of ..... School. To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by .....

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated ....., the contents of which I have carefully considered.

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the head teacher's report, I have determined that the decision to withdraw permission for you to come onto school premises should be confirmed. I am therefore instructing that, until further notice, you are not to come onto the premises of the school without the prior knowledge and approval of the head teacher.

If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises of the school. If you cause a nuisance or disturbance on the premises, you may be prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

Even though we have taken this decision, the head teacher and staff at ..... School remain committed to the education of your child(ren), who must continue to attend school as normal (insert for primary age children) under the arrangements set out in my previous letter.

This decision will be reviewed again ..... **(insert review date which should be within a reasonable period and no longer than six months)**. When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the withdrawal of permission to come onto the school premises, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from you; and any evidence of your co-operation with the school in other respects.

If you wish to pursue the matter further you have a right to complain to a panel of school governors who have not been involved previously and who will consider the circumstances of the decision to withdraw permission for you to come on to the school site. You can make your complaint by writing to the Clerk to the Governors, c/o ..... School.

**(Where the incident has arisen in the context of a parental complaint against the school, the following may be inserted)** Finally, I would advise you that I have asked the head teacher to ensure that your complaint that..... is considered under the appropriate stage of the school's parental complaints procedure. The school will contact you about this in due course.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors  
cc: Head teacher

## Appendix D

### Letter 3b

#### **Restore permission after review by Chair of Governors (sent by Chair of Governors)**

Dear

On ..... I wrote to inform you that on the advice of the head teacher I had temporarily withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of ..... School.

To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to give your written comments on the incident concerned by .....

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated ....., the contents of which I have carefully considered.

In the circumstances, and after consulting further with the head teacher, I have decided that it is not necessary to confirm the decision and I am therefore restoring to you permission to come onto the school premises, with immediate effect.

**(Optional)** I must warn you, however, that if it should become necessary in the future I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the school premises once again.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors  
cc: Head teacher

## Appendix D

### Letter 4a

#### Continue ban after second review (sent by Chair of Governors)

Dear

I wrote to you on ..... confirming that permission for you to come onto the premises of ..... School had been withdrawn until further notice. I also advised you I would take steps to review this decision by .....

I have now completed the review. However, after consultation with the head teacher, I have determined that it is not yet appropriate for me to withdraw my decision.

**(Add brief summary of reasons).**

I therefore advise that the instruction that you are not to come onto the premises of ..... School, without the prior knowledge and approval of the head teacher remains in place until further notice.

If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises and you may be prosecuted under section 547 of the Education Act 1996; if convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

I shall undertake a further review of this decision by ..... **(insert review date which should be within a reasonable period and no longer than six months).**

In the meantime you can write to me with a statement of your views, which I will consider.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors  
cc: Head teacher

## Appendix D

### Letter 4b

#### Restore permission after later review (sent by Chair of Governors)

Dear

I wrote to you on ..... confirming that permission for you to come onto the premises of ..... School had been withdrawn until further notice.

I also advised you I would take steps to review this decision by .....

I have now completed the review. After consultation with the head teacher I have decided that it is now appropriate to restore permission for you to come onto the school premises with immediate effect.

I trust that you will now work together with the school and there will be no further difficulties of the kind which made it necessary to restrict your access to the school premises.

**(Optional)** I must warn you, however, that if it should become necessary in the future I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the school premises once again.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors  
cc: Head teacher

## Appendix E

### Dealing with abusive telephone calls

Sometimes staff may have to deal with challenging, abusive, aggressive or threatening telephone calls. It is unacceptable for any member of staff to be subjected to such abuse but staff may not know how to handle such a telephone call. This guidance has been produced to assist staff if they are faced with such a situation.

To reduce the likelihood of callers becoming abusive staff should conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner and make every attempt to meet the needs of the caller. Staff should also have the confidence that it is acceptable to end an abusive telephone call.

#### Always

- remain calm and polite
- stay in control of the situation
- actively listen – repeat information back to the caller to test understanding of the issue and gain their agreement
- inform the caller they are trying to help them
- be positive and say what you can do
- be clear and avoid using jargon
- if necessary, apologise for an error and take action to put it right
- if you have to go and get some information, let the caller know why you are putting them on hold and do not leave them on hold for a long time. Update them as necessary
- make notes of the conversation
- follow the procedure below if appropriate
- refer to the caller to the head teacher, deputy etc.

#### Never

- respond in the same manner as an abusive caller
- take it personally
- allow yourself to be bullied
- slam the phone down.

## Script for abusive telephone calls

### **When the caller starts to raise their voice/be abusive:**

Mr/Mrs/Ms...please don't raise your voice/swear at me, I am not raising my voice/being rude to you. If you continue to raise your voice/be rude to me then I will be forced to terminate the call.

### **When the caller continues to raise their voice/be abusive:**

Mr/Mrs/Ms..... I understand you are upset/frustrated however I am not prepared to continue to be shouted/sworn at so you can either call back when you have calmed down or if you prefer you can put your views in writing.

### **If, despite the two warnings above, the caller continues to raise their voice/be abusive:**

Mr/Mrs/Ms.... I advised you earlier during this call about raising your voice/swearing and you have continued to do this, so I am afraid I am going to have to terminate this call. **Hang up.**

### **Further actions:**

Make a written note of the telephone call or use the incident report form **(Appendix G)** and report the incident to your line manager.

## Appendix F

### Incident Recording Form

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Date and time of incident</b>  |  |
| <b>Details of person(s) assaulted/<br/>verbally abused</b>                |  |
| Name  |  |
| Address and telephone number  |  |
| Role  |  |
| <b>Details of perpetrator</b>   |  |
| Name  |  |
| Address and telephone number  |  |
| Relationship to the school  |  |
| <b>Details of witnesses</b>   |  |
| Witness 1:<br><br>Name, contact details and<br>relationship to the school |  |
| Witness 2:<br><br>Name, contact details and<br>relationship to the school |  |
| Witness 3:<br><br>Name, contact details and<br>relationship to the school |  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Description of the incident</b></p> <p>(include relevant events leading up to the incident, details of those present, whether weapons were involved etc.)</p> |  |
| <p><b>Location of incident</b></p> <p>(attach sketch if appropriate)</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>(were police called, what happened after the incident)</p>   |  |

## Incident Recording Form

### Other information to be recorded as appropriate

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Any possible contributory factors</b>  |  |
| <b>Is the perpetrator known to have been involved in any previous incidents?</b><br><br>(if yes, give details)  |  |
| <b>Were measures in place to try to prevent an incident of this type occurring? Could these be improved?</b><br><br><b>If no measures were in place, could action be taken now?</b> |  |
| <b>Name and contact details of police officer(s) involved.</b><br><br><b>Incident number/ crime reference number</b>  |  |
| <b>Any other relevant information</b>   |  |

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Form completed by (name and role) |  |
| Date form completed               |  |