

THE SYDNEY RUSSELL SCHOOL



Parent Conduct Policy

Date of review: November 2023



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Introduction and Ethos

The Governing Body takes the safety and wellbeing of all staff and students extremely seriously. This policy outlines the procedures the school will follow in cases where the behaviour of parents gives a cause for concern.

In particular, this policy deals with situations where parents are being threatening, abusive or aggressive, including online, towards other members of the school community. Such behaviour clearly cannot be tolerated. Staff and students have a right to expect their school to be a safe place in which to work and learn.

The school's expectations for all parents are clearly laid out in our Home School Agreement (Appendix A).

The Department for Education advises that schools should have a written policy setting out the behaviour expected of parents, and the procedures to be followed when a school wishes to restrict a parent's access to the premises.

In this policy, the definition in the Education Act 1996 of the word parent is somewhat extended and includes an individual who has care of the child whether or not they are the natural parent or have parental responsibility for the child and includes step parents. Where an individual does not fall within this broad definition, the principles of this guidance should still be applied (but the wording of the model letters should be amended accordingly).

Reporting an incident

Staff should immediately report any incidents where they believe a parent's conduct has been inappropriate through an incident form. These accounts should be detailed.

Risk Assessments

In the event of a parent behaving in an inappropriate way, each situation will need to be considered individually by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). In order to assess this situation the member of SLT will issue a letter to the parent informing them that they are investigating the allegation and giving them an opportunity to make a written statement of their version of events (see Appendix C for model letters). 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?
- Has the parent aggressive/threatening /intimidating online?
- 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?

Actions to consider

After evaluating all available information, and any other relevant factors, there are several actions the school may consider.

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 on the telephone or by arriving without an appointment at the Front Office 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 or Head of Year, but should instead arrange to meet a 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.

Meetings

It may be appropriate for a meeting to take place to discuss events and clarify what is considered as acceptable behaviour by the school. The safety and well-being of those attending such a meeting must be carefully considered. The meeting will be minuted and a follow up letter sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions. Please be aware that any information obtained without the expressed permission of the school will not be permissible. It is highly inappropriate for a parent to record or say they are recording a conversation with a member of staff without the expressed permission of the school. This will be regarded as intimidatory behaviour.

If the school decides it would not be safe or appropriate to bring all the parties together at a meeting, a restorative process can still take place through the exchange of information in writing.

Withdrawing permission for the parent to enter the school site and buildings

In more serious cases of actual or threatened aggression/violence, or persistent abuse/intimidation, the school may need to consider whether it is safe for the parent to continue to come onto the school site or enter the buildings. The procedure for doing so is outlined in flowchart (Appendix B)

Letters will be issued at each stage of the process (see Appendix C for model letters). As outlined, all parents will be given the opportunity to make representations during the review by the Chair of Governors.

If a parent is dissatisfied by the decision of the Chair of Governors then it will be referred to a panel of school governors. If withdrawal of permission to enter school site is confirmed, a date for a second review will be set in the letter and parents are welcome to make representations at the second review stage.

Cases of violence or criminal damage will be reported to the police and the Local Authority.

Calling for police assistance

In cases where a withdrawal of permission to enter school site is in place but is ignored and the person comes onto the school site, the police will be notified immediately. This could result in legal proceedings.

Legal proceedings

Where individuals persist in coming onto the school site even when permission to do so has been withdrawn, the school will explore legal proceedings. The options include:

- Prosecution under section 547 of the Education Act 1996
- Community Protection Notice (CPN)
- Civil Injunction
- Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO's)
- Restraining orders (Protection from Harassment Act 1997)
- Prosecution for criminal damage/assault

Appendix A: Home School Agreements

Primary

- ensure my child attends school every day
- ensure that my child arrives for school on time and with the correct equipment
- ensure you remain with your child until the class teacher has escorted them into the building
- ensure that my child follows the uniform policy
- ensure that all items such as uniform, coats and bags are labelled clearly with your child's name
- have high expectations of my child's work and behaviour
- encourage my child to work hard in lessons
- reinforce the importance of being polite and respectful to teachers and kind and helpful to other students
- check my child's homework book and reading record daily
- help my child meet the school's expectations by ensuring he or she attends any booster sessions
- encourage my child to participate in extra-curricular activities and trips
- pay for any property that is damaged or destroyed by my child
- accept responsibility for any property brought into school by my child
- regularly monitor my child's ParentPay account
- regularly monitor all of my child's social media accounts and mobile devices
- support my child by attending Parents' Evenings, school events and other meetings, as appropriate
- accept school policies as they are described on the school website and in other relevant documents
- support the school's decision when my child is sanctioned
- conduct myself in a respectful manner towards staff at all times
- trust the school and relevant external agencies to resolve any issues my child might have
- keep the school informed of any changes to my child's circumstances
- ensure that you make the school aware of any medication that your child needs to take during the school day and it is given in to Reception
- ensure that the school has up-to-date contact information

Secondary

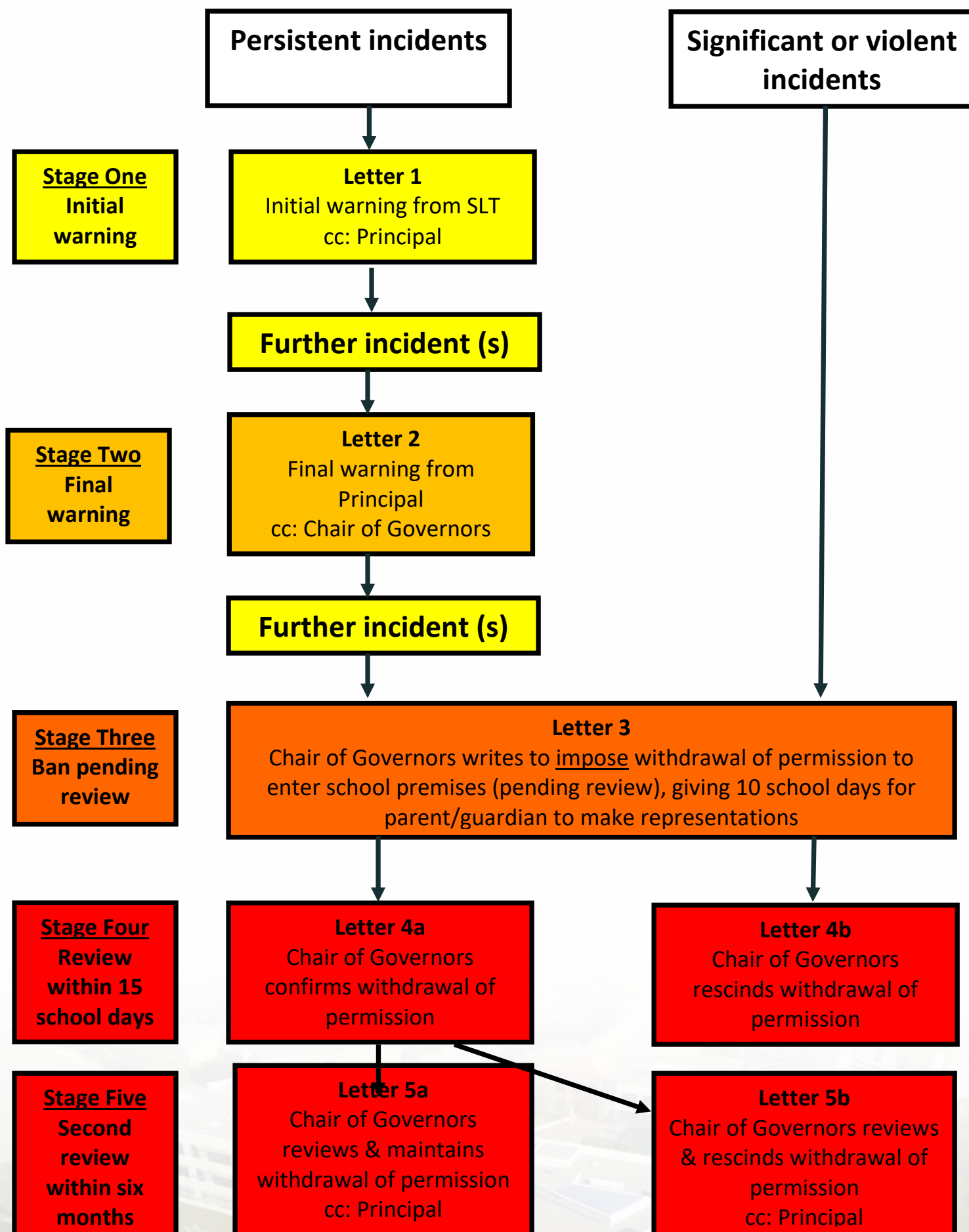
As a parent or guardian I agree to:

- ensure my child attends school every day
- ensure that my child arrives for school on time and with the correct equipment
- ensure that my child follows the uniform policy
- have high expectations of my child's work and behaviour
- encourage my child to work hard in lessons
- reinforce the importance of being polite and respectful to teachers and kind and helpful to other students
- check my child's planner at least once a week to check that homework and detentions are being completed
- help my child meet the school's expectations by ensuring he or she attends catch up sessions or detentions as necessary
- encourage my child to participate in extra-curricular activities and trips
- pay for any property that is damaged or destroyed by my child

- accept responsibility for any property brought into school by my child
- regularly monitor my child's ParentPay account
- regularly monitor all of my child's social media accounts and mobile devices
- ensure my child conducts themselves in a respectful manner within our local community
- support my child by attending Parents' Evenings, school events and other meetings, as appropriate
- accept school policies as they are described on the school website and in other relevant documents
- support the school's decision when my child is sanctioned
- conduct myself in a respectful manner towards staff at all times
- trust the school and relevant external agencies to resolve any issues my child might have
- keep the school informed of any changes to my child's circumstances
- ensure that the school has up-to-date contact information



Appendix B: Flowchart for process to withdraw permission for a parent to enter school premises



Appendix C – Model Letters

Letter 1: Investigation Letter (SLT)

Dear (NAME OF PARENT),

As part of our Parent Conduct Policy, I am writing to inform you that I am investigating the alleged incident between yourself and (NAME OF STAFF) on (DATE).

The allegation is that you (SUMMARY OF ALLEGATION).

If you wish to give your version of events, it must be submitted in writing to office@sydneyrussellschool.com by (DEADLINE). If I do not receive a submission by this deadline, I will conclude the investigation without it and a decision will be made based on the evidence before me.

While I am investigating this incident, I would ask that you do not discuss this matter with any of our staff. Any further incidents of misconduct during the investigation period could be considered a persistent breach of the policy and lead to the withdrawal of permission to enter site.

Once the investigation has been concluded, I will write to you again with the outcome. I am copying this letter to the Principal.

Yours sincerely,

SLT Member
cc: Principal

Letter 2: Initial Warning Letter (SLT)

Dear (NAME OF PARENT),

As outlined in our policy, I am writing to advise you formally that your behaviour towards (NAME OF STAFF) on (DATE) was totally unacceptable and I have taken advice on how to proceed.

I have now been able to investigate the incident further and I understand that (SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND IMPACT ON STAFF/PUPILS)

OR

I am very concerned about the unsatisfactory nature of our conversation on (DATE) and I have taken advice on how to proceed.

As I witnessed your behaviour myself there is no need for me to investigate the incident further.
(SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND IMPACT ON STAFF/PUPILS)

I am not prepared to continue to accept such behaviour. 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 could be followed by an immediate withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises and buildings.

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

Yours sincerely,

SLT Member
cc: Principal

Letter 2: Final Warning Letter (Principal)

Dear (NAME OF PARENT),

On (DATE OF LETTER 1), I wrote to warn you about your inappropriate conduct. I am writing to advise you formally that your behaviour towards (NAME OF STAFF) on (DATE) was once again totally unacceptable and I have taken advice on how to proceed.

I have now been able to investigate the incident further and I understand that (SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND IMPACT ON STAFF/PUPILS)

OR

I am very concerned about the unsatisfactory nature of our conversation on (DATE) and I have taken advice on how to proceed.

As I witnessed your behaviour myself there is no need for me to investigate the incident further.
(SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND IMPACT ON STAFF/PUPILS)

I am not prepared to continue to accept such behaviour. You have already been issued with a warning about inappropriate behavior and 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,

Principal
cc: Chair of Governors

Letter 3: Withdraw permission pending review (Chair of Governors)

Dear (NAME OF PARENT),

I have received a report from the Principal of The Sydney Russell School about your conduct on (DATE) towards (NAME OF STAFF).

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. You have been clearly and formally warned twice about the potential consequences of such behaviour.

On the advice of the Principal, 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.

Until this decision is reviewed if you cannot arrange for another parent/carer to bring/collect your child(ren) 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 bollards at the front of the school.

For primary 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.

Please do not telephone the school during this period. Any communication should be done in writing to the Principal via the email address office@sydneyrussellschool.com

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 will in that time 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 Principal. 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 (INSERT DEADLINE - ONE WEEK FROM DATE ISSUED).

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 Principal.

Yours sincerely,

Chair of Governors
cc: Principal

4a: Withdrawal of permission confirmed (Chair of Governors)

Dear (NAME OF PARENT),

On (DATE OF LETTER 3) I wrote to inform you that on the advice of the Principal I had withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of The Sydney Russell 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 (DEADLINE SET IN LETTER 3).

I have not received a written response from you.

OR

I have received a letter from you dated (DATE RESPONSE WAS RECEIVED) the contents of which I have carefully considered.

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Principal'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 Principal.

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.

Please do not telephone the school during this period. Any communication should be done in writing to the Principal via the email address office@sydneyrussellschool.com

Even though we have taken this decision, the Principal and staff at The Sydney Russell School remain committed to the education of your child(ren), who must continue to attend school as normal **(if Primary add)** and under the arrangements set out in my previous letter.

This decision will be reviewed again (DATE OF REVIEW). 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 The Sydney Russell 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 Principal to ensure that your complaint that (INSERT SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT) 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

Letter 4b: Restore permission after review by Chair of Governors (Chair of Governors)

Dear (NAME OF PARENT),

On (DATE OF LETTER 3) I wrote to inform you that on the advice of the Principal, I had temporarily withdrawn permission for you to come onto the premises of The Sydney Russell 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 (DEADLINE SET IN LETTER 3)

I have not received a written response from you

OR

I have received a letter from you dated (DATE LETTER WAS RECEIVED) the contents of which I have carefully considered.

In the circumstances, and after consulting further with the Principal, 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.

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

Letter 5a: Maintain ban after second review (Chair of Governors)

Dear (NAME OF PARENT),

I wrote to you on (DATE OF LETTER 4A) confirming that permission for you to come onto the premises of The Sydney Russell School had been withdrawn until further notice. I also advised you I would take steps to review this decision by (DATE OF REVIEW).

I have now completed the review. However, after consultation with the Principal, I have determined that it is not yet appropriate for me to withdraw my decision. (ADD BRIEF SUMMARY OF REASONS).

I therefore advise that you are not to come onto the premises of The Sydney Russell School without the prior knowledge and approval of the Principal. This instruction 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.

Please do not telephone the school during this period. Any communication should be done in writing to the Principal via the email address office@sydneyrussellschool.com

I shall undertake a further review of this decision by (DATE OF REVIEW)

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

Yours sincerely,

Chair of Governors
cc: Principal

Letter 5b: Restore permission after second review (Chair of Governors)

Dear (NAME OF PARENT)

I wrote to you on (DATE OF LETTER 4A) confirming that permission for you to come onto the premises of The Sydney Russell School had been withdrawn until further notice. I also advised you I would take steps to review this decision by (DATE OF REVIEW)

I have now completed the review. After consultation with the Principal, 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.

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: Principal

Letter 6: Investigation Letter

Dear (NAME OF PARENT),

Re: Investigation Letter – incident on (date)

As part of our Parent Conduct Policy, I am writing to inform you that I am investigating the alleged incident between yourself and (NAME OF STAFF) on (DATE).

The allegation is (SUMMARY OF ALLEGATION).

If you wish to give your version of events, it must be submitted in writing to (EMAIL ADDRESS) by (DEADLINE). If I do not receive a submission by this deadline, I will conclude the investigation without it and a decision will be made based on the evidence before me.

While I am investigating this incident, I would ask that you do not discuss this matter with any of our staff. Any further incidents of misconduct during the investigation period could be considered a persistent breach of the policy and lead to the withdrawal of permission to enter site.

Once the investigation has been concluded, I will write to you again with the outcome. I am copying this letter to the Principal.

Yours sincerely,

SLT Member
cc: Principal