# Unacceptable Abuse Policy

**Introduction**
Buzzers Academies Ltd encourage close links with parents/carers/guardians and the community. It believes that children and young people benefit when the relationship between home and their Club/Camp staff is a positive one.

The vast majority of parents/carers/guardians and others visiting our Clubs/Camps are keen to work with us and are supportive of the company. However, on the rare occasions when a negative attitude towards the company is expressed, this can result in aggression, verbal and or physical abuse towards members of Buzzers Academies Club/Camp staff.

Buzzers Academies expects and requires its members of staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to defuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues.

However, all members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse, and the right, in an extreme case, of appropriate self-defence.

We expect parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards members of Buzzers Academies staff. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

At all times the common purpose remains clear: to achieve zero tolerance of violence, threatening behaviour or abuse at our Clubs/Camps, and to ensure all members of the Club/Camp community, and all visitors to the Club/Camp, can be confident that they are operating within a safe environment.

**Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated are:**

- Shouting at members of the Club/Camp staff, either in person or over the telephone.
- Physically intimidating a member of staff, e.g. standing very close to her/him.
- The use of aggressive hand gestures.
- Threatening behaviour.
- Shaking or holding a fist or finger towards another person.
- Swearing.
- Pushing or shoving.
- Hitting, e.g. slapping, punching, and kicking.
- Spitting.
- Racist, sexist, or homophobic comments.
- Breaching the Club/Camp's security procedures.
- Aggressive and threatening phone calls or emails.
- Aggressive or threatening behaviour towards staff or their families via social media.

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour.

**Unacceptable behaviour may result in the police being informed of the incident.**

**Procedure to be followed:**
If a parent/carer/guardian behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of Buzzers Academies staff, the company Managing Director will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If necessary, the company's Complaints Procedures should be followed. Where all procedures have been exhausted, and aggression or intimidation continue, or where there is an extreme act of violence, a parent/carer/guardian may be banned by the company Managing Director from the Club/Camp premises for a period of time, subject to review.

**In imposing a ban, the following steps will be taken:**

1. The parent/carer/guardian will be informed, in writing, that she/he is banned from the Club/Camp premises, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, e.g. that police involvement or an injunction application may follow.

2. Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the company Managing Director and the police will be included.

3. A note of the ban will be made on the parent/carer/guardian's account on our online booking system and will be accessible to all company senior staff whenever the parent/carer/guardian makes future Club/Camp bookings.

4. Where appropriate, arrangements for children being dropped off and collected from the Club/Camp will be clarified.

**The length of a ban**

The ban should be finite in length, as only the most serious misconduct would justify an indefinite ban. The duration needs to be sufficient to convey a clear message about the seriousness of the associated misconduct, but not so long as to be disproportionate. The aim should always be to restore "normal" relations as soon as is reasonably practicable. Even if a ban is permanent, it should be reviewed periodically, taking account of subsequently demonstrated patterns of behaviour.

**What does a ban achieve?**

- It confirms to a parent/carer/guardian that Buzzers Academies will not tolerate misbehaviour.
- It shows that Buzzers Academies takes health and safety of its staff, visitors and children seriously.
- It provides a key element in making it easier to use legal remedies to prevent repeated misconduct, including use of section 547 of the1996 Education Act, to enable police removal and possible prosecution of those on the Club/Camp premises without permission.
- It may form the basis for an application for an injunction to curtail repeated instances of misbehaviour.

**Parental rights**

Every attempt should be made to maintain normal communications with parents/carers/guardians. Even where a parent/carer/guardian has been banned from the Club/Camp premises, they retain their right to an annual consultation in relation to the educational/childcare progress of their child(ren). However, Buzzers Academies may determine who will be present at the meeting (e.g. the company Managing Director or senior member of staff may accompany the Club/Camp 'Lead' tutor) and its location (e.g. it may be arranged off-site).

**Options for Buzzers Academies**

After evaluating all available information, and any other relevant factors, there are several actions that Buzzers Academies 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 Buzzers Academies 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/carer/guardian 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 company's expectations and any agreed actions. Some parents/carers/guardians may covertly record meetings and then seek to use the information obtained to support their case, and therefore Buzzers Academies should state explicitly that information obtained without permission will not be permissible.

**Clarifying to the parent/carer/guardian what is considered acceptable behaviour by the company -**
In some instances, it may be appropriate simply to ensure the parent/carer/guardian is clear about behaviour standards expected by the company whilst attending their Clubs/Camps. 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/carer/guardian persistently engages in arguments with Buzzers Academies staff at the beginning or end of a Club/Camp day, the parent/carer/guardian could be informed that any discussions with Buzzers Academies staff must be held by prior appointment. Alternatively, the parent/carer/guardian may be asked not to approach Buzzers Academies staff but should instead arrange to meet the company Managing Director (or a member of the company senior management team), who will deal with their concerns. In more serious cases, a further option may be to advise the parent/carer/guardian that in future their concerns should be dealt with by written communication. Any such arrangements should be confirmed in writing to the parent/carer/guardian.

**Withdrawing permission for the parent/carer/guardian to enter the Club/Camp premises and/or buildings -**
In more serious cases of actual or threatened aggression/violence, or persistent abuse/intimidation, the company Managing Director may need to consider whether it is safe for the parent/carer/guardian to continue to come onto the Club/Camp premises or enter the buildings.

**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 Club/Camp premises, the police should be notified immediately (Buzzers Academies staff will need to be aware of the ban and have agreed procedures in place should the person come onto the Club/Camp premises).

In situations where there is no immediate threat to Buzzers Academies staff, children, or other members of the Club/Camp community, the company Managing Director may still wish to make their local community police officer (e.g. neighbourhood support team) aware of the situation.

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

**Legal proceedings**
Where individuals persist in coming onto the Club/Camp premises 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 company. They are flexible in terms of content and format and can be an effective means of encouraging young adults, children, and parents/carers/guardians 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 Club/Camp grounds.

**Anti-social behaviour orders (Crime and Disorder Act 1998) -**
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. 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 -**
Prosecutions 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. All possible steps should be taken to prevent the loss of evidence. In particular, witnesses should be asked to make a record of exactly what they saw and heard at the earliest opportunity.

Individual cases should always be discussed with the company Managing Director who will work with the Legal Services to decide the most appropriate response. Whilst the emphasis will usually be on ensuring safety and security of persons and property, and therefore the injunction route is likely to be the most effective deterrent legal action, it does not necessarily guarantee against the behaviour of the more persistent offender.

## Record keeping

There will 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/carers/guardians receive a written confirmation of the events and the company Managing Director's response.

If the police are asked to deal with an incident as a criminal investigation, there are several 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.

## Support for Buzzers Academies staff

If a member of Buzzers Academies 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 ongoing support of colleagues will be invaluable.

## Conclusion

Buzzers Academies may take action where behaviour is unacceptable or there are serious breaches of this policy, or health and safety legislation. In implementing this policy, Buzzers Academies will, as appropriate, seek advice from external organisations, to ensure fairness and consistency. This Policy is based on the NAHT Model Policy and guidance and will be reviewed annually.

## Appendix A

**Dealing with abusive telephone calls -**
Sometimes Buzzers Academies 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, even if they may 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 leave the call to 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.
- Transfer the caller to the company Managing Director if necessary.

**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' and report the incident to the company Managing Director.

## Appendix B

**Abuse/bullying using cyber technology -**
Staff at our Clubs/Camps may become targets of cyber abuse/bullying and, like other forms of bullying, it can have a significant impact on their health, well-being and self-confidence. Protecting staff from abuse is best done within a prevention framework, including whole company policies and appropriate practices.

Cyber abuse/bullying may consist of threats, harassment, embarrassment, humiliation, defamation, or impersonation. It may take the form of general insults, or prejudice-based abuse, e.g. homophobic, sexist, racist or other forms of discrimination. It may involve email, virtual learning environments, chat rooms, websites, social networking sites, mobile and fixed-point phones, digital cameras, games, and virtual world sites.

Abuse using cyber technology can occur at any time and incidents can intrude into the victim's private life. The audience for such messages can be very large and can be reached rapidly. The content of electronically forwarded messages is hard to control, and the worry of content resurfacing can make it difficult for the victim to move on.

Buzzers Academies operates a zero-tolerance policy towards direct or indirect harassment or assault against any member of their staff or volunteers. This includes the use of social media and other forms of electronic communications to facilitate the act.

**Cyberbullying and the law**

While there is not a specific criminal offence called cyberbullying, activities can be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including:

- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997.
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003.
- Public Order Act 1986.
- The Defamation Acts 1952 and 1996.

It is the duty of every Buzzers Academies member of staff to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare at work of all employees. Incidents that are related to employment, even those taking place outside the hours or place of work may fall under the responsibility of the employer.

**Effectively tackling abuse using cyber technology**

Company behaviour policies and procedures refer to and outline how the company will deal with cyber abuse/ bullying of both staff and children/young people. They should include; rules on the use of equipment, software and network access provided by the company, the use of staff and child/young person owned equipment and internet access routes, where they are used on Club/Camp premises and within operating hours, e.g. mobile phones, digital cameras and laptops.

**Appendix C**

**Responding to incidents -**

Buzzers Academies staff should never retaliate i.e. personally engage with cyberbullying incidents. Instead:

- Keep any records of abuse – texts, emails, voice mails, or instant messages. Take screen prints of messages or web pages. Record the time, date, and address of the site.
- Inform the appropriate person e.g. company Managing Director, at the earliest opportunity.
- Where the perpetrator is known to be a co-worker, this should be dealt with through the company's own 'Staff Behaviour Policy' and disciplinary procedures.
- Monitoring and confiscation must be appropriate and proportionate - parents, employees and learners should be made aware in advance of any monitoring (for example, of email or internet use) or the circumstances under which confiscation might take place.
- A designated member of the company senior management team should contact the police where it appears that a law has been broken – for example, where death threats, assault, or racially motivated criminal offences are involved. Where a potential criminal offence has been identified, the company should ensure that any internal investigation does not interfere with police inquiries. Buzzers Academies staff are of course able to report incidents directly to the police.
- If a potential criminal offence has been committed and the company is not able to identify the perpetrator, the police may issue a Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) request to a service provider, enabling them to disclose the data about a message or the person sending it.

**Getting offensive content taken down -**

Where online content is upsetting/inappropriate and the person(s) responsible for posting is known, the quickest way to get material taken down is likely to be to ensure that the person who posted it understands why the material is unacceptable and to request that they remove it. If the person responsible has not been identified, or will not take the material down, the company will need to contact the host (i.e. the social networking site) to make a request to get the content taken down. The material posted may breach the service provider's terms and conditions of use and can then be removed.

It is important to be clear about where the content is – for example, by taking a screenshot of the material that includes the URL or web address. If you are requesting that they take down material that is not illegal, be clear how it contravenes the site's terms and conditions.

In cases of actual/suspected illegal content, the company should contact the police.

**Appendix D**

**Incident Report Form -**
Relevant incidents include trespass, nuisance or disturbance on Club/Camp premises, verbal abuse, sexual or racial abuse, threats, aggression, physical violence and intentional damage to property.

Where possible, the form should be completed before any discussion between witnesses is possible, as this might lead to allegations of collusion.

This form should be completed as fully as possible, using a continuation sheet, if necessary. For any incident involving or witnessed by a child/young person, parent/carer/guardian, or visitor, a member of Buzzers Academies staff should complete the form on their behalf.

The completed form should be passed to the company Managing Director, for appropriate action and recording.

**This policy was reviewed and/or updated on 20/10/2026**