

# Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure



## Bourn Church of England Primary Academy

<b>Approved by:</b>	Resources Committee	<b>Date:</b> May 2021
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	February 2020	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	May 2023	

**Source: EPM May 2020**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy applies for all employees, governors and volunteers employed or appointed by the Governing Body of Bourn Primary Academy.
- 1.2. The Governing Body seeks to ensure that all employees and all adults engaged by the School are treated and treat others with dignity and respect, free from harassment and bullying. Adults should always consider whether their words or conduct could be offensive. Even unintentional harassment or bullying is unacceptable.
- 1.3. The Governing Body will take allegations of harassment or bullying seriously and address them promptly and confidentially where possible. All employees, governors and volunteers must comply with this policy and take appropriate measures to ensure that such inappropriate conduct does not occur. Harassment, sexual harassment, bullying and victimisation and retaliation against an employee will not be tolerated. Harassment (including sexual harassment), bullying or victimisation by an employee may be treated as misconduct under the School's Disciplinary Procedure. In some cases, it may amount to gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal. Aggravating factors such as abuse of power over a more junior colleague will be taken into account in deciding what disciplinary action to take.
- 1.4. This policy covers harassment or bullying which occurs both in and out of the workplace, such as on school visits, at events, work-related social functions or on social networking sites. It covers bullying and harassment by staff, governors and volunteers and also by third parties such as suppliers or visitors to the School, which includes parents.
- 1.5. Where the complaint relates primarily to a matter covered by another policy, for example, grievance, pay or whistleblowing, then the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant policy, if more appropriate. Matters will not be dealt with under both this policy and the Grievance Policy.
- 1.6. The Governing Body will consider appropriate outcomes when a complaint has been investigated for example, warning a parent about their behaviour, supporting the employee with reporting any criminal acts to the police, a disciplinary hearing, training, formal apologies.
- 1.7. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time following consultation. Elements of this procedure, including any time limits, may be varied as appropriate in any case.
- 1.8. Employees will not be subjected to disciplinary action or to any other detriment simply because their complaint is not upheld and they will only face disciplinary action if it is found both that the allegation is false and made in bad faith (that is, without an honest truth in its belief).

- 1.9. At any stage of the procedure, after discussion with the Headteacher, the line manager may deem it more appropriate for matters to be investigated under the disciplinary procedure.
- 1.10. Any incidents involving an adult engaged by, but not employed by the School should be reported to the Head Teacher and will be dealt with as appropriate.

## **2. Definitions**

- 2.1. "Head Teacher" also refers to any other title used to identify the Head Teacher, where appropriate, or other senior manager delegated to deal with the matter by the Head Teacher.
- 2.2. "Companion" refers to a person chosen by the employee to accompany them, who shall be a trade union representative or a workplace colleague.

## **3. What is Harassment?**

- 3.1. Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment.
- 3.2. It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or have refused to submit to such behaviour.
- 3.3. Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race (including, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.
- 3.4. Harassment may include, for example:
  - unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing, grabbing, brushing past someone, invading their personal space, and more serious forms of physical or sexual assault;
  - unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless), and suggestions that sexual favours may further a career or that a refusal may hinder it;
  - continued suggestions for social activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome;
  - conduct of a sexual nature such as sending or displaying material that is pornographic or that some people may find offensive (including e-mails, text messages, video clips and images sent by

mobile phone or posted on the internet);

- offensive or intimidating comments or gestures, or insensitive jokes or pranks;
- mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability;
- racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist jokes, or derogatory or stereotypical remarks about a particular ethnic or religious group or gender;
- outing or threatening to out someone as gay or lesbian;
- ignoring or shunning someone, for example, by deliberately excluding them from a conversation or a workplace social activity.

3.5. A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if they create an offensive environment, or the harasser may wrongly believe the person to have a particular protected characteristic or the person may be associated with someone who has a protected characteristic. When deciding whether or not the conduct has the effect of harassment, the perception of the other person, the circumstances of the case for example is the harasser a person of seniority, and whether or not it is reasonable for the conduct to have that effect, must all be taken into account.

#### **4. What is Bullying?**

4.1. Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.

4.2. Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Bullying may include, by way of example:

- shouting at, being sarcastic towards, ridiculing or demeaning others;
- physical or psychological threats;
- overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision;
- inappropriate and/or derogatory remarks about someone's performance;
- abuse of authority or power by those in positions of seniority;
- deliberately excluding someone from meetings or communications without good reason.

4.3. Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a worker's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to employees in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying on their own.

## **5. What the Law Says**

- 5.1. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits harassment related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- 5.2. The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 also makes it unlawful to pursue a course of conduct which is known, or ought to be known, to amount to harassment. This includes causing someone alarm or distress.
- 5.3. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 staff are entitled to a safe place and system of work.
- 5.4. Schools within the public sector must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This means that when carrying out their functions, they must pay due regard to the need to:
  - Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who have a protected characteristic and people who do not, and
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not
  - To comply with the PSED, employers must give due regard to how taking steps to prevent third party harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.
- 5.5. Individual employees may in some cases be legally liable for harassment of colleagues or third parties and may be ordered to pay compensation by a court or employment tribunal.

## **6. Informal Process**

- 6.1. If an employee is being bullied or harassed, they must attempt to manage the situation informally if this is at all possible. The objective of an informal approach is to resolve the difficulty with the minimum of conflict. Every member of the School community has personal rights and these include being made aware that their attention or behaviour is perceived by another as bullying or harassing. It is possible that the “perpetrator” simply does not realise the effect of their behaviour on the recipient. The recipient should discuss their complaint with the “perpetrator” as early as possible. The recipient should explain clearly to the “perpetrator” that their behaviour is not welcome or that it makes the recipient feel uncomfortable.
- 6.2. If the recipient would find it too difficult or embarrassing to speak directly with the other person, then they should attempt to communicate through a

third party, for example, a work colleague, line manager/supervisor, or union representative. They could support the recipient in a number of ways for example by providing the recipient with advice on how to approach the issue directly with the alleged harasser, or support the recipient in raising the issue with the alleged harasser by accompanying the recipient in any discussion or helping the recipient to set out his/her thoughts in writing, or raise the matter informally with the harasser on the recipient's behalf. Support could extend to helping the recipient to obtain advice on or assistance in dealing with issues relating to particular protected characteristics or helping the recipient to obtain counselling.

- 6.3. If the behaviour continues after raising it with the "perpetrator", the employee should raise the matter with their line manager or another appropriate senior colleague orally or in writing.
- 6.4. The line manager/senior colleague will then arrange to meet with both parties, either individually or together (only where both parties are comfortable with this), and seek to address the concerns by considering options with those involved. These options may include mediation or moving to the formal stage of the procedure and those referred to in 1.5.
- 6.5. If informal steps have not been successful or are not possible or appropriate due to the seriousness of the allegations, the harassed employee should follow the formal procedure set out below.
- 6.6. Witnesses to harassment or victimisation can also take steps to address it. This may include:
  - The witness intervening where the witness feels able to do so
  - The witness asking the person subjected to the harassment if they would like the witness to report it or support them in reporting it
  - The witness reporting the incident where the witness feels that there may be a continuing risk if they do not report it, and
  - Requiring witnesses to cooperate in an investigation.

## **7. Formal Procedure**

- 7.1. This process follows the School's Grievance Policy, which cannot then be used in addition to, or as a substitution for, the same complaint being investigated under this procedure.
- 7.2. The harassed employee should submit a written complaint, setting out the full details of the conduct in question, including the name of the alleged harasser or bully, the nature of the harassment or bullying, the date(s) and time(s) at which it occurred, the names of any witnesses and any action that has been taken so far to attempt to stop it from occurring. If it is helpful, the Notification of Grievance Form (Appendix A of the School's Grievance Policy) can be used to state the grounds of the complaint and the remedy

being sought.

- 7.3. As a general principle, the decision whether to progress a complaint is up to the complainant. However, the Governing Body has a duty to protect all employees, governors and volunteers and may pursue the matter independently if, taking everything into account, they consider it appropriate to do so.
- 7.4. Where the grievance and/or bullying and harassment procedure is invoked as a result of a complaint about bullying or harassment, a manager (usually the direct line manager of the complainant, unless the complaint is against the direct line manager or where this manager has involvement in the complaint) must be designated as the Investigating Officer to investigate the complaint in a timely, sensitive, impartial and confidential manner.
- 7.5. The Investigating Officer will arrange a meeting with the complainant, usually within a week of receiving the complaint, so that they can give their account of events. The complainant has the right to be accompanied by a companion, who must respect the confidentiality of the investigation. There may be further meetings with the complainant as appropriate throughout the investigation. The complainant should be informed of likely timescales for and outcome at the meeting.
- 7.6. Where the complaint is about an employee, the Governing Body may consider suspending the employee on full pay or making other temporary changes to working arrangements pending the outcome of the investigation, if circumstances require. A suspension risk assessment should be completed in all cases. The Investigating Officer will also meet with the alleged harasser or bully, who may also be accompanied by a companion, to hear their account of events. They have a right to be told the full details of the allegations against them, so that they can respond.
- 7.7. Where the complaint is about someone other than an employee, such as a contractor or visitor, the Governing Body will consider what action may be appropriate to protect the complainant, and anyone involved, pending the outcome of the investigation, bearing in mind the reasonable needs of the School and the rights of that person. Where appropriate, the Governing Body will attempt to discuss the matter with the third party.
- 7.8. The Governing Body will also seriously consider any request that the complainant makes for changes to their own working arrangements during the investigation.
- 7.9. It is likely to be necessary to interview witnesses to any of the incidents mentioned in the complaint. If so, the importance of confidentiality will be emphasised to them.
- 7.10. Any employee who deliberately provides false information or otherwise acts

in bad faith as part of an investigation may be subject to action under the School's Disciplinary Procedure.

- 7.11. The main purpose of the investigation is to establish whether the act(s) under investigation amounted to harassment and/or bullying. The Investigation Report by the Investigating Officer should include:
- the terms of reference of the report;
  - the complainant's account of the incident(s) and the effects;
  - a response from the person identified by the complainant;
  - evidence from employees in the same work area or any other relevant areas where incidents of harassment or bullying may have occurred;
  - a conclusion as to whether or not there is a case to answer in respect of the allegations made and whether the matter should be referred to a disciplinary hearing. The report should identify whether it appears that the complainant has suffered any detriment e.g. deterioration of work performance or health, lack of career development, denial of opportunities etc.
- 7.11.1. The Investigating Officer may also choose to make recommendations as to how the matter may be resolved.
- 7.12. At the end of the investigation, the Investigating Officer will submit their report to a senior manager nominated to consider the complaint. Within 10 (ten) working days, the senior manager will write to the complainant to invite them to a formal meeting to discuss the complaint. The senior manager may be accompanied by another employee or an HR adviser.
- 7.13. The complainant may bring a companion to the meeting (a colleague or trade union representative). The complainant must advise the senior manager who their chosen companion is, in good time before the meeting.
- 7.14. At the meeting the companion may make representations and ask questions but should not answer questions on the complainant's behalf.
- 7.15. If the complainant's chosen companion is unavailable at the time the meeting is scheduled, and will not be available for more than 5 (five) working days afterwards, the complainant will normally be required to find an alternative companion.
- 7.16. The Investigating Officer will attend the meeting to present the findings of their investigation and the complainant will be provided with a copy of the Investigation Report at least 5 (five) working days before the meeting.
- 7.17. At the meeting the complainant will be given a reasonable opportunity to raise points about any information collected in the investigation.

- 7.18. Following the meeting, the appointed senior manager will consider the Investigation Report and all information presented in the meeting and will decide whether:
- they consider that harassment or bullying has occurred, in which case the matter may be dealt with as a case of possible misconduct or gross misconduct under the School's Disciplinary Procedure;
  - they consider that harassment or bullying has occurred but the evidence shows that it was inadvertent or unintentional, in which case the "perpetrator" shall be offered support and training to allow them the opportunity to modify their behaviour;
  - less formal action is appropriate, but some form of mediation or counselling is required for one or both parties;
  - any short-term or long-term relocation, change in duties or reporting structure are required. Any changes should not be to the detriment to any parties concerned.
- 7.19. The complainant will receive a letter confirming the senior manager's decision in writing within 10 (ten) working days of the meeting. A copy of the letter and the Investigation Report will also be given to the alleged harasser.
- 7.20. Following a formal bullying or harassment complaint, either party may be concerned about working with the other again. Due regard to such views should be taken into account when offering counselling or mediation. A transfer of one or both parties to another section or department may be appropriate in some cases and where feasible.
- 7.21. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, then the complainant may appeal in accordance with Section 8.

## **8. Appealing a Formal Decision**

- 8.1. If the complaint has not been resolved to the complainant's satisfaction they may appeal in writing to the Clerk of Governors, setting out the grounds of their appeal, within 5 (five) working days of receiving the written confirmation of the original decision. The complainant must detail how they consider the formal procedure in section 7 has not been correctly applied, and/or how the outcome was not reasonable or proportionate.
- 8.2. The appeal will normally be heard as soon as possible after receipt of the appeal letter, by an Appeal Panel of one or more governors, convened by the Clerk to Governors.
- 8.3. The Appeal Panel may have an HR adviser attend the meeting with the complainant. The HR adviser, who should not have had any previous

involvement in dealing with the complaint, shall not have a vote in the decision of the Appeal Panel.

- 8.4. The Appeal Panel will confirm its final decision in writing, as soon as reasonably possible after the appeal meeting. This is the end of the procedure and there is no further right of appeal.

## **9. Reporting a Concern**

- 9.1. All employees, governors and volunteers must comply with this policy and take appropriate measures to ensure that such inappropriate conduct does not occur. If a person witnesses bullying or harassment, they should raise the concern with their line manager or another appropriate senior colleague orally or in writing.
- 9.2. The School will support the witness in raising genuine concerns, informally or formally.

## **10. Protection and Support for those Involved**

- 10.1. Employees who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation conducted under this policy must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result.
- 10.2. Employees who have been the subject of an investigation which has not been upheld must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result.
- 10.3. If an employee believes they have suffered any such treatment they should inform their line manager or another senior manager. If the matter is not remedied, they should raise it formally using this procedure.
- 10.4. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone for making a complaint, for being the subject of a complaint or investigation, or for assisting in good faith with an investigation under this procedure will be subject to disciplinary action under the School's Disciplinary Procedure.

## **11. Confidentiality and Data Protection**

- 11.1. Confidentiality is an important part of the procedures provided under this policy. Everyone involved in the operation of the policy, whether making a complaint or involved in any investigation, is responsible for observing the high level of confidentiality that is required. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused must only be disclosed on a need-to-know basis.
- 11.2. Information about a complaint by or about an employee may be placed on the employee's personnel file, along with a record of the outcome and of any

notes or other documents compiled during the process. These will be processed in accordance with the School's Data Protection Policy.

- 11.3. Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action under the School's Disciplinary Procedure.

## **12. Responsibility for this Policy**

- 12.1. The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy but has delegated day-to-day responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the Head Teacher.
- 12.2. All managers have a specific responsibility to operate within the boundaries of this policy, to ensure that all employees understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and to take action when behaviour falls below its requirements.
- 12.3. Employees should disclose any instances of harassment or bullying of which they become aware to the Head Teacher or Deputy/Assistant Head Teacher.
- 12.4. Questions about this policy and requests for training or information on dealing with bullying or harassment should be directed to the Head Teacher.

## **13. Monitoring and Review of the Policy**

- 13.1. This policy is reviewed by the Resources committee at least every 2 years.
- 13.2. Following a formal investigation under this policy, the Head Teacher and the Investigating Officer involved should consider whether this policy has been effective in addressing the issues and report any problems or suggestions for improvement to the Governing Body.
- 13.3. The Head Teacher has responsibility for ensuring that any person who may be involved with investigations or administrative tasks carried out under this policy receive regular and appropriate training to assist them with these duties.

## **14. Related Policies**

- Data Protection and Record Management Policy
- Staff Disciplinary Procedure relating to misconduct
- Staff Grievance Policy
- Pay Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy