

Dignity at Work and Prevention of Harassment Policy

Signhills Academy



Approved by:	Full Governing Board	Date: Spring 2026
Next review due by:	Spring 2027	

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At Signhills Academy, we recognise that there will be a range of attitudes about what conduct is considered to be offensive, humiliating, intimidating, hostile, or degrading. What one worker — or even a majority of workers — might see as harmless fun or 'banter', another may find unacceptable. It is important to understand that conduct can amount to harassment or sexual harassment even if that is not how it was intended. This includes harassment related to a relevant protected characteristic, sexual harassment, and less favourable treatment for rejecting or submitting to harassment. No form of harassment, bullying or victimisation can ever be justified.

The academy's stance is as follows:

- Harassment, sexual harassment, bullying and victimisation will not be tolerated and are unlawful
- The law requires employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their workers, including by third parties. These will be identified through a risk assessment
- All members of the school workforce have a right to be treated with dignity and respect
- The school will assess whether harassment, bullying or victimisation has occurred based on the impact of the action(s) on the victim rather than the intent of the alleged perpetrator
- Harassment, bullying or victimisation of others (regardless of intent) may lead to disciplinary action up to and including 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
- Harassment, bullying or victimisation by third parties may lead to restrictions on site access, including site bans and/or referral to the police

1. Statement of Principles

- All members of the school workforce have a right to be treated with dignity and respect in the workplace
- Workplace harassment, bullying and victimisation are totally unacceptable
- No member of the school workforce should have to tolerate harassment, bullying or victimisation from colleagues, pupils, members of the public or other individuals they may encounter at work, or on school trips
- The school recognises that any member of the school workforce can be subjected to these forms of behaviour
- The school will not base decisions about handling harassment, bullying or victimisation on whether someone submitted to or rejected a particular instance of such behaviour
- The school strives for a workplace that is free of harassment, bullying and victimisation through:
 - Raising awareness of the issues and refusing to tolerate these behaviours
 - Supporting any member of the school workforce who is harassed, bullied or victimised
 - Dealing with any issues through agreed processes when they are raised

2. Legislation and Statutory Requirements

This policy is based on the following legislation and Department for Education (DfE) guidance:

- Equality Act 2010 Section 5 — based on the principle that workers should not be harassed, discriminated against or victimised at work
- Equality Act 2010 Sections 26 (1, 2, 3) — which makes three types of harassment unlawful: harassment related to a relevant protected characteristic; sexual harassment; and less favourable treatment of a worker because they submit to, or reject, sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment
- Equality Act 2010 Section 40 — it is unlawful for an employer to harass a worker, or anyone who has applied to them for employment
- Equality Act 2010 Section 40A(1) — it is unlawful if an employer fails to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of workers
- Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 — which introduced the proactive duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace

3. Definitions

All forms of harassment, bullying or victimisation may consist of either a single act or a continuous pattern of behaviour. The individual making the complaint usually defines what they mean by harassment, bullying or victimisation in a given context, where something has happened to them that is unwelcome, unwarranted and causes a detrimental effect.

If a member of the school workforce reports that they are being bullied, harassed or victimised, then they have a complaint which must be dealt with, regardless of whether or not it accords with a standard definition.

Workers	For the purpose of this policy the term 'staff' also applies.
Protected Characteristics (under the harassment provisions)	Age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex (including pregnancy and maternity), sexual orientation.
Harassment related to a protected characteristic	A worker is subject to unwanted conduct that is related to a protected characteristic and has the purpose or effect of violating the worker's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that worker.
Unwanted conduct	This can include: spoken words, written words, banter, posts or contact on social media, imagery, graffiti, physical gestures, facial expressions, mimicry, jokes or pranks, acts affecting a person's surroundings, aggression, or physical behaviour towards a person or their property. This is not an exhaustive list.
Unwanted	Unwanted/unwelcome/uninvited by the worker; considered from the worker's subjective point of view.
Sexual harassment	Unwanted conduct which is of a sexual nature. The conduct need not be sexually motivated.
Conduct of a sexual nature	This can include: sexual comments or jokes, displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photographs, suggestive looks, staring or leering, propositions and sexual advances, making promises in return for sexual favours, sexual gestures, intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life or a person discussing their own sex life, sexual posts or contact on social media, spreading sexual rumours about a person, sending sexually explicit emails or text messages, unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging or kissing.
Bullying	Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct.
Victimisation	Subjecting an individual to a detriment because they do a protected act, or it is believed they have done or may do a protected act. A 'protected act' includes: bringing proceedings under the Equality Act 2010; giving evidence or information in connection with such

Less favourable treatment	proceedings; doing any other thing for the purposes of the Act; or making an allegation that someone has breached the Act.
	Being put at a disadvantage compared to others because of submitting to or rejecting harassment.

4. Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

Unacceptable behaviour in this school may include:

- Insulting someone verbally or through offensive behaviour
- Physical or psychological threats
- Spreading malicious rumours
- Sharing information about an individual with others who do not need to know
- Ridiculing or demeaning someone
- Picking on someone or setting them up to fail
- Exclusion or deliberate isolation
- Misuse of power, such as overbearing supervision or deliberately undermining a competent worker
- Unwelcome sexual advances, such as touching, standing too close, displaying offensive materials, asking for sexual favours, or making decisions on the basis of sexual advances being accepted or rejected
- Making unfounded threats or comments about job security
- Preventing an individual from progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Harassment, bullying or victimisation may occur:

- Face to face
- Through written communications
- Using visual images (for example, pictures of a sexual nature or embarrassing photographs of colleagues)
- Via email, phone or social media
- Via automatic supervision methods, such as computer recording of downtime from work, or recording of telephone conversations, if these are not universally applied to all workers in similar roles

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

5. Reasonable Management

The school differentiates between reasonable management, which is firm and fair, and behaviours associated with harassment, bullying or victimisation.

Legitimate, justifiable, and appropriately conducted monitoring of a member of the school workforce's behaviour or job performance does not therefore constitute bullying, harassment or victimisation.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Governing Board

The governing board has ultimate responsibility for this policy, but will delegate day-to-day responsibility to the Headteacher.

The governing board has a duty to:

- Ensure complaints and allegations are handled according to agreed procedures
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Ensure that this policy is periodically reviewed and kept up to date
- Deal with complaints raised by or about the headteacher
- Assess the risks to workers and others, informing workers about potential risks and the measures in place to manage them

6.2 The Senior Leadership Team

The headteacher, supported by the SLT, is responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy and the associated risk assessment(s) are shared with all workers
- Identifying appropriate training for all workers
- Considering the risks of sexual harassment occurring in the course of employment and taking reasonable preventive steps
- Working to ensure the working environment is free from harassment, bullying and victimisation
- Investigating, and acting on, any concerns reported under this policy

6.3 School Staff (Workers) and Volunteers

School staff are responsible for:

- Treating colleagues with dignity and respect
- Pro-actively supporting the implementation of this policy and associated risk assessment(s)
- Engaging in appropriate training
- Alerting the headteacher (SLT) to any risks they find that need assessing
- Reporting any occurrence of unacceptable behaviour and offering supporting evidence in any investigation where appropriate
- Supporting colleagues who experience unacceptable behaviour

6.4 Pupils and Parents

Pupils and parents are responsible for:

- Following the school's advice and familiarising themselves with this policy
- Alerting the headteacher to any risks they find that need assessing
- Supporting the maintenance of an environment in which all academy staff are safe from harassment, bullying and victimisation
- Promptly reporting any concerns (to SLT) concerning the conduct of others

6.5 Visitors

Visitors are expected to:

- Follow the school's advice and familiarise themselves with this policy
- Alert the headteacher to any risks they find that need assessing
- Support the maintenance of an environment free from harassment, bullying and victimisation
- Promptly report any concerns (to SLT) relating to the conduct of others

7. Proactive Duty to Prevent Sexual Harassment

Under the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, the academy has a proactive legal duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of workers. This duty applies to sexual harassment by colleagues and by third parties (such as parents, contractors or visitors).

To fulfil this duty, the academy will:

- Conduct and maintain a Sexual Harassment Risk Assessment (see Appendix 1), identifying risk factors and the steps taken to address them
- Ensure this policy and the associated risk assessment are shared with all workers and are accessible on the school website
- Deliver training to all workers on recognising and reporting sexual harassment, bystander intervention, and the consequences of sexual harassment
- Consider all risks of sexual harassment occurring in the course of employment, including lone working, power imbalances, third-party contact and cultural norms
- Communicate the academy's zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment to third parties via the school website, Facebook and notices displayed in the staffroom, playground and reception

- Review the risk assessment regularly and update it when circumstances change
- Monitor the effectiveness of preventive steps through staff surveys, complaint data analysis and lessons-learned reviews

8. Reporting Concerns or Complaints

If you are being harassed, bullied or victimised, concerns or complaints can be reported:

- In person to a member of the SLT
- By email to a member of the SLT
- Confidentially via <https://forms.gle/2QiwTNxx3vreb7d8>

Where the concerns relate to the headteacher, they should be reported to the Chair of Governors, Mrs Doreen Hollamby (d.hollamby@signhillsacademy.co.uk).

Consider whether you feel able to raise the issue informally with the person responsible. The Head or Chair of Governors can support you with this. If you raise the matter informally, you should explain clearly that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. It may be that they are not aware of the effect of their actions.

If you feel uncomfortable raising the matter informally, or you have tried to do so without a successful resolution, the school will decide whether your complaint should be dealt with formally under this policy or under the school's grievance procedures.

When a report is received, the headteacher (or Chair of Governors in the case of the headteacher) will:

- Act promptly to resolve the complaint, taking into account how the worker wants it to be resolved
- Respect the confidentiality of all parties
- Protect the complainant from ongoing harassment or victimisation during an investigation or complaint
- Protect witnesses to the harassment, bullying or victimisation
- If a worker makes a complaint that may be a criminal offence, speak to the individual about whether they want to report the matter to the police and support them if they go ahead
- Always communicate the outcome of the concern or complaint and outline any appeals process to the complainant in a timely manner

Harassment or bullying by a third party, such as a parent, supplier or contractor, will be treated just as seriously as that by a colleague.

9. Formal Procedure for Managing Complaints

How complaints will be dealt with will depend, in part, on whether the alleged perpetrator is an employee or a stakeholder. Where a complaint has been raised and is being investigated, the school will consider requests from the complainant to change their working arrangements, duties or hours in order to avoid or minimise contact with the alleged perpetrator until a resolution is reached.

9.1 Alleged Harassment, Bullying or Victimisation by Employees

The school will use this process if the complaint relates to someone employed directly by the school, or where the school has the power to take professional or disciplinary action.

9.1.1 Submitting a Formal Complaint

The complainant should submit their complaint in writing to the Head or Chair of Governors. If the complaint relates to the Head or Deputy, the complaint should be sent to the Chair of Governors, and vice versa.

The written complaint should set out the nature of the complaint with reference to specific incidents where possible, including times, dates and witnesses.

9.1.2 Formal Investigation

Once a written complaint is received, an investigating officer will be appointed to carry out an investigation. This will be an independent individual with no prior knowledge of the complaint. Both the complainant and the subject of the complaint should be advised that a formal complaint has been made and that an investigation will take place.

An interview will usually be arranged with the complainant within one week of receipt of the complaint. The subject of the complaint will then be interviewed, and will be allowed the opportunity to respond to the complaint. There is no entitlement for the subject of the complaint to see the written complaint, but they should be provided with information as to the nature of it.

Both the complainant and the subject of the complaint may be accompanied at any stage of the formal procedure by either a colleague, a trade union official, a certified trade union representative, or a friend.

9.1.3 Action Following the Investigation

If the investigating officer upholds the complaint, possible outcomes may include:

- Disciplinary action
- Mediation
- Mandatory training

If the investigating officer does not uphold the complaint, possible outcomes may include:

- No action
- Mediation

These lists are not intended to be exhaustive.

9.2 Alleged Harassment, Bullying or Victimisation by Stakeholders

The school will use this process if the complaint relates to someone not employed directly by the school, or when the school does not have the power to take professional or disciplinary action against the person in question.

If the allegation is found to be justified, the response will depend on the relationship of the perpetrator to the school and the nature and severity of the incident. The school will take proportionate action in consultation with the individual who made the complaint. This may involve:

- Mediation
- A verbal warning
- A written warning

For very severe cases or where action taken is not effective, the school will consider further action. This may involve a meeting to discuss a ban from the school site. Where appropriate, the school will have regard to the Department for Education's guidance on controlling access to school premises. If the perpetrator is a contractor, this may involve termination of contract. If the individual is a parent, arrangements for pupils being delivered to and collected from the school will be clarified.

9.3 Continued Working Relationships

If it is decided that there is no case to answer, support will be provided for both parties and consideration given to managing their ongoing working relationship. The school will also consider whether there is evidence that the complaint has been malicious. If there is such evidence, this will be investigated and dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedures.

9.4 Appeals

If the complainant is not satisfied, they should write to the Head or Chair of Governors within 10 working days of being informed of the outcome. An appeal hearing will then be arranged within a reasonable period of time, and will be heard by a panel of 3 governors with no prior involvement with the issue.

The complainant may be accompanied at the hearing by a colleague, trade union official, certified trade union representative, or a friend. The appeal outcome will be confirmed in writing within 5 working days of the hearing. An outcome may dismiss the appeal and confirm the original decision, or may uphold the appeal and overturn the original decision.

10. Confidentiality

The school will respect confidentiality for both the person making the allegation and the subject of it. Details of the investigation and the names of the victim and alleged perpetrator will only be disclosed when necessary (for example, when it is necessary to give details to properly investigate the matters raised).

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.

Information will be processed in line with data protection law. It will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with our privacy notices.

11. Training

Workers, including the headteacher and SLT, will be trained on:

- What sexual harassment and workplace harassment in all forms looks like
- What to do if they experience or witness it
- Bystander intervention
- How to handle any complaints of harassment, bullying or victimisation

The headteacher will review the effectiveness of any training and offer refresher sessions at regular intervals.

12. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the headteacher annually and approved by the Governing Body.

The headteacher, in collaboration with other staff members, will monitor its effectiveness and implement any changes that may be required.

Monitoring will take place through:

- Reviewing informal and formal complaints/concern data to identify any trends or particular issues and take appropriate actions
- Surveying staff anonymously on their experiences of harassment and bullying, including whether they have witnessed or been subjected to it, whether they have or would report it (and if not, why not), and what further steps they think the academy could take
- Comparing reported complaints/concerns with survey feedback to ensure an accurate reflection of the level of harassment in the workplace
- Holding lessons-learned sessions after any complaints are resolved

Appendix 1: Sexual Harassment Risk Assessment

Risk factors:	Who might be at risk and why (list all that apply):	Steps already taken to reduce those risks:	Further action necessary:
1. Lone Working	Staff who work alone at times (eg. caretaker, business manager) may face increased risks of sexual harassment due to limited supervision or support.	1. The academy has adopted a robust Sexual Harassment & Harassment at Work policy that explicitly addresses sexual harassment. The policy is accessible to all staff via the school website. 2. Training is delivered to all staff on recognising and reporting sexual harassment, bystander intervention and the consequences of sexual harassment. The training focuses on creating a supportive environment and empowering staff to speak up.	1. Conduct regular check-ins with lone workers to ensure their well-being and help identify any potential issues. 2. Make efforts to ensure that there are always two staff members on duty whenever possible. 3. Ensure that the academy's zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment is communicated to all via Facebook, the school website and notices displayed in the staffroom, playground and reception.
2. Power Imbalances	Staff who are in subordinate positions may be at higher risk of experiencing sexual harassment. This is because the power imbalances in such relationships can create opportunities for exploitation. It may also be more difficult for individuals in these subordinate positions to speak up due to fear of negative consequences or retaliation.	1. The academy has adopted a robust Sexual Harassment & Harassment at Work policy which includes clear reporting procedures, including the ability to report concerns anonymously. The policy contains multiple reporting channels to ensure that staff can safely report incidents of sexual harassment, even if the harasser is in a position of power. The inclusion of multiple reporting channels ensures impartiality and protection against negative consequences or retaliation. The policy is accessible to all staff via the school website. 2. Training is delivered to all staff on recognising and reporting sexual harassment, bystander intervention and the consequences of sexual harassment. The training also covers power imbalances and how they can contribute to sexual harassment.	1. Provide additional training for managers that is aimed at preventing abuses of power and their role in preventing and stopping bullying and harassment from occurring in the workplace. 2. Ensure managers involved in handling sexual harassment complaints are given appropriate support to address the complexities of cases involving power imbalances and the need to be independent and not influenced by any conflicts of interest.

3. Presence of Alcohol	Staff attending work related social events where alcohol is consumed may be more vulnerable to sexual harassment. Alcohol consumption can impair judgement and lower inhibitions, potentially leading individuals to behave in ways that they would not in a sober state.	1. The academy has adopted a robust Sexual Harassment & Harassment at Work policy which includes clear reporting procedures, including the ability to report concerns anonymously. The policy contains multiple reporting channels to ensure that staff can safely report incidents of sexual harassment, even if the harasser is in a position of power. The inclusion of multiple reporting channels ensures impartiality and protection against negative consequences or retaliation. The policy is accessible to all staff via the school website. 2. Training is delivered to all staff on recognising and reporting sexual harassment, bystander intervention and the consequences of sexual harassment.	1. Ensure that all staff know that the Sexual Harassment & Harassment at Work policy applies to social events which could be deemed work events eg. where the event is arranged on the school WhatsApp group, or the majority of attendees are school staff. 2. Reinforce relevant policies leading up to these events to remind staff and attendees about the importance of ensuring a safe environment, free from discrimination, bullying or harassment.
4. Third-Party Contact	All staff members who regularly come into contact with parents, suppliers and contractors, may be more vulnerable to sexual harassment due to a higher frequency of interactions.	The academy has adopted a robust Sexual Harassment & Harassment at Work policy that explicitly addresses sexual harassment. The policy is accessible to all staff via the school website.	Ensure that the academy's zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment is communicated to third parties via Facebook, the school website and notices displayed in the playground and reception.

5. Lack of Diversity	A lack of diversity in senior leadership roles can result in a significant power imbalance, which may lead to women and groups from other under-represented backgrounds throughout the academy feeling marginalised, more vulnerable to sexual harassment and less empowered to speak up due to fear of retaliation.	1. The academy has adopted a robust Sexual Harassment & Harassment at Work policy which includes clear reporting procedures, including the ability to report concerns anonymously. The policy contains multiple reporting channels to ensure that staff can safely report incidents of sexual harassment, even if the harasser is in a position of power. The inclusion of multiple reporting channels ensures impartiality and protection against negative consequences or retaliation. The policy is accessible to all staff via the school website. 2. The academy has adopted an Equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Both policies are accessible to all staff via the school website.	1. Provide diversity and inclusion training to senior leaders with a focus on unconscious bias. 2. Take reasonable and appropriate steps to encourage job applications for senior leadership roles from as diverse a range of people as possible.
6. Particular events that raise tensions locally or nationally	Events that raise tensions locally or nationally can create strong reactions, polarise opinions and create division in the workplace. In such environments, individuals may feel compelled to assert their beliefs forcefully, sometimes leading to harassment or hostile behaviour towards those in the workplace with differing perspectives.	The academy has adopted a robust Sexual Harassment & Harassment at Work policy which includes clear reporting procedures, including the ability to report concerns anonymously. The policy contains multiple reporting channels to ensure that staff can safely report incidents of sexual harassment, even if the harasser is in a position of power. The inclusion of multiple reporting channels ensures impartiality and protection against negative consequences or retaliation. The policy is accessible to all staff via the school website.	1. Remind staff of the academy's zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, bullying, harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace during any such event and reinforce the Anti-bullying and harassment policy. 2. Conduct regular check-ins with workers during any such event to ensure their well-being and help identify any potential issues.

7. Cultural norms at the workplace	A workplace culture that tolerates certain attitudes, inappropriate behaviours and stereotypical views where employees are not treated with dignity and respect may make staff more vulnerable to sexual harassment.	1. The academy has adopted a robust Sexual Harassment & Harassment at Work policy which includes clear reporting procedures, including the ability to report concerns anonymously. The policy contains multiple reporting channels to ensure that staff can safely report incidents of sexual harassment, even if the harasser is in a position of power. The inclusion of multiple reporting channels ensures impartiality and protection against negative consequences or retaliation. The policy is accessible to all staff via the school website. 2. The academy has adopted an Equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Both policies are accessible to all staff via the school website. 3. Training is delivered to all staff on recognising and reporting sexual harassment, bystander intervention and the consequences of sexual harassment.	1. Provide diversity and inclusion training to senior leaders with a focus on unconscious bias and their role in preventing and stopping discrimination, bullying and harassment from occurring in the workplace. 2. Monitor our workplace culture through anonymous surveys, exit interviews, one-to-one conversations, return-to-work meetings a to identify and address any high risk issues. 3. Ensure Sexual Harassment & Harassment at Work policy is reviewed and communicated to staff annually.
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