



BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

RATIONALE

We believe that all our staff have a right to a working environment that is free from bullying and harassment.

AIMS

- To prohibit any form of bullying or harassment within Coppetts Wood Primary School and Children's Centre.
- To deal with any incidents or bullying and harassment swiftly and effectively.

PROCEDURE

The policy prohibits all forms of harassment whether this amounts to unlawful discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, or disability or not.

The policy prohibits all forms of harassment including physical, verbal and non-verbal behaviour.

The policy applies to all members of staff during working hours and outside normal working hours where an individual's action detrimentally affects another member of staff.

Definition and effects of bullying

Bullying is characterised as aggressive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour or abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Bullying does not always derive from supervisor/subordinate relationships or vice versa; unacceptable peer pressure can also amount to bullying.

Examples of bullying include:

- displays of rage at a colleague in public and/or in private
- personal insults and name-calling
- persistent unjust criticism and public humiliation
- setting objectives with impossible deadlines
- removing areas of responsibility and inflicting menial tasks instead
- ignoring or excluding an individual, or talking only to a third party to isolate another
- spreading malicious rumours
- insulting someone
- copying critical memos about someone to others who do not need to know

- ridiculing or demeaning someone
- exclusion
- overbearing supervision
- unwelcome sexual advances
- touching or standing too close
- displaying offensive materials
- making threats or comments about job security without foundation
- deliberately undermining a competent worker by overlooking them and constant criticism
- preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities.

Bullying can take other forms. For example, what may emerge as a concern initially categorised as 'harassment', 'intimidation' or 'aggressive management' may, upon investigation, be considered to be a case of bullying.

A person who is subject to bullying may suffer from physical and/or emotional symptoms, e.g. disturbed sleep, feeling sick, sweating, shaking, depression and loss of confidence and motivation. Additionally, they can suffer in other ways, e.g. loss of training and development opportunities, and missed promotion opportunities.

Procedure Where Harassment is Suspected from a Member of the Public

- Where harassment is suspected from a person outside of the staff team of Coppetts Wood Primary School and Children's Centre it is the staff's right to ask the individual to leave the premises.
- If the threat is deemed severe the police will be called.
- In the Children's Centre if the threat is deemed immediate the panic alarm will be used.
- The incident will be recorded.
- Where harassment is suspected during an outreach visit the team have the right to terminate a visit immediately and to contact the police.

Procedure Where Harassment is Suspected from another Staff Member

- All complaints will be taken seriously and investigated promptly and thoroughly.
- Employees are encouraged to make clear to the person who is harassing or bullying them that the behaviour is unwelcome and must be stopped. However, it may not be possible to resolve the matter informally. (Employees may find it helpful to keep records of incidents of behaviour, which they consider to be harassment or bullying, noting the date and time of the incident and details of any witnesses. Such records can be helpful in describing the problem and may also be used if any formal action is subsequently taken. It is not expected, however, that such

records would be kept for extended periods without the complainant's concerns being raised through the process described).

- Should the behaviour continue, staff should approach their line manager or, if appropriate (e.g. if that person is the one causing the concerns), another senior manager or in the case of the Head teacher, the Chair of Governors.
- A manager handling the complaint of harassment or bullying is likely, in the first instance, to discuss the complaint informally with the alleged offender. This should take place without delay after the complaint has been made.
- If the matter is not resolved informally, the manager will initiate an investigation.
- Following an investigation, the decision of the manager will be confirmed in writing to the complainant and the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- If the manager concludes that harassment or bullying have taken place, procedures set out in the school's disciplinary procedure will be initiated.
- The complainant can appeal against the manager's decision to the appeals panel of the governing body. Appeals must be lodged within ten working days of receipt of the letter confirming the decision, in accordance with arrangements set out in the letter. The decision of the appeals panel is final.
- Relocation within the school may be considered and, if it is feasible, every effort will be made to relocate the harasser or bully and not the victim, subject to consultation with all parties. Where harassment has been proven from another staff member it will result in an individual being disciplined and may result in dismissal, or summary dismissal for gross misconduct.
- Both victims and perpetrators will be interviewed with representation from a trade union or colleague if requested.
- Confidentiality will be maintained in consultation with alleged victims.
- Records of cases will be kept and incidents will be monitored and evaluated.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The governing body requires all governors and staff to maintain a high standard of conduct in relationships with colleagues and those who are under their direct authority. The governing body will not tolerate intimidation, victimisation, retaliation or discrimination against an individual for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation, whether or not the complaint is upheld. Where such action is alleged, the matter will be dealt with in the same way as an allegation of harassment or bullying.

Malicious complaints of harassment or bullying will not be condoned and will be regarded as a disciplinary offence. They will be dealt with in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedure.

This policy must not be used as a defence against reasonable management behaviour, e.g. action under the capability or disciplinary procedure. Such procedures may be suspended where a complaint of harassment or bullying is made.

This policy further requires all governors and staff to act to eliminate any harassment or bullying in the workplace of which they are aware. Failure to do so will be considered a failure to fulfil all the responsibilities of their position.

Harassment or bullying of any kind should not be dismissed by either governors or staff as trivial or insignificant, as a matter of interest only to a minority or as behaviour that can be excused as fun or a joke.

It is the Head teacher and Centre Manager's responsibility to ensure that no staff member feels harassed or bullied by another. It is the staff team's responsibility to ensure everyone is treated with equal respect.

GUIDELINES

Certain types of harassment are regarded as unfair discrimination and are covered by statute.

- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1995 states the use of threatening, abusive or insulting words or disorderly behaviour intended to cause harassment, alarm or distress is a criminal offence.
- The European Code of Practice protects people's dignity at work.
- The Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 contains the right not to be dismissed on the basis of trade union membership or activities, or non trade union membership

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