PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Policy statement

We are committed to providing a working environment free from sexual harassment and ensuring all staff are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect. We recognise that sexual harassment can occur both in and outside the workplace, such as on excursions, trips, at school related events or social functions, or on social media.

Sexual harassment or victimisation of any member of staff, or anyone they come into contact with during the course of their work, is unlawful and will not be tolerated. The law requires employers to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their staff during the course of their employment. We will take active steps to prevent the sexual harassment and victimisation of all staff. Anyone who is a victim of, or witness to, sexual harassment is encouraged to report it in accordance with this policy. Sexual harassment constitutes a breach of our Staff Behaviour Policy and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

About this policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out a framework for line managers to deal with sexual harassment that occurs by staff (which may include consultants, contractors and agency workers) and also by third parties such as parents, suppliers or visitors to our premises. It should be read in conjunction with our Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy but is intended to address, specifically, the issue of sexual harassment.

The policy covers sexual harassment which occurs at work and out of the workplace, such as on School trips or at work-related events or social functions, or on social media.

This policy has been implemented following consultation with employees.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time following consultation with staff.

Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to all employees, officers, consultants, self-employed contractors, casual workers, agency workers and volunteers.

Who is responsible for this policy?

The board of trustees has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy but has delegated responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the headteacher. Suggestions for change should be reported to the headteacher or deputy bursar (HR).

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that 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 sexual harassment.

It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or that is related to gender reassignment or sex, in the past.

Sexual harassment may include, for example:

- unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- verbal harassment, including making unwelcome comments about someone's appearance, sexual jokes or suggestive remarks;
- non-verbal harassment, including leering or making obscene gestures;
- continued suggestions for sexual activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome;
- sending or displaying material that is pornographic or that some people may find offensive (including emails, text messages, video clips and images sent by mobile phone or posted on the internet);
- unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless) or
- offensive emails, text messages or social media content.

A person may be sexually harassed even if they were not the intended target.

Sexual harassment is unlawful, will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Third-party sexual harassment

Third-party sexual harassment occurs where a person is sexually harassed by someone who does not work for, and who is not an agent of, the same employer, but with whom they have come into contact during the course of their employment. Third-party sexual harassment could include, for example, unwelcome sexual advances from a supplier visiting the school's premises.

Third-party sexual harassment can result in legal liability and will not be tolerated. The law requires the school to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment by third parties. All staff are encouraged to report any third-party sexual harassment they are a victim of, or witness, in accordance with this policy.

If any third-party sexual harassment of staff occurs, we will take steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again. These steps may include warning the harasser about their behaviour, banning them from our premises and reporting any criminal acts to the police.

Any sexual harassment by a member of staff against a third party may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Preventative steps

We are committed to taking proactive steps to prevent the sexual harassment of our staff. These

steps include:

- Online training course for all staff
- Face to face training for staff
- Introduction of robust anti-harassment policies that are reviewed and communicated to staff and third parties regularly
- Make third parties aware of zero tolerance stance to sexual harassment through email communications, notices, parent contract and/or parent code of conduct
- Assess risks affecting our school and consider how to mitigate them
- Engage a "harassment champion" to whom concerns can be reported to in confidence
- Monitor workplace culture through exit interviews, return to work meetings and staff surveys

If you are being sexually harassed: informal steps

If you are being sexually harassed, consider whether you feel able to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. If you feel comfortable doing so, you should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. We recognise, however, that this may be difficult or inappropriate depending on the circumstances. If this is the case, or raising the problem with the person responsible has not resolved the issue, you may speak to a member of SLT or the deputy bursar (HR), who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally.

If the complaint concerns a senior staff member, you may speak informally to the headteacher.

If you are not certain whether an incident or series of incidents amounts to sexual harassment, you should initially contact a member of SLT or the deputy bursar informally for confidential advice.

Raising a formal complaint

If informal steps are not appropriate, or have not been successful, you should raise the matter formally under our Grievance Procedure. The matter will then be dealt with as a formal grievance in line with our Grievance Procedure.

If, following the conclusion of the grievance process, we consider you have been sexually harassed by an employee the matter will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure as a case of possible misconduct or gross misconduct. If the alleged perpetrator is a third party such as a parent or visitor, we will consider what action would be appropriate to deal with the problem.

Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned.

As a general principle, the decision whether to progress a formal complaint is up to you. However, we have a duty to protect all staff and may pursue the matter independently if, in all the circumstances, we consider it appropriate to do so.

If you witness sexual harassment

Staff who witness sexual harassment are encouraged to take appropriate steps to address it. Depending on the circumstances, this could include:

- Intervening where you feel able to do so
- Supporting the victim to report it or reporting it on their behalf
- Reporting the incident where you feel there may be a continuing risk if you do not report it
- Co-operating in any investigation into the incident

All witnesses will be provided with appropriate support and will be protected from victimisation.

Protection and support for those involved

Staff who make complaints, report that they have witnessed wrongdoing, or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

If you believe you have suffered any such treatment you should inform a member of SLT or the deputy bursar. If the matter is not remedied, you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure.

We will monitor the treatment and outcomes of any complaints of sexual harassment we receive to ensure that they are properly investigated and resolved, those who report or act as witnesses are not victimised, repeat offenders are dealt with appropriately, and workforce training is targeted where needed.

We offer access to confidential counselling and support through our employee assistance programme provided by BHSF. The details are set out below:

Telephone number 0800 015 7284

Online: www.colleaguesupport.co.uk

Support and guidance can also be obtained from the following external services:

- The Equality Advisory and Support Service (www.equalityadvisoryservice.com)
- Protect (www.protect-advice.org.uk).
- Victim support (www.victimsupport.org.uk).

Confidentiality and record-keeping

Confidentiality is an important part of the procedures provided under this policy. 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. Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Information about a complaint by or about a staff member may be placed on their 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 our Data Protection Policy and Staff Privacy Notice.

This policy will be reviewed annually to monitor its effectiveness and implement any changes that may be required.

Last reviewed: October 2026

Next review: October 2027