



LEARNING ACADEMY PARTNERSHIP ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

Policy Reference No	PT003
Review Frequency	Annually
Reviewed	September 2025
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Amendments

Policy Date	New Version Number	Summary of change	Comments
Oct 24	V1.1	Creation of policy	
Sept 25	V1.2	Accessibility & Language Support section added	
Sept 25	V1.2	Confidentiality, monitoring & data protection section updated (13)	
Oct 25	V1.2	Comprehensive review of the entire policy to ensure more modern, inclusive, and considered language that is clearer and more concise, reflecting our organisational values around equality, diversity, and respect.	
Mar 26	V1.3	Updated terminology around Legal duties (2.2) in relation to the Employments Rights Bill.	
Mar 26	V1.3	Section added around disclosures relating to sexual harassment (10.4) in relation to the Employments Rights Bill.	

Union Consultation/Review

Date	Action (meeting, email etc.)	Comments	Attendance
Oct 24	Reviewed by PHP Law		

* **Trust** – Refers to all Schools, Academies & Business Support Team within the Learning Academy Partnership

* **Colleagues** – Refers to employees

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1. Accessibility and Language Support

If you require this policy in an alternative format or language, please contact the Trust People Team or your Head Teacher /Leader (as appropriate). We are committed to ensuring that all colleagues have access to our policies and can fully understand and engage with them and will work with you to provide the necessary support and resources.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Trust are committed to providing a working environment free from harassment, victimisation and bullying and ensuring all colleagues are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect. We recognise that harassment or bullying can occur both in and outside the workplace, such as on trips or at work-related events or social functions.
- 2.2 Harassment, victimisation or bullying of any colleague, or anyone they come into contact with during work, can be unlawful and will not be tolerated. The Trust has a legal duty to take reasonable steps to prevent Harassment, Bully or Sexual Harassment before it occurs. The Trust will take active steps to help prevent the harassment, bullying and victimisation of all colleagues. Anyone who raises a complaint of, or witness to, harassment, bullying or victimisation is encouraged to report it in accordance with this policy. This will enable the Trust to take appropriate action and provide support. Harassment, bullying and victimisation can result in legal liability for both the business and the perpetrator, whether they work for the Trust, or are a third-party outside of our control. Harassment, bullying and victimisation may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- 2.3 This policy is aligned with and reinforces the principles outlined in our Trust Code of Conduct, ensuring a safe and respectful working environment for all colleagues and members of our communities.

3. Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EEDI)

- 3.1 As a Trust with diverse communities and workforce we recognise every individual for their uniqueness and aim to create an inclusive culture where people can be their genuine selves in accordance with our values. We believe we are 'stronger together' and will achieve our greatest success as an organisation when every person feels included and is able to flourish. We strive to create an environment where everyone, regardless of their background, feels valued, respected and empowered to contribute to their fullest potential.
- 3.2 We have zero tolerance for any behaviours that cause harm based on identities, backgrounds, cultures, neurodivergence, and/or protected characteristics - whether real or perceived. Identity-based harm, including but not limited to discrimination, harassment, microaggressions, hate speech, and violence, is unacceptable. Such behaviours are not only damaging to the individuals targeted but also undermine the values, integrity, and inclusive culture of our Trust.

- 3.3 We encourage all members of our Trust to report any incidents of harm based on identity, background, culture and or protected characteristics that they witness or experience. These reports will be handled sensitively, and witnesses will be supported throughout the process. The Trust will protect those who raise concerns in good faith from victimisation or retaliation.
- 3.4 We are all responsible for upholding this policy and contributing to a culture of respect and inclusion. Together, we can ensure that the Trust is a place where everyone feels valued, safe, and welcome.
- 3.5 These commitments are underpinned by our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, which protects individuals from unlawful discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity across all protected characteristics.

4. About this policy

- 4.1 This purpose of this policy is to set out a framework for colleagues on how to deal with any harassment, victimisation or bullying that occurs by colleagues (which may include agency/supply workers) and by third parties such as contractors, volunteers and visitors to our ~~schools~~ premises.
- 4.2 Any form of harassment, including from parents, carers, or through online platforms, will not be tolerated under any circumstances.
- 4.3 This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or contract to provide services, and we may amend it at any time.

4.4 Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to all colleagues, trustees, contractors, visitors, supply workers, agency workers and volunteers.

4.5 Who is responsible for this policy?

The Board of Trustee's has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy but has delegated responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the Trust Leadership Team, Leaders and the Trust People Team. Suggestions for change should be reported to the Trust People Team.

Headteachers, line managers and leaders have day-to-day responsibility for this policy and you should refer any questions about this policy to them in the first instance.

5. What is Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Victimisation?

- 5.1 **Harassment** - Harassment is unwanted behaviour that causes distress or violates someone's dignity, often linked to protected characteristics like race, sex, or disability. It can be verbal, physical, or written, and may be considered unlawful or criminal depending on its nature. A single incident can amount to harassment.

Harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- Continued suggestions for social activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist jokes, or derogatory or stereotypical remarks about a particular ethnic or religious group or gender
- Disclosing or threatening to disclose someone's sexual orientation or gender identity against their wishes
- Offensive emails, text messages or social media content or
- Mocking. Mimicking or belittling a person's disability

5.2 **Sexual Harassment** - Sexual harassment is any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that violates someone's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. The conduct does not need to be sexually motivated, only sexual in nature. This policy protects all colleagues of the Learning Academy Partnership against any form of Sexual Harassment.

Sexual Harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- Sexual comments, jokes or "banter"
- Displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photos.
- Suggestive looks or staring
- Suggesting sexual advances
- Making promises in return for sexual favours
- Asking questions about a personal private or sex life
- Discussing your personal sex life
- Sexual posts of conduct on social media
- Spreading sexual rumours about a person
- Sending sexually explicit emails or messages
- Unwelcoming touching, hugging or massaging

To be sexual harassment, the unwanted behaviour must have either:

- Violated someone's dignity
- Created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone

It can be sexual harassment if the behaviour:

- Has one of these effects even if it was not intended
- Intended to have one of these effects even if it did not have that effect

5.3 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, 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.

5.4 **Victimisation**

Victimisation includes subjecting a person to a detriment because they have done, or are suspected of doing or intending to do, any of the following protected acts:

- Bringing proceedings under the Equality Act 2010
- Giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the Equality Act 2010
- Doing any other thing for the purposes of or in connection with the equality Act 2010
- Alleging that a person has contravened the Equality Act 2010

Victimisation may include, but is not limited to:

- Denying someone an opportunity because it is suspected that they intend to make a complaint about harassment.
- Excluding someone because they have raised a grievance about harassment
- Failing to promote someone because they accompanied another staff member to a grievance meeting
- Dismissing someone because they gave evidence on behalf of staff member at an employment tribunal hearing

5.5 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 the jokes create an offensive environment.

5.6 Any form of harassment and victimisation are unlawful and will not be tolerated. They may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal if they are committed:

- In a work situation
- During any situation related to work, such as a social event with colleagues
- Against a colleague or another person connected to us outside of a work situation, including on social media
- Against anyone outside of a work situation where the incident is relevant to your suitability to carry out your role

5.7 We will take into account any aggravating factors, such as abuse of power over a more junior colleague, when deciding the appropriate disciplinary action to take.

5.8 If any harassment or victimisation of colleagues occurs, we will take steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again. Action may include

updating relevant policies, providing further colleague training and taking disciplinary action against the perpetrator.

6. Third Party Harassment

6.1 Third-party harassment occurs where a person is harassed or 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 with during their employment.

Third-party harassment could include, for example, unwelcome sexual advances from a contractor, agency or supply worker or any other visitors including parents/carers/family members, visiting the Trust's premises. This also includes where a person is visiting a contractor, or any other external third-party including parents/carers/family members in another location in the course of their employment, for example home visits.

6.2 Third-party harassment can result in legal liability and will not be tolerated. Any colleague who is harassed or witnesses any third-party harassment is strongly encouraged to report it in accordance with this policy.

6.3 Any harassment by a colleague of the Trust against a third-party may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal in line with our disciplinary policy.

6.4 If any third-party harassment of colleagues occurs, we will take steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again. Action may include:

- Warning the harasser about their behaviour
- Banning them from our schools
- Reporting any criminal acts to the police
- Formal action in line with the Trust disciplinary policy

7. What is Bullying?

7.1 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.

7.2 Bullying may include overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision or inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance. However, legitimate, reasonable, and constructive criticism of a colleague's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to workers in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying on their own.

Bullying may include, but is not limited to:

- Starting gossip and rumours about a colleague
- Excluding or ignoring others in the workplace on purpose
- Acting aggressive towards others
- Undermining other work in front of management
- Getting physical or threatening physical abuse
- Giving unfair or unattainable tasks and deadlines
- Withholding information
- Telling offensive or inappropriate jokes
- Invading others privacy
- Criticising or devaluing others
- Passive aggressive comments

7.3 If you are not certain whether an incident or series of incidents amounts to bullying or harassment, you should initially contact your line manager or the Trust People Team for confidential advice.

8. Raising an informal allegation against harassment, victimisation or bullying

8.1 If you are being bullied, harassed or victimised, you should consider whether you feel able to raise the incident informally with the person responsible. You should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable.

If this is too difficult, you should speak to your Head Teacher / Leader, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally. If you feel unable to speak to your line manager because the incident concerns them, you should speak to the Trust People Team on 01 626 248800 or on people@lapsw.org.

9. If you witness harassment, victimisation or bullying

9.1 Colleagues who witness harassment or victimisation are encouraged to take appropriate steps to address it. Depending on the circumstances, this could include:

- Intervening where you feel safe and able to do so
- Supporting the harassed colleague to report it or reporting it on their behalf
- Cooperating in any investigations into the incident

9.2 All witnesses will be provided with appropriate support and will be protected from victimisation and retaliation. The Employee Assistant Programme is available for all colleagues who feel that they may require additional support.

10. Raising a formal allegation against harassment, victimisation or bullying

- 10.1 If you wish to make a complaint about bullying, sexual harassment, harassment or victimisation, you should initially complete the Trust incident reporting form available at [Harassment Reporting Form](#) which will automatically submit on completion. Please note that this form can be used if you are the complainant or witness of any bullying, sexual harassment, harassment or victimisation towards another colleague or third party within the Trust.
- 10.2 As a general principle, the decision whether to report an incident is up to you. However, we have a duty to protect all colleagues and may pursue the matter independently if, in all the circumstances, we consider it appropriate to do so.
- 10.3 If you require further advice on submitting a formal allegation, please contact harassmentreporting@lapsw.org which is managed by the Trust People Team.
- 10.4 Disclosures relating to sexual harassment are protected under the Employment Rights Act as qualifying whistleblowing protections. Colleagues who raise a concern about sexual harassment will be protected from any form of detriment or dismissal as a result of doing so. Further guidance can be found within the Trust Whistleblowing Policy.

11. Formal investigations

- 11.1 We will investigate all incidents promptly and respectfully. While your initial conversation or report will be treated with confidentiality, please note that due to the nature of the incidents, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. However, disclosure of information regarding the complaint or investigation will be limited to those directly involved, or whom need to know. As well as investigating the incident itself, the investigating officer will also consider whether reasonable steps were in place to prevent bullying, harassment or victimisation.
- 11.2 A meeting will be arranged with you and the investigating officer within **5 working days** of receiving your complaint. This meeting will allow you the chance to give your account of events. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or a trade union representative of your choice, who must respect the confidentiality of the investigation.
- 11.3 The investigating officer will also meet with the alleged harasser or bully (who may also be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative of their choice) to hear their account of events. They have a right to be told the details of the allegations against them, so that they can respond however, confidentiality will be maintained where possible.

- 11.4 Where your incident report is about someone other than a colleague, such as a contractor or supply staff, we will consider what actions may be appropriate to protect you and anyone involved pending the outcome of the investigation, bearing in mind the reasonable needs of the Trust and the rights of that person. Where appropriate, we will attempt to discuss the matter with the third party.
- 11.5 We will also consider any request that you make for changes to your own working arrangements during the investigation. For example, you may ask for changes to your duties or working hours to avoid or minimise contact with the alleged harasser or bully.
- 11.6 During the investigation of the complaint, it may be necessary to interview individuals who witnessed the alleged incidents. In such cases, they will be advised of the requirement to maintain strict confidentiality regarding all aspects of the investigation.
- 11.7 Following the conclusion of the investigation, the investigating officer will submit a report with a decision will be made about whether formal action is appropriate. The potential outcomes may include, but are not limited to:
- **No further action** where there is insufficient evidence or where the concerns are not substantiated,
 - **Informal resolution or professional support**, such as additional training, coaching, professional guidance or reflective practice where issues are identified but do not warrant formal disciplinary action. Any such action would be confirmed in writing and monitored to ensure the required improvements are made and sustained.
 - **Mediation or Counselling** may be considered to manage the ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned. It may be appropriate to arrange some form of mediation and/or counselling, or to change the duties, working location or reporting lines of one or both parties.
 - **Referral to a disciplinary hearing** would be advised if the investigating officer considers that there is a case to answer and the harasser or bully is a colleague of the Trust. The matter will be dealt with as a case of possible misconduct or gross misconduct under our Disciplinary Procedure.
- 11.9 All outcomes will be communicated sensitively, and colleagues will be supported throughout the process.

12. Appeals

- 12.1 If the incident has not been resolved to your satisfaction you may appeal in writing to the Chief Executive Officer/Chair of Board (as appropriate) stating your full grounds of appeal, within **10 working days** of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you. You have a right to bring a companion to the meeting.

- 12.3 The Trust Lead for People or Clerk to the Board (as appropriate) will arrange for a meeting to take place as soon as possible and usually within **5 working days** following receipt of your written appeal.
- 12.4 An Appeal Panel will be selected, specifically for the appeal, from our Senior Leaders/Trust Board (as appropriate) who has not been involved in the case or original decision. They may ask anyone previously involved to be present.
- 12.5 The colleague will receive a final decision in writing, usually within **5 working days** of the appeal hearing. This is the end of the procedure and there is no further appeal

13. Protection and support for those involved

- 13.1 Colleagues who report an incident or 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 the Trust Disciplinary Procedure.
- 13.2 Colleagues are protected from retaliation both under this policy and under whistleblowing legislation where disclosures about sexual harassment are made.
- 13.3 If you believe you have suffered any such treatment you should inform your Head Teacher /Line Manager/ Leader as soon as possible. If you have suffered such treatment by your Head Teachers /Line Managers/ Member of the Trust Leadership Team/Member of Trust Executive Team (as appropriate) you can raise your concerns to the Trust People Team on 01626 248800 or at people@lapsw.org.

If the matter is not remedied, you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure as highlighted in the Trust Grievance policy.

- 13.4 We will monitor the treatment and outcomes of any reported incidents of harassment or victimisation 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, cultural clashes are identified and resolved and workforce training is targeted where needed.
- 13.5 We offer access to confidential counselling through our Employee Assistant Programme (Health Assured), which is available on request for anyone affected by, or accused of, bullying or harassment. Information is available through your Employee Self Service or for additional information, please contact the Trust People Team. The helpline number is 0800 028 0199 or through the Wisdom app.

14. Monitoring & Data Protection

- 14.1 The Trust is committed to ensuring that this policy is applied fairly, consistently, and in a way that supports an inclusive, respectful, and legally compliant working environment.
- 14.2 As part of the implementation of this policy, the Trust may collect, process, and store personal data — including special categories of data — in accordance with our Data Protection Policy. This will always be done in line with current Data Protection legislation, including:
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
 - The Data Protection Act 2018
 - Any successor legislation or updates to these laws
- 14.3 We will ensure that all data collected as part of the application of this policy is handled with integrity and in accordance with the principles of transparency, purpose limitation, and data minimisation. Records will be maintained in line with our:
- Workforce Privacy Notice
 - Records Management and Retention Policy
 - Information Security standards
- 14.4 If any colleague becomes aware that personal data is at risk of compromise, loss, or has been subject to a breach, they must report it immediately to the Trust's Data Protection Officer. Prompt reporting is essential to allow for assessment, mitigation, and, where applicable, notification to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) within the required 72-hour window.
- 14.5 Colleagues are responsible for familiarising themselves with and adhering to all related policies, including but not limited to:
- Data Protection and GDPR Policies
 - Criminal Records Information Policy
 - Recruitment and Safer Recruitment Policy
 - Internet, Email and Communications Policy
 - Information Security Policy
- 14.6 Colleagues must ensure that all personal data and sensitive information they access in the course of their work is treated with strict confidentiality. Such information should only be shared with authorised individuals on a need-to-know basis. Any suspected or actual breach of confidentiality must be reported immediately to the Data Protection Officer. Breaches may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with Trust procedures.
- 14.7 These policies are available through the Colleague Portal, your Head Teacher, or the Trust Business Support Team.
- 14.8 By following these expectations, we ensure that data is handled responsibly and that the Trust remains a secure and trustworthy place for colleagues and the communities we serve.

14.9 If colleagues are ever unsure about their responsibilities or how to respond to a potential data issue, they are encouraged to seek advice from their line manager, the Trust Business Support Team, or the Data Protection Officer without delay.

15 Review of policy

15.1 This policy is reviewed annually or upon change of relevant legislation. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.

15.2 The Trust will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it remains effective, equitable, and aligned with our Trust values.

14.3 Reviews will take into account feedback from colleagues, evolving best practice, and any identified gaps in fairness, inclusion, or consistency of application. Where appropriate, updates will be made to strengthen the policy and support continuous improvement across the Trust

15. Useful links

- [Equality Advisory and Support Service \(equalityadvisoryservice.com\)](https://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/)
- [Specialists help and support - Sexual harassment - Acas](https://www.acas.org.uk/help-and-support/sexual-harassment)
- [Sexual harassment - Victim Support](https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/)
- [Protect - Speak up stop harm - Whistleblowing Homepage \(protect-advice.org.uk\)](https://www.protect-advice.org.uk/)