



WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL
ASHURST CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL
SCHOOL LANE, ASHURST, WEST SUSSEX, BN44 3AY



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Dignity and Respect at Work Policy

Part of the school's commitment to ensure a safe and friendly working environment

1. Context

It is a key priority for the school to ensure a welcoming, safe, inclusive, and supportive working environment that is free from all forms of unacceptable behaviour such as discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation. It is important that all colleagues feel a sense of belonging, and are valued, celebrated, and recognised for who they are and what they bring.

Creating this environment enables us to deliver good quality education, and it is important we all embrace and promote the school's values, where treating others with dignity and respect is central.

2. Aim

Everyone has a role to play in creating this environment, and the aim of the Policy is to ensure everyone we deal with or have contact with:

- is treated with dignity and respect;
- understands the role they play in creating a culture of equity and inclusion; and
- has a positive experience of the school.

To achieve this, we must ensure that everyone:

- understands the importance of dignity and respect, and feels empowered to challenge, resolve and/or report unacceptable behaviour when it is witnessed or experienced;

' Achieving Together with Love, Hope and Joy '

- has the confidence that when they raise a concern, they will be listened to, and appropriate and timely action will be taken, and helpful support provided; and
- understands the behaviours expected of them to create an inclusive, safe and welcoming environment.

3. Scope

This policy applies to the way we work and interact with our colleagues and covers all school staff.

It encompasses all interactions, including those that occur at a work social event, training events or online. 1 In relation to unacceptable behaviour from customers (including parents, carers and visitors), please refer to the document titled Policy on the Prevention and Management of Unacceptable Customer Behaviour.

For unacceptable behaviour involving an employee of a partner school, Headteachers from both schools will liaise to agree the framework within which the behaviour should be resolved.

4. Who can help?

If you experience or witness unacceptable behaviour, your manager / Headteacher can support you in considering what the next steps might look like, the best approach to resolution and where requested can support that resolution. Where for whatever reason this is not appropriate, or you don't feel able to raise a concern with your Headteacher, or you don't feel it is being managed effectively, you can contact:

- your Chair of Governors, Chair of the Governing Board
- your trade union; or
- a colleague

If a Headteacher would like any advice and support on how best to respond to and resolve unacceptable behaviour, they can contact the Schools HR Business Partnering team.

5. Responsibilities

Experiencing unacceptable behaviour can have a significant impact on staff. This impact can increase if left unresolved or allowed to continue¹.

The school wants to ensure that all staff know that unacceptable behaviour will always be addressed and that there are many options available for staff to resolve, raise or report concerns. To help achieve this the following one-page documents have been created:

- Informal Steps if you experience or witness unacceptable behaviour
- Reflecting on Unacceptable Behaviour
- Providing Feedback on Unacceptable Behaviour
- Ways to Report Unacceptable Behaviour

We are all responsible for ensuring that the way we act and interact with colleagues creates a positive, inclusive, and thriving work environment. Our responsibilities are as follows:

a) All staff

It is essential that we:

- treat all colleagues with dignity, respect, consideration, fairness, and hold ourselves and each other to account when we fall short of this;
- ensure all colleagues can be themselves and feel included;
- be sensitive, aware and considerate to the impact our attitude, words and actions can have on others and how they make people feel;
- speak up, report and support our colleagues if we see unacceptable behaviour. This is important as it:
 - o demonstrates to the recipient that others do not agree and are not comfortable with the behaviour;
 - o prevents exclusionary behaviour embedding, reoccurring and/or becoming the norm; and
 - o provides the opportunity for reflection, learning and a change in behaviour.
- declare a personal relationship to a manager / Headteacher as there may be potential to be a conflict of interest i.e. in recruitment, in direct line management, in decision making in the school and in personal relationships.
- seek, welcome, respect, value and listen to views and opinions that are different to our own;
- listen, reflect, and respond to feedback about our behaviour, and continually challenge our own perceptions and assumptions; and
- become familiar with and work in alignment with school values.

b) Headteacher

It is essential that Headteachers do all they can, to prevent unacceptable behaviour occurring. There is more information for Headteachers on preventing unacceptable behaviour on WSSfE within the discipline, grievance and whistleblowing policies, and the West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) Standards of Conduct.

In addition to the above, Headteachers should:

- adopt inclusive leadership practices and create psychological safety which can be achieved by working in alignment with the schools values. This would include for example:
 - o leading by example and role modelling positive behaviours;
 - o collaboratively developing, agreeing and continuously reviewing a team charter that covers behavioural expectations and how the team will hold each other to account if these are not met.
 - o make it clear that unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated, and how important it is to treat colleagues with dignity and respect.
 - o have difficult conversations privately and in a respectful way.
 - o create a supportive environment, where staff are invited to candidly share their thoughts and ideas.
- operate in a fair and consistent way, providing equity in opportunities for all staff;
- be alert to unacceptable behaviour and act promptly to tackle and resolve, irrespective of whether the behaviour has been observed personally or whether a concern has been raised.
- treat all concerns raised seriously, sensitively and confidentially, giving all parties full support during the process;
- investigate and respond to all allegations of unacceptable behaviour;
- record any incidents of unacceptable behaviour and any action or investigations.
- Headteachers should take all reasonable steps to address and avoid actual and perceived conflicts of interest. Further information on conflicts of interest can be found in the Guidance on Propriety and Official Conduct.

6. What behaviours are unacceptable?

Alongside our responsibilities, there are certain behaviours that are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. These can occur in person and/or online and include:

a) Discrimination

Discrimination occurs where one person (or a group of people) is treated unfairly compared to another person or group because of their protected characteristic² and there is no legal justification. For more information, please see the document 'types of discrimination and examples'.

This includes but is not limited to all forms of racism, ableism, sexism, ageism, transphobia and homophobia, and could take the form of microaggressions.

b) Harassment

Harassment (under the Equality Act) is unwanted conduct related to protected characteristics that:

- a) violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person; or
- b) is reasonably considered by that person to have violated their dignity or created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Other forms of repeated behaviour that cause alarm or distress to an individual or group of individuals may also amount to harassment.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any kind of unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that makes a person feel humiliated or intimidated, or that creates a hostile environment.

c) Bullying

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, and/or an abuse or misuse of power that is meant to undermine, humiliate or injure the person on the receiving end.

Behaviour may amount to bullying even if it was not intended to cause distress or harm. Bullying and harassment may be single or repeated incidents and can range from extreme forms of intimidating behaviour, such as physical violence, to more subtle forms such as ignoring someone. They can and often do occur without witnesses.

It is important to separate bullying or harassment from the right of the employer to allocate work, provide feedback, support, encourage and manage performance. These are valid management actions which should always be performed in a reasonable, fair, and respectful way.

For further information about harassment and bullying please see the Bullying and Harassment Guidance (Schools), available on the WSSfE page titled Raising/Addressing a Grievance and/or Concerns.

d) Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint, raised a grievance about unacceptable behaviour or discrimination or because they are suspected of doing so.

An employee will however be held to account if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

7. Resolving Concerns

a) Overview

Headteachers will listen empathetically to all concerns raised and they will always be taken seriously. Timely action will be taken to address issues, and tailored support will be provided.

Headteachers will resolve problems in a way that, as far as possible, maintains a positive and supportive working environment. Matters will be addressed swiftly, clearly, and sensitively, respecting the rights of both the person raising the concern and the person who has had a concern raised against them.

All concerns whether informal or formal will be treated confidentially and fairly.

b) Informal resolution

It is often possible to resolve matters informally to the full satisfaction of all parties involved.

Resolving unacceptable behaviour informally does not make it less important, but it is often the quickest, most effective, and most constructive method for resolution.

It is important to recognise that sometimes people make genuine mistakes or might not be aware that their behaviour is unwelcome or offensive. Letting the person know their behaviour is unwelcome or offensive, either directly or with the help of a third party will give them the opportunity to reflect, learn, apologise and to stop.

For more information on informal steps that can be taken please refer to:

- Informal Steps if you Experience or Witness Unacceptable Behaviour;
- Reflecting on Unacceptable Behaviour

- Providing Feedback on Unacceptable Behaviour

c) Formal resolution

If the informal approach fails to resolve the matter, or the situation is so serious it warrants formal action, a concern can be raised using the Grievance Policy and Procedure.

You are advised to speak to the Headteacher (or Chair of Governing Body if about the Headteacher) about raising a concern formally.

You may also wish to consider speaking to a trade union representative (if a member) for support and advice.

For more information, please refer to Ways to Report Unacceptable Behaviour.

Action may also be taken under the WSCC Disciplinary Policy and Procedure or the WSCC Performance Improvement Policy where judged appropriate

8. Available Support

Experiencing unacceptable behaviour can have a devastating effect as it can cause fear, stress, anxiety, and a range of other physiological and psychological health issues.

It can also be a difficult time for the individual the complaint is about.

Below are examples of the types of support available.

Support Provision	Information on Support
Headteacher Debrief and ongoing support	The Headteacher should give the member of staff the option, time and space to debrief and discuss an incident, its impact, and how it has made them feel. It is important Headteachers do not dismiss or attempt to explain away someone's lived experience, and how it made them feel. Headteacher should listen empathetically and ask the individual how best they and the school can support them, and what the next steps might look like. In some circumstances support may not be required immediately, as the impact may not occur until a period of time has passed. For this reason, it is important that a debrief is an ongoing option, and that when a debrief occurs, follow

	up check in meeting are scheduled, at an agreed timeframe.
Peer support	Colleagues that witness unacceptable behaviour should offer the individual support and check to see how they are. It can be important to listen to the individual's experience, if they wish to share, and help them to plan and consider what the next steps might include, and provide any support required. It is important to remain in contact with the colleague and check to see how they are, and that the issue has been resolved.
Employee Assistance Programme	All staff can contact the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) where this would be of benefit to them. This is a free independent service that is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The EAP can help staff deal with problems that might adversely impact their work, life, health and wellbeing. Support is provided by a fully trained and qualified Counsellor. The EAP also provides Managerial Support and Consultancy to provide support with navigating challenging managerial duties.
Mental Health	The Headteacher can support staff with their mental health by discussing and implementing a Mind Wellness Action Plan, available on the H&S page on WSSfE titled Wellbeing and Stress Management. Mind also provides advice and guidance alongside a list of schools that can support staff that are impacted by racism. The school has a Mental Health First Aiders (The Headteacher) to support staff.
Staff Networks	Our Staff Networks may be able to provide peer support, signpost to guidance and/or provide a safe space to work through the behaviour staff have experienced. To join or find out more please email: Black, Asian and Global Majority (BAGM) staff network contact BAGMstaffnetwork@westsussex.gov.uk Carer's staff network contact CarersStaffNetwork@westsussex.gov.uk Disability staff network contact DisabilityStaffNetwork@westsussex.gov.uk LGBT+ staff network contact LGBTQStaffNetwork@westsussex.gov.uk Mental health staff network contact MentalHealthStaffNetwork@westsussex.gov.uk Neurodiversity staff network contact NeurodiversityStaffNetwork@westsussex.gov.uk Women in the workplace staff network contact womenintheworkplaceStaffNetwork@westsussex.gov.uk

Trade Unions	A Trade Union can assist staff that are members, get the support they need, or address an incident particularly where this is felt to be insufficient.
Stress Risk Assessment	Should staff experience stress after an incident, managers / Headteachers can provide support by collaboratively putting in place a stress risk assessment to proactively identify and control the potential stress. Actions should be identified and prioritised to eliminate or reduce risks and promote wellbeing. The stress risk assessment can be found on the H&S page on WSSfE titled Wellbeing and Stress Management.
Access to Work	Access to Work's Mental Health Support Service can provide a tailored package of support for up to nine months. You do not need to have a diagnosed condition to use this service.

¹If the behaviour is prolonged or repeated, it can be helpful to keep notes of what was said, the date and time, names of participants and anyone else who may have seen or heard what happened. Please report it, as important the behaviour is addressed.

²The protected characteristics are age; race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins); disability; sex; sexual orientation; gender identity/re-assignment; religion & belief; pregnancy and maternity; and marital/civil partnership status.

9. Document History

Reviewed	Ratified	Expires
March 26		April 27