St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Crayford

Learning and growing together with Christ

Staff Dignity at Work Policy

Catholic Social Teaching is the moral compass that guides us
in how to live out our faith in the world.

Dignity



Aligned with the Catholic Social Teaching principle of Dignity, St Fidelis Catholic Primary School maintains a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual harassment, bullying and victimisation. This ensures a safe environment where every individual's inherent worth is respected and protected.

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Last reviewed:	November 2026
Next review date:	November 2029

Contents

1. Statement of principles **3**

2. Legislation and scope **3**

3. Definitions **4**

3.1 Harassment 4

3.2 Bullying 5

3.3 Victimisation 5

4. Examples of unacceptable behaviour **5**

5. Examples of Sexual Harassment **6**

6. Reasonable management **6**

7. Roles and responsibilities **7**

7.1 The governing board 7

7.2 The executive headteacher and head of school 7

7.3 All members of the school staff 7

8. Raising a Concern **7**

9. When it's a Crime **8**

10. Witnessing sexual harassment, bullying or victimisation **8**

1. Statement of principles

- All members of the school workforce (as defined in section 2) have a right to be treated with dignity and respect in the workplace
- Workplace harassment (including sexual harassment), bullying and victimisation are totally unacceptable
- We recognise that harassment or bullying can occur both in and outside the workplace, such as on school trips or at school-related events or social functions
- 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
- We recognise that any member of the school workforce can be subjected to these forms of behaviour
- 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
- The school will not base decisions about handling harassment, bullying or victimisation on whether someone submitted to or rejected a particular instance of harassment, bullying or victimisation

The school strives for a workplace that's free of harassment, bullying and victimisation through:

- Fostering a safe environment and respectful workplace for staff
- Raising awareness of the issues of harassment (including sexual harassment), bullying and victimisation, 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
- Ensuring that senior leaders demonstrate and uphold high standards of conduct

2. Legislation and scope

This policy follows the principles of the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Employment Rights Act 2025

This policy is designed to protect all current and former members of the school workforce.
For the purposes of this policy, the term 'school workforce' includes:

- Employees
- Agency workers
- Student teachers or teaching assistants
- Apprentices or work experience students
- Volunteers including governors
- Job seekers and job applicants

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

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.

3.1 Harassment
Harassment, as defined in the Equality Act 2010, is: “Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.”

The unwanted conduct may be physical, verbal or non-verbal. A single incident can amount to harassment.

The relevant protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The individual making the complaint does not need to be the intended target or possess the relevant characteristic themselves. For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment.

An individual may find the behaviour offensive even if it is not directed at them, or they may be:

- Associated with a person who has a protected characteristic
- Wrongly perceived to have a protected characteristic
- Treated as if they have a protected characteristic

Harassment may also involve unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which has the same purpose or effect on the individual as described at the beginning of this section (3.1).

Harassment may also occur where there is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or that relates to gender reassignment or sex. This conduct has the same purpose or effect described at the beginning of this section (3.1) and the individual is treated less favourably because they rejected or submitted to it.

Harassment is unacceptable, and may still be considered and addressed under this policy even if it does not fall within any of the defined categories above.

3.2 Bullying
Bullying in the workplace may be characterised as: “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. 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.

Harassment is when bullying or unwanted behaviour is about any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010 (as defined in section 3.1).

3.3 Victimisation
Victimisation is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as: “Subjecting an individual to a detriment because the individual does a protected act, or it is believed they have done or may do a protected act.”

A ‘protected act’ is:
- Bringing proceedings under the Equality Act 2010
- Giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the Act
- Doing any other thing for the purposes of or in connection with the Act
- Making an allegation that someone has breached the Act

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
- Misuse of power, such as overbearing supervision or deliberately undermining a competent worker
- Putting humiliating, offensive or threatening comments or photos on social media

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Sexual harassment can be a one-off incident or an ongoing pattern of behaviour. It can happen in person or in other ways, for example online through things like email, social media or messaging tools. A non exhaustive list of examples includes:
- flirting, gesturing or making sexual remarks about someone's body, clothing or appearance
- asking questions about someone's sex life
- telling sexually offensive jokes
- making sexual comments or jokes about someone's sexual orientation or gender reassignment or gender identity
- displaying or sharing pornographic or sexual images, or other sexual content
- touching someone against their will, for example hugging them
- sexual assault or rape.

What some people might consider as joking or ‘banter' is still sexual harassment if:

- the behaviour is of a sexual nature (see examples provided above)
- it is unwanted
- it violates someone's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Harassment, bullying or victimisation may occur:

- Face to face
- Through written communication
- Using visual images (for example, pictures of a sexual nature or embarrassing photographs of colleagues)
- Via email
- Via phone or communication platforms
- Via 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. Examples of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment can be a one-off incident or an ongoing pattern of behaviour. It can happen in person or in other ways, for example online through things like email, social media or messaging tools. A non exhaustive list of examples includes:

- flirting, gesturing or making sexual remarks about someone's body, clothing or appearance
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- making sexual comments or jokes about someone's sexual orientation or gender reassignment or gender identity
- displaying or sharing pornographic or sexual images, or other sexual content
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What some people might consider as joking or ‘banter' is still sexual harassment if:

- the behaviour is of a sexual nature (see examples provided above)
- it is unwanted
- it violates someone's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Sexual harassment is usually directed at an individual, but it's not always the case. Sometimes there can be a culture of sexual harassment in a workplace that's not specifically aimed at one person – for example making jokes of sexual nature. Someone could still make a complaint of sexual harassment in this situation.

6. Reasonable management

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

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

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board:

- Ensures complaints and allegations are handled according to agreed procedures
- Holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Ensures that this policy is periodically reviewed and kept up to date
- Deals with complaints raised by or about the executive headteacher

7.2 The executive headteacher and head of school

The executive headteacher and head of school:

- Works to ensure that the working environment is free from harassment, bullying and victimisation
- Works to check that complaints and allegations are handled according to agreed procedures
- Considers the risks of sexual harassment and works to implement reasonable steps to reduce these risks, including [amend the points below in accordance with your school's practice]:
    - Providing staff training to raise awareness and help encourage reporting
    - Training managers to respond to complaints of sexual harassment
    - Carrying out a risk assessment to identify situations and environments where sexual harassment may be more likely to occur

7.3 All members of the school staff

All members of the school workforce:

- Treat colleagues with dignity and respect
- Contribute to maintaining an environment free from harassment, bullying and victimisation
- Attend training on identifying and responding to sexual harassment
- Support colleagues who experience unacceptable behaviour and who are considering making a complaint, or have made a complaint
- Report any occurrence of unacceptable behaviour and offer supporting evidence in any investigation where appropriate

8. Raising a Concern

If a member of staff believes they have experienced sexual harassment, bullying or victimisation at work, the school always encourages a member of staff to raise the matter so that they can receive appropriate support and that the complaint can be dealt with properly.

Staff can raise their concerns through the school's Staff Grievance Policy. The policy offers both informal and formal routes to resolve matters. It may also be necessary for matters to be dealt with under the school's Staff Disciplinary Policy. Staff can make their complaint in writing, speak directly to the Head of School or Executive Headteacher or otherwise ask a trade union representative or colleague to raise the complaint on their behalf.

Because of the sensitive nature of sexual harassment complaints, the steps in the school's grievance or disciplinary policies can be adapted to ensure that all staff feel comfortable and supported. That might include:

- discussing with the member of staff who will deal with the complaint and any investigation, as well as any steps to be taken to ensure they are comfortable with the approach and feel supported
- considering any interim measures that might need to be taken while the complaint is dealt with to avoid direct contact with the person about whom the complaint has been made
- agreeing a timescale to resolve matters.

Whilst school procedures normally require complaints to be raised within 3 months, the school recognises that in the case of sexual harassment that might not always be easy to do and will therefore consider each case on its merits.

9. When it's a Crime

If the complaint amounts to a crime, you can report this directly to the Police. If you are unsure or uncomfortable about doing this, there are specialist helplines you can call for support and advice. They can help talk through your options. We will also discuss with you how you wish the matter to be dealt with.

Further guidance is also available from ACAS at: www.acas.org.ukdiscrimination-and-bullying

10. Witnessing sexual harassment, bullying or victimisation

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

- Intervening where they feel able to do so
- Supporting the victim to report it or reporting it on their behalf
- Reporting the incident to the executive headteacher or head of school
- Cooperating in any investigation into the incident

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