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**Bullying and Harassment of staff**

**Purpose**

Watchorn Christian School seeks to provide a safe, caring environment where all members of staff feel able to work without fear of judgement, harassment or bullying. This policy serves to deal with any incidents of bullying in an efficient, quick manner.

**Policy statement**

Watchorn Christian School shares the Local Authority's opposition to harassment and workplace bullying and its commitment to their elimination from the workplace. The governing body recognises its responsibility for ensuring that this policy encourages employees who consider that they have been harassed or bullied to make their voice heard.

This policy aims to:

* Develop a working environment in which harassment is not tolerated, where staff understand that harassment is unacceptable and where individuals feel able to raise complaints and are confident that management will act appropriately.
* enable complaints to be investigated and dealt with as discreetly, effectively, and sensitively as possible; and provide support, respect, and understanding of a person's rights as an employee and as an individual.

The head teacher will inform its staff of this policy, to review this policy as and when necessary, in consultation with school staff and to ensure that harassment and bullying issues are addressed as part of the school's in-service training programme.

**Procedures**

**Harassment and Bullying in the Workplace**

The governing body believe that all staff have a right to be treated with dignity and respect at work and are committed to eliminating all forms of harassment or bullying in the workplace and, through this policy and procedure, to taking steps to ensure that schools are free from such behaviour.

The governing body recognises that harassment and bullying may be unlawful

and can affect working conditions, health and safety and undermine equality at work.

Harassment and bullying also undermine attempts to improve education provision for all children because they:

• present an unacceptable model for children's own behaviour

• cause increased incidence of stress-related illness amongst staff

• lead to high levels of staff turnover in individual schools; and demoralise staff working in schools where their colleagues are bullied

The governing body will not tolerate harassment or bullying of staff on any grounds and all staff (school leaders, teachers and support staff) are expected to comply with this policy.

Breach of this policy is a disciplinary offence and therefore appropriate disciplinary action will be considered if any member of staff fails to adhere to this policy.

Work-related harassment which takes place outside the workplace also falls within the remit of this policy.

**3. Definition of Harassment**

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It can cause a person to feel threatened, humiliated or patronised. Harassment may be either intentional or unintentional. A key feature is its effect on the person rather than the motive of the perpetrator.

Harassment can take many forms. These include:

The display or distribution of offensive material, graffiti or badges; non-verbal abuse such as offensive gestures and body language; inappropriate comments about someone's appearance; intrusive questioning about someone's private life; verbal abuse such as suggestive remarks, "jokes" and name calling; physical contact such as unnecessary touching; or threatened or actual physical abuse or attack.

**4. Definition of Bullying**

Bullying is a form of harassment in which the bully undermines, belittles or assaults (verbally and physically) the recipient. Bullies may seek to exploit others' perceived personal weaknesses, either because they enjoy the exercise of such power or because they are under pressure themselves, or even because they believe such behaviour is the best mean of managing relationships.

Common examples of bullying include:

Allocating excessive workload, preventing the carrying out of work responsibilities, changing priorities and objectives unreasonably, imposing impractical deadlines, intimidation through demeanour or voice, excessive and unreasonable supervision or unnecessary invoking of disciplinary, capability or grievance procedures.

Bullying may take place in front of colleagues and/or pupils or on a one-to-one basis. A common feature of the different forms of behaviour which constitute harassment and bullying are that the behaviour is unwanted by the victim.

**5. Harassment and Bullying of Staff by Members of the School Community**

The governing body acknowledge that staff can experience harassment or bullying from governors, parents, pupils, Local Authority employees and other visitors to the school. The governing body does not regard it as part of an employee’s duties to have to tolerate such behaviour.

The governing body ensures that an investigation is carried out of all complaints of harassment or bullying made by staff, whether that complaint is against a member of staff, or other member of the school community. A member of staff has the right to make a complaint to the police when they consider that a criminal offence has occurred and should inform their head teacher of their intention to do so.

**6. The process of raising a complaint against harassment or bullying**

The grievance procedure should be used by a member of staff to raise a complaint. This contains three stages through which a complaint can be pursued:

* Preliminary informal stage where the complainant or a representative makes the other individual aware that his/her behaviour is regarded as unacceptable by the complainant in order to allow an opportunity to resolve the situation without recourse to the formal procedure.
* Formal stage involving the use of a formal grievance statement and a thorough investigation of the complaint which, if found to be substantiated, could lead to a recommendation that disciplinary proceedings be instituted or that other appropriate steps be taken to resolve the situation without use of the disciplinary procedure.
* Appeal stage if the complainant is not satisfied with the proposed resolution at the formal stage. Many complaints can be resolved at the informal stage, but it is recognised this will not be appropriate in all cases.

Where evidence of harassment or bullying comes directly to the attention of the head teacher, the governors should consider use of the disciplinary procedures.

On occasion, counter allegations may be made by persons against whom complaints are made when they are informed that complaints have been lodged against them. For example, they may claim to have been harassed or bullied by the first complainant or that their behaviour has been provoked by the complainant. Both parties' complaints will be dealt with separately, using the grievance or disciplinary procedures as appropriate. False or malicious accusations will be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

Please see our *Staff Grievance Policy* for more information.

**Help and Support**

The following sources of help and advice are available to employees who experience harassment or bullying.

Trade unions: Members of trade unions will be able to seek advice and assistance from a union representative.

The Teacher line support service tel:08000 562561

Advice from the above may also be sought by persons against whom complaints are made, who may wish to deny the allegation or who may not have been aware that their behaviour was causing offence until a complaint was made and may wish to talk through their position.

Advice may also be sought by employees who are concerned about the apparent harassment of others but who may not have been subjected to harassment themselves.

**Monitor and Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the governors and head teacher or in light of any new publications or bullying incidents.

**This policy was reviewed by the schools Governing Body on 01/10/2023 and will be reviewed every other year.**

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