

NET Dignity At Work Policy Number 58

Document Management Information

Applicable to:	All staff
Dissemination:	TL email Display on NET and school and Trust websites
Linked policies:	16 - Grievance policy and procedures 9 - Disciplinary policy and procedures 24 - Whistle-blowing policy 12 - Code of conduct 33 – Relationships (behaviour) policy 10 - Safeguarding and child protection policy 45- Antbullying
Implementation:	Principals to share with staff and community. Display on school and Trust websites.
Training:	None specific
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Policy Author:	Governance Manager
Policy Lead:	HR Team working with Safeguarding Lead
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Revision History

Document version	Description of Revision	Date Approved
1	New policy	CEO – May 2024
2		
3		

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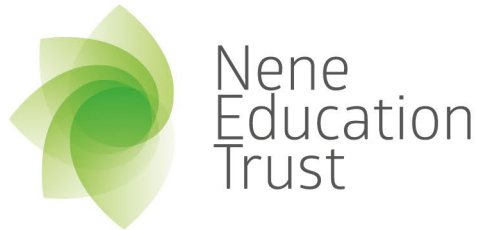
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1. Statement of principles

- All members of the Trust and school and Trust workforce (as defined in section 2) have a right to be treated with dignity and respect in the course of carrying out their professional roles.
- Harassment, bullying and victimisation are totally unacceptable in and out of the workplace or at any time.
- No member of the Trust and 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 and Trust trips
- Nene Education Trust recognises that any member of the Trust and school workforce can be subjected to these forms of behaviour
- The Trust or school leadership (as applicable) 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 Trust or school and Trust leadership (as applicable) 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 Trust and school strive for a workplace that is free of harassment, bullying and victimisation through the following:

- Raising awareness of the issues of harassment, bullying and victimisation, and refusing to tolerate these behaviours
- Supporting any member of the 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 in line with the NET code of conduct.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Acas guidance ['Bullying and harassment at work: a guide for managers and employers'](#) (2014).

This policy follows the principles of the following:

- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Protection from Harassment Act 1997](#) (which makes provision for protecting individuals from harassment and similar conduct)
- [Employment Rights Act 1996](#) (which is particularly relevant if the school and Trust is considering a dismissal)
- [Employment Relations Act 1999](#) (where a dispute progresses to an employment tribunal)

Where it becomes necessary to bar an individual from the school and Trust's premises, we will refer to the Department for Education's [guidance on controlling access to school and Trust premises](#).

This policy aims to protect all current and former members of the workforce.

For this policy, the term 'Trust and school workforce' includes the following:

- Agency workers
- Consultants
- Casual workers
- Interns
- Apprentices
- Volunteers, including members, trustees and local committee members
- 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.

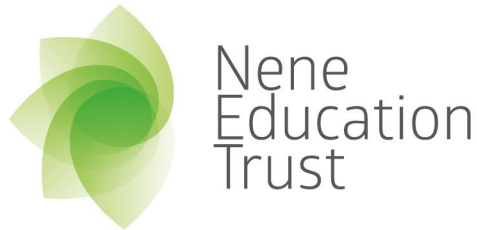
3. Definitions

All forms of harassment, bullying or victimisation may consist of either a single act or a continuous pattern of behaviour. The individual making the grievance 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 Trust or school and Trust workforce reports that they are being bullied, harassed or victimised, then they have a grievance that must be dealt with, regardless of whether it accords with a standard definition.

3.1 Harassment

Harassment, as defined in the Equality Act 2010, is as follows:



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 as follows:

- Age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

The individual raising the grievance does not need to be the intended target or possess the relevant characteristic themselves.

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 it 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 follows:

Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving 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.

The words 'bullying' and 'harassment' are often used interchangeably in the workplace. The impact on the individual can be the same as harassment.

The workplace for this purpose means bullying or harassment when a member of the Trust or school workforce is carrying out their professional role or because of their professional role. It does not need to have happened on Trust or school and Trust premises, it can be in any place or at any time because of that person's role in the school or Trust.

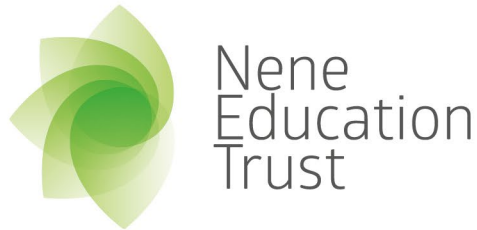
3.3 Victimisation

Victimisation is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as follows:

Subjecting an individual to a detriment because he/she does a protected act, or it is believed he/she has done or may do a protected act.

A 'protected act' is as follows:

- Bringing proceedings under the Equality Act 2010



- Giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the Act
- Doing any other thing for 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 and Trust may include the following:

- 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
- Unwelcome sexual advances, such as touching, standing too close, displaying offensive materials, asking for sexual favours, or making decisions on the basis of sexual advances being accepted or rejected
- Making unfounded threats or comments about job security

This list is not exhaustive.

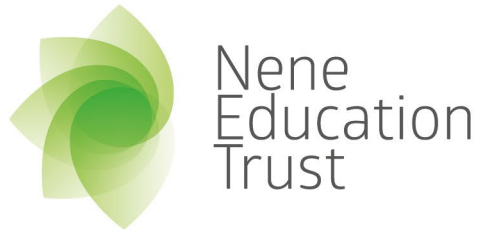
Harassment, bullying or victimisation may occur in the following ways:

- Face-to-face
- Through written communications
- Using visual images (for example, pictures of a sexual nature or embarrassing photographs of colleagues)
- Via email
- Via phone
- 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 exhaustive.

5. Reasonable management

The Trust and school differentiate 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 and Trust workforce's behaviour or job performance does not, therefore, constitute bullying, harassment or victimisation.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 The CEO

The CEO is responsible for the following:

- Ensuring the whole Trust work environment is free from harassment, bullying and victimisation
- Ensuring grievances and allegations are handled according to agreed policies and procedures
- Holding the Principals to account for the implementation of this policy
 - Ensuring that this policy is periodically reviewed and kept up to date

6.2 The DCEO

The DCEO is responsible for the following:

- Dealing with grievances raised by or about the Principals through the grievance policy.

6.3 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for the following:

- Ensuring the school work environment is free from harassment, bullying and victimisation
- Checking grievances and allegations are handled according to agreed procedures.

6.3 All members of the Trust and school and Trust workforce

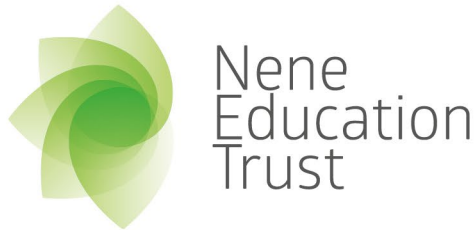
All members of the workforce are responsible for the following:

- Treating colleagues with dignity and respect
- Contributing to maintaining an environment free from harassment, bullying and victimisation
- Supporting colleagues who experience unacceptable behaviour and who are considering making a grievance, or have made a grievance
- Reporting any occurrence of unacceptable behaviour and offering supporting evidence in any investigation where appropriate.

6.4 Line managers

Line managers, and those fulfilling this role when a grievance is about the line manager, are responsible for the following:

- Listening to and taking seriously any member of the workforce who comes to them with a concern or grievance regarding harassment, bullying or victimisation.



7. What to do if you're being harassed, bullied or victimised

If you are being harassed, bullied or victimised by an employee (as defined in 8.1, below), stakeholder (as defined in 8.2, below) or pupil, speak to your line manager within the school and Trust. They can provide confidential advice and assistance to resolve the issue.

If your line manager is the subject of your grievance, speak to the next in the line management chain in line with the grievance policy.

In the case of members of the local committee, 'line manager' in this policy means the chair of the committee. If the chair is the subject of your grievance, speak to the Chair of Trustees.

For job applicants, job seekers and former members of the school and Trust workforce, 'line manager' in this policy is the Trust HR Manager

Consider whether you feel able to raise the issue informally with the person responsible. Your line manager can support you with this.

If you do raise the issue with the individual, you should explain clearly that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. It may be that they are not aware of the effect of their actions.

Raising the matter informally will involve a discussion of the events, with the intention of reaching an agreement that the behaviour will cease with immediate effect.

If you feel uncomfortable raising the matter with the individual informally, or you have tried to do so without a successful resolution, the school and Trust will decide whether your grievance should be dealt with formally under this policy or the school and Trust's grievance procedures. It is for the school and Trust to determine the appropriate procedure, based on the facts of the case.

If the grievance is dealt with under this dignity at work policy, the school and Trust will follow the procedure set out below.

If the grievance is dealt with under the school and Trust's grievance procedures, you should refer to those.

8. Formal procedure for managing grievances

How grievances under this policy will be dealt with will depend, in part, on whether the alleged perpetrator is an employee, a stakeholder or a pupil. Each option, and who it relates to, is set out below.

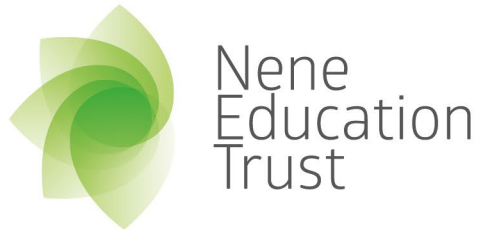
8.1 Alleged harassment, bullying or victimisation by employees

This will be dealt with under the Trust grievance policy.

8.2 Alleged harassment, bullying or victimisation by stakeholders

The Trust and school will use this process if the grievance relates to someone not employed directly by the Trust and when the Trust does not have the power to take any professional or disciplinary action against the person in question.

Where the decision has been reached for the grievance to be dealt with under this dignity at work policy, a formal written grievance must be submitted to the Principal or CEO for a formal investigation to commence. It may be appropriate to allow the stakeholder to be accompanied as part of any investigation interview.



If the allegation is found to be justified, the response from the school and Trust will depend on the relationship of the perpetrator to the school and Trust and the nature and severity of the incident.

The school and Trust will take proportionate action in consultation with the individual who made the grievance. This may involve the following:

- Mediation
- Putting up signs setting out acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- A verbal warning
- A written warning.

This list is not exhaustive.

If the action taken is not effective in preventing issues, or for very severe cases, the school and Trust will consider further action. This may involve a meeting to discuss a ban from the school and Trust's site. If the perpetrator is a contractor, this may involve a meeting to discuss the termination of the contract between them and the school and Trust.

In the case of a ban, the individual will be informed in writing that they are banned from the premises or specific means of contact with the school, subject to review. At this stage, other agencies such as the local authority may be involved. Where appropriate, the school and Trust will have regard to the Department for Education's guidance on controlling access to school and Trust premises (see section 2 of this policy).

If the individual is a parent of a pupil at the school and Trust, where appropriate, the arrangements for pupils being delivered to and collected from the school and Trust will be clarified.

Incidents occurring in schools or Trust offices within the scope of this policy must be recorded by Principals on Arbor (or by the HR Team in the case of the Trust central office).

8.3 Alleged harassment, bullying or victimisation by pupils

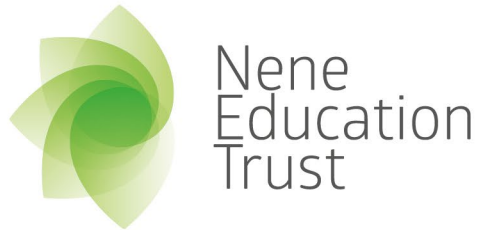
Where the decision has been reached for the grievance to be dealt with under this dignity at work policy, the matter will be handled in line with the above outlined formal procedure – namely the requirement for a formal written grievance to be submitted and a formal investigation to commence. It may be appropriate to allow the pupil to be accompanied by an appropriate adult as part of any investigation interview.

If the allegation is found to be justified, the school and Trust will then refer to the behaviour policy, and it may issue a disciplinary sanction against the pupil in accordance with that policy (up to and including permanent exclusion where appropriate), with reference to the safeguarding policy if appropriate to the pupil's circumstances.

Where the pupil remains at the school and Trust, the school and Trust will also take responsibility for educating the pupil about appropriate behaviour and liaise with the individual who raised the allegation about alternative working arrangements (temporary or permanent) if they teach, or otherwise have regular interaction with, the pupil.

8.4 Continued working relationships

If it is decided that there is no case to answer, support will be provided for both parties and consideration given to managing their ongoing working relationship.



We will also consider whether there is evidence that the grievance has been malicious. If there is evidence to suggest that the grievance was malicious, this will be investigated and dealt with under our disciplinary procedures. Where the individual is not covered by our disciplinary procedures, the school and Trust will consider other reasonable action and involve other agencies where appropriate.

Whatever the outcome, we will consider how to support the individuals involved to maintain an ongoing working relationship.

8.5 Appeals

For staff members raising a grievance this will be handled via the grievance policy and procedure.

9. Confidentiality

The school and Trust will respect confidentiality for both the person making the allegation and the subject of it. Details of the investigation and the names of the victim and alleged perpetrator will only be disclosed when necessary (for example, when it is necessary to give details to investigate the matters raised properly).

Information about a grievance by or about an employee may be placed on the employee's personnel file, along with a record of the outcome and any notes or other documents compiled during the process.

A grievance about a pupil may be stored on their educational record.

Information will be processed in line with data protection law. It will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with data protection law, our privacy notices and data retention policy.

End