



RESPECT FOR STAFF POLICY

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As a Trust we welcome people into our organisation and onto our Academy sites and the vast majority of people support our ethos and demonstrate the values which we want to promote. In this way we value all positive interactions between staff, parents, students, contractors and any other visitors.

All school staff have a right to be free from any form of harassment and from verbal or physical abuse or aggression when they are at school or representing the school yet, sadly, there are occasions when a minority of people do not conduct themselves in ways that we would deem acceptable. With this in mind the Trust has considered what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and also what to do in the situation where unsatisfactory behaviour arises.

What do we Mean by Abusive or Threatening Behaviour?

The Public Order Act 1986 defines “disorderly conduct” as: verbal abuse, threatening abusive or insulting words or behaviour or any disorderly behaviour whereby a person is caused alarm, harassment or distress. “Threatening behaviour” is when a person fears that violence or threat of violence is likely to be provoked.

In a school context this could mean someone shouting at a member of staff, either in person or on the telephone; acting aggressively, including using intimidating body language, as well as actual violence. It also covers comments posted on social networking sites or situations where members of staff are approached.

The Law

Violence at work is defined as “any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.” This covers the serious or persistent use of verbal abuse – which can add to stress or anxiety. It also covers staff who are assaulted or abused outside their place of work; for example, while going home, while working in the community or while travelling, as long as the incident relates to their work (Health & Safety Executive).

Please also note that commenting negatively about the school or individual members of staff on Social Media is a breach of libel laws.

Expectations of School Communities

All members of our school communities have a right to expect that their school is a safe place in which to work and learn.

Threats or acts of violence, threatening behaviour and disorderly conduct, including abuse in all forms, against Academy staff or other members of the school community will not be tolerated.

In the unlikely event that such behaviour does occur, then action will be taken to deal with those people concerned.

Action to be Taken if an Incident Occurs

If an incident involving threatening behaviour or abuse does occur then an incident report form will be completed by the member of the Academy community against whom the abuse was directed.

Where appropriate the school may report serious incidents of abuse and threatening behaviour to the relevant authorities and the school has a statutory responsibility to report any racist or discriminatory incidents to the Local Authority. Any act of actual or threatened violence will also be referred to the police immediately.

All incidents will be recorded and passed onto the relevant authorities so that patterns of behaviour can be monitored.

Step 1 – First warning

Where possible the Principal will speak to the person or persons perpetrating such an incident privately. (If not possible to meet in person then this stage can be confirmed in writing to those involved.) It will be put to them that such behaviour is not acceptable and an assurance will be sought that such an incident will not be repeated. It will be stressed on this occasion that repetition of such an incident will result in furthermore serious action being taken. If the Principal has been subject to abuse this may also be done by the Chief Executive/LGB Chair of Governors.

Step 2 – Second warning

If a further incident occurs involving the same person or persons or if the first incident is particularly extreme, the Principal will write to the adult(s) informing them once again that this conduct is unacceptable and that further repetition may lead to further action including barring from access to the Academy site. As with Step 1, if the Principal has been subject to abuse, this may be done by the Chief Executive/LGB Chair or other appointed Governor.

Step 3 – Governors letter

If such an incident recurs, or if an initial incident is considered serious enough by the Principal, the Chief Executive/LGB Chair (or other appointed Governor) would be involved to enforce any action deemed necessary. This may result in a person or persons being excluded from school premises. Where this action is pursued, the site ban would be for 7 weeks in the first instance. A review of the decision will be scheduled in advance of the end date so that either (a) the ban will be lifted; or (b) the end date will be extended. The outcome of this review will be communicated to the person in question.

If following a decision to bar a person from the Academy site that person persists in accessing or trying to access the site and displaying unreasonable behaviour then it may be necessary to involve the Police and for that individual to be removed from the site under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 and charged with an offence under the Public Order Act 1986.

At all stages of the process, the person or persons will have the right to appeal and this can be done by writing to the Clerk to the Board of Trustees (email: info@leap-mat.org.uk) stating clearly the grounds for the appeal. Any appeal should be submitted within 5 days of the warning notice. The appeal will be considered by a senior member of the Trust (Principal of another Trust school, Chief Executive, Trustee, etc).

IMPORTANT NOTE: Covid-19 – interruption to normal application of policy: during the pandemic, methods of delivering policy and usual timescales may be affected. For instance, communication may include a virtual / video meeting rather than an in-person one.