



Dignity at Work Policy
Dated **March 2020**
Review Period 3 Years
Trustee Board
Author NRF
Reviewed and amended by IR March 2022
Approved by the Trustee Board on 11 July 2022
Reviewed by IR June 2023
Reviewed by IR June 2024
Approved by the Trustees People Panel 04 July 2024
Reviewed by AN 28th May 2025
Approved by the Trustees People Panel 19th June 2025
Reviewed by AN 7th May 2026
Approved by the Trustees' People Panel on 15 June 2026

Dignity at Work Policy

1.Context

There is no place for any form of discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or sexual misconduct at The Learning Trust (the 'Trust'). Such behaviour is contrary to the values and ideals of our shared community, subverts The Learning Trust's mission and core values, and diminishes the dignity and integrity of all parties.

The aims of the Dignity at Work Policy are to:

- Support and sustain a positive (thriving) working environment for all staff, free from any form of inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour;
- Make it clear that discrimination and harassment including sexual harassment are unacceptable and that all members of The Learning Trust community have a role to play in creating a thriving environment for everyone, free from discrimination and harassment;
- Provide a framework for respect and good conduct to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and harassment, including racial and sexual harassment and sexual misconduct;
- To highlight the options available to staff (and students) who feel they are or have been subject to bullying, harassment, racial discrimination, sexual misconduct, or any other inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour;

The Learning Trust expects all members of the Trust community to treat each other with respect, courtesy, and consideration at all times. All members of The Learning Trust community are expected to behave professionally and have the right to expect professional behaviour from others.

The Trust requires very high standards of conduct from its staff, and, in return, it expects them to be treated with dignity and respect. We will not tolerate abusive, bullying or otherwise inappropriate behaviour against any member of staff. Where this is perpetrated by another member of staff, then the individual is encouraged to access the Staff Grievance Policy and progress their concerns through the procedures highlighted within the policy.

However, when parents, carers, suppliers or any third party have occasion to visit or phone the school, we ask them all to respect our members of staff, to remain civil at all times and to not use any abusive language or threatening behaviour. Where any such inappropriate behaviour is perpetrated by an external individual, whether a parent, carer, supplier or visitor then staff are encouraged to access the 'Behaviour towards Staff policy' and progress any concerns through the procedures highlighted within that policy.

All members of The Learning Trust community have a **personal responsibility** for complying with this Policy and demonstrate active commitment to it by:

- Treating others with dignity and respect.
- Discouraging any form of discrimination and harassment by suitably challenging inappropriate behaviour, making it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable (and raising concerns with managers where appropriate so these can be dealt with).
- Supporting any member of The Learning Trust who feels they have been subject to discrimination and / or harassment, including supporting them to make a formal complaint if appropriate.
- Managers have particular responsibility for setting standards and ensuring appropriate workplace behaviours are maintained. They should set a good example and ensure concerns raised are acted upon.

The Dignity at Work Policy does not form part of, and is not intended to vary, the contract of employment or employee's contract. It may be amended from time to time, as necessary.

2. Eligibility

The principles of the Dignity at Work Policy are designed to apply to the staff of The Learning Trust but also cover all visitors to The Learning Trust (including academic visitors and visiting researchers, visitors to The Learning Trust school's or those attending public events, students, parents, agency staff, contractors, suppliers, and their staff). This list is not exhaustive and any complaints directed towards external visitors should be dealt with by 'Behaviour towards Staff' policy.

If a member of staff wishes to raise a complaint against another member of staff of The Learning Trust, they may do so by raising a grievance as laid out in the Staff Grievance Procedure. The Trust believes this will provide a fair and comprehensive procedure and provide the right of appeal in the event that the individual is not satisfied with the outcome.

In circumstances where a student has a complaint concerning the behaviour of a member of The Learning Trust staff, the matter should be dealt with under The Learning Trust's Complaints Procedure. The procedure is set out in The Learning Trust Policies. A student may wish to seek support from his/her Tutor or head of year.

Members of The Learning Trust staff who have a complaint against a student should contact their Line Manager in the first instance.

3.Statement of Policy

The Learning Trust is dedicated to creating and maintaining a safe, welcoming, inclusive, and diverse community, which nurtures a healthy environment and culture of mutual respect and consideration, allowing all members of The Learning Trust Community to thrive without fear of harassment, racial discrimination, bullying, sexual violence, abuse, coercive behaviour, sexual harassment, or related misconduct.

If you are being harassed, bullied or victimised speak to your line manager within the Trust. They can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue. If your manager is the subject of your complaint, speak to the Headteacher/CEO.

The Learning Trust encourages individuals and managers to make every effort to resolve dignity at work problems informally in the first instance as this is often the most effective method of dealing with unacceptable behaviour. Consider whether you feel able to raise the issue informally with the person responsible. Your line manager or Headteacher/CEO 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 Trust will decide whether your complaint should be dealt with formally under the Trust's grievance procedure policy. It is for the Trust to determine the appropriate procedure based on the facts of the case.

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).

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) 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.

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 (as defined in this section 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

Examples of unacceptable behaviour

- Unacceptable behaviour in this Trust 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
- 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
- Preventing an individual from progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities
- Putting humiliating, offensive or threatening comments or photos on social media
- This list is not intended to be exhaustive.
- 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.

When a criminal offence may have been committed, the Grievance Procedure may not be appropriate.

These cases include, but are not be limited to, serious assault or threat of serious assault. Staff members may wish to seek advice from their HR team, the Headteacher or CEO and/or approach the Police directly. Students can seek advice from their Head of Year, Headteacher, and/or approach the Police directly.

Dignity at work may involve equalities issues and UK discrimination law provides specific protection against discrimination, harassment, and victimisation on a variety of grounds. The Learning Trust takes its responsibilities in these areas very seriously.