



THIRD PARTY HARASSMENT POLICY

for adoption by all CDAT schools

This policy is informed by the Christian values which are the basis for all of CDAT's work and any actions taken under this policy will reflect this.

'Blessed are those who act justly, who always do what is right'

Psalm 106:3

Approved by	Date	Review Schedule	Date of next review
Trust Board	October 2026	Every Two Years	October 2028 – delegated to F&O committee

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1. Policy Aims

The Chester Diocesan Academies Trust (CDAT) has a zero-tolerance approach to any incident involving harassment or abuse against our staff. The Trust actively promotes a culture of respect by setting out clear expectations of conduct to all visitors, parents, contractors, and third parties before they interact with school staff. Any form of abuse is unacceptable, and the Trust is committed to taking the strongest possible action to tackle any incidents and protect staff. In line with the Staff Code of Conduct, the Trust is responsible for ensuring that the working environment for staff is one in which all staff are treated with respect, and any abuse or harassment by third parties is not tolerated.

'Third party' means someone that staff interact with as part of their role but who are not employed by the Trust, for example parents and carers, contractors and volunteers and anyone else we are connected to or do business with.

All staff have the right to work in a safe environment where they are protected from abuse or harassment. The Trust has a responsibility to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all staff, in line with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974). Third party abuse or harassment can have a severe impact on staff and can lead to feelings of anxiety or fear in the workplace as well as undermine an individual's self-confidence.

Whilst all staff across the Trust have a responsibility to take action to prevent abusive incidents or harassment, this policy is staff centred to ensure that they have a high degree of control over what type of actions are taken to protect them in their role. We will ensure the safety, protection and welfare of our staff at all times by:

- Reducing the risk of harassment or abuse of staff
- Making sure arrangements are in place to assess the risk of harassment or abuse against our staff
- Taking appropriate action against the third party who perpetrated the harassment or abuse
- Providing appropriate training and information for staff
- Making sure our management standards are applied consistently
- Making sure staff are aware of their responsibilities
- Providing appropriate support to staff following an abusive or harassment incident
- Maintaining robust recording and management systems for all abuse or harassment incidents
- Making sure staff who have experienced or witnessed incidents feel able to report them and have the matter treated seriously and dealt with effectively

2. What is Third Party Abuse or Harassment?

This policy covers any kind of unwanted behaviour from third parties that humiliates, victimises or threatens any of our staff, for example:

- Verbal and physical abuse
- Racial slurs
- Sexual advances
- Violence or threat of violence
- Discrimination
- Bullying
- Harassment

- Imagery or graffiti
- Jokes or banter
- Physical behaviour towards a person or their property

Abuse or harassment can take place online, face to face or over the phone. This list is not exhaustive.

3. Equality

The Trust employs staff from a diverse range of backgrounds and all staff should be treated with respect regardless of protected characteristics. It is recognised that discriminatory abuse is a specific type of abuse that has a particular impact on staff from certain groups, that includes but is not limited to groups with protected characteristics as outlined in the Equalities Act 2010. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

As a public sector employer, we must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty which means we must take steps to prevent third party harassment which may help to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

The Trust is committed to taking robust actions to oppose any incidents of workplace harassment and recognizes that staff who do not have a 'protected characteristic' can still experience discriminatory third-party harassment, for example people belonging to an alternative subculture (defined as appearance and lifestyle).

In addition, the Equality Act makes three types of harassment unlawful

- Harassment related to a 'relevant protected characteristic'
- Sexual harassment
- Less favourable treatment of a worker because they submit to, or reject, sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment

Victimisation

Victimisation is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as: Treating someone badly because they have done a 'protected act' (or because it is believed that a person has done or is going to do a protected act). A 'protected act' is:

- Making a claim or complaint of discrimination (under the Equality Act).
- Helping someone else to make a claim by giving evidence or information.
- Making an allegation that you or someone else has breached the Act.
- Doing anything else in connection with the Act.

If a worker is treated less favourably because they have taken such action, then this will be unlawful victimisation.

Hate Crimes and Hate Incidents

The Police and Crown Prosecution Service have agreed a common definition of hate crime as any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion and belief; sexual orientation or perceived

sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.

Hate incidents are incidents that the victim or anyone else thinks was motivated by hostility or prejudice based on the protected characteristics listed above, and can also include other characteristics such as being female (misogyny or hatred of women), older age or belonging to a subculture (defined as appearance and lifestyle). The key word is 'hostility'. There is no legal definition for 'hostility' but the everyday understanding of the word can be used as a guide and includes: ill-will, spite, contempt, prejudice, unfriendliness, antagonism, resentment, and dislike. A hate incident or hate crime can include verbal abuse, intimidation, threats, harassment, assault, and bullying.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Manager Responsibilities:

- Ensuring risk assessments are done to determine whether any measures can be put in place to avoid or reduce the risk of harassment or abuse happening. Risk assessments should be recorded and regularly reviewed, for example when there has been a significant change to the work activity, workplace or there is new information.
- Staff may not always feel comfortable reporting abuse or harassment, so it is important that managers are open to disclosures in a range of settings.
- Listening and supporting the victims of abuse or harassment without judgement.
- Ensuring that staff are trained and aware of how to keep themselves safe in the workplace and that they are aware of existing guidance to support them.
- Ensuring regular and effective reporting of abusive incidents or harassment to SLT (or the executive team with regard to the central office functions) to ensure they have oversight over numbers, types and frequency of abusive incidents and harassment.
- Responding robustly to any incidents of abuse or harassment by third parties.

All Staff Responsibilities:

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others who may be impacted by their actions.
- Dynamically assessing risks where appropriate.
- Attending any relevant training provided.
- Discussing any concerns regarding identified risks of violence, abuse or harassment with their line manager.
- Reporting all incidents of violence, abuse and harassment to their line manager.

5. Responding to an Incident

1. If anyone is at immediate risk steps need to be taken to protect the individual and anyone else at risk, including calling the Police if required.
2. Staff should contact their line manager to report the incident as soon as it is safe to do so
3. The line manager should have a debrief with the member of staff and report the incident on Smartlog. If the incident/s are connected to protected characteristics, the seriousness and specific impact should be recorded.

4. If the allegation is found to be justified, the response from the Trust/school will depend on the relationship of the perpetrator to the trust/school and the nature and severity of the incident. The Trust/school will take proportionate action in consultation with the individual who made the complaint. This may involve:

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

This list is not intended to be exhaustive. If the action taken is not effective in preventing issues, or for very severe cases, the Trust/school will consider further action. This may involve a meeting to discuss a ban from the Trust/school site.

If the perpetrator is a contractor, this may involve a meeting to discuss the termination of the contract between them and the Trust/school.

In the case of a ban, the individual will be informed in writing that they are banned from the premises, subject to review. At this stage, other agencies such as the local authority may be involved. Where appropriate, the Trust/school will have regard to the Department for Education's guidance on controlling access to school premises.

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

6. Communication of Expectations to Third Parties

CDAT is committed to fostering an environment of mutual respect and safety. To prevent incidents of harassment or abuse, the Trust and its schools will proactively communicate our standards of conduct to all third parties through the following measures:

- **Parents, Carers, and Visitors:** Expectations regarding respectful communication and behavior on school grounds, via telephone, or in digital correspondence are published on school websites, included in parent handbooks/code of conduct, and prominently displayed on signage at school reception areas.
- **Contractors and Service Providers:** All third-party contractors, suppliers, and service providers must agree to adhere to our conduct standards as part of their contract terms. They will be formally notified that abusive, discriminatory, or harassing behavior towards staff will lead to the immediate removal of personnel or termination of contract.
- **Public and Online Channels:** Prominent notices on official communication channels (including email footers and online portals) will clarify that aggressive, abusive, or discriminatory language towards staff will not be tolerated and may result in communication being restricted or terminated.

7. Support for Staff Who Have Faced Harassment or Abuse at Work

In all cases line managers should have a regular 'check in' or 'one to one' for a period of time to check on the staff member's wellbeing and give them the opportunity to raise any worries or concerns. The impact of abuse or harassment can last a long time. Line managers should also offer access to a range of mental health support including the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and refer the staff member to Occupational Health if the member of staff feels they would benefit from this support. Staff members may also wish to contact their trade union for advice and support