

Grievance, Bullying & Harassment

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School Business Manager:		Date:	03/07/2026
Headteacher:		Date:	03/07/2026

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This policy has been adopted and adapted from the FusionHR model policy April 2026.

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1. INTRODUCTION & STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 1.1 Amwell View School is committed to ensuring that the employment arrangements meet the highest standards of fairness and statutory entitlements in employment. We seek to build a workplace environment where colleagues are treated fairly and can work with dignity and respect.
- 1.2 The aim of the Grievance, Bullying and Harassment Policy is to address any complaints fairly, consistently and promptly. We believe that the fair and effective resolution of staff concerns is beneficial to harmonious working, job satisfaction, productivity and ultimately to the effective education of our pupils.
- 1.3 This policy sets out our commitment to a safe working environment. While non-contractual, it reflects our statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Employment Rights Act 1996.
- 1.4 This Policy may be varied by the school.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 This policy applies to all staff employed by the school in respect of whom the responsibility for seeking redress of any complaint (except those matters which are subject to separate procedures such as flexible working and pay relating to their employment).
- 2.2 Complaints made under this procedure should be made as soon as possible (and in any case within 6 months of the alleged event(s) in order that the school can resolve matters. The employee should not deliberately or unreasonably delay in bringing the matter to the school attention.
- 2.3 Where a complaint involves a matter of public interest, such as a systemic failure to protect staff or pupils from harm, or sexual harassment, it may be handled under the school's **Whistleblowing Policy** to ensure appropriate statutory protections.

3. TERMS USED IN THE PROCEDURE

- 3.1 Throughout the document the person making the complaint may be termed the "complainant". The term "school" also refers to any committee delegated to act by the school on its behalf.

4. DEFINITIONS OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

4.1 ACAS states that most people use the terms bullying and harassment interchangeably. ACAS provides the following definitions:

4.1.1 Bullying:

- Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or
- an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, or causes physical or emotional harm to someone

4.1.2 Harassment

When bullying or unwanted behaviour is about any of the following protected characteristics under the discrimination law: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. For it to count as harassment the unwanted behaviour must have either violated the person's dignity, whether it was intended or not or created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, offensive, environment for the person, whether it was intended or not.

4.1.2 Sexual Harassment (Worker Protection Act 2023 & 2025 Amended)

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. This includes, but is not limited to, lewd comments, displays of sexual material, or unwelcome physical contact.

4.2 Employer Preventative Duty

In accordance with the Worker Protection Act 2023 and 2025 amended, the school adopts a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. We undertake regular risk assessments, staff training, and monitoring to prevent harassment by colleagues and third parties (e.g., parents, contractors, or visitors).

4.3 Third-Party Harassment

The Employment Rights Bill 2025 explicitly outlines employer liability for harassment of staff by third parties (e.g., parents/carers, contractors, volunteers, visitors, or members of the public).

Protection under this policy extends to harassment by third parties. Staff must report any such behaviour by parents, contractors, or members of the public immediately so the school can take appropriate action to protect the employee.

4.4 Discrimination

By law, being discriminated against is when you're treated unfairly because of any of the following:

- Age
- Disability

- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Membership or non-membership of a trade union or involvement in trade union activities
- Status as an ex-offender
- Status as a part-time worker / Fixed-term status
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5. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THIS PROCEDURE

5.1 School Responsibilities

In law an employer may be held responsible for the actions of its employees regardless of whether or not they are aware of those actions, i.e. regardless of intent. It is therefore essential that the school takes appropriate measures to ensure that bullying, harassment, or discrimination does not occur.

5.1.1 It is the responsibility of the school leadership to:

- Make all members of staff aware of the policy and ensure their compliance.
- Deal with all issues in a timely, serious, and sensitive manner.
- Maintain confidentiality when dealing with cases and ensure that a written record is kept of all informal and formal meetings and discussions.
- Make every effort to resolve complaints informally by discussion between the individual member of staff and the appropriate level of management; the resolution of employee complaints should form part of everyday informal managerial action.
- If an allegation of sexual harassment is upheld, the school will actively review its policies and training to prevent it from happening again

5.2 Employee Responsibilities

Each individual is responsible for their own actions whilst at work. It is the responsibility of all employees to:

- Be mindful of their own behaviour and treat others with dignity and respect.
- Try to resolve problems informally by discussion with colleagues and/or management.
- Report incidents of harassment or bullying either personally experienced or witnessed, immediately to the appropriate line manager.
- Ensure confidentiality is maintained at all times.

- 5.2.1 The school has delegated the following powers to hear grievances to the following levels (or above) of staff:

Complainant	Grievance Officer	Appeal Officer
Staff below level Senior Leader	Senior Leader	Deputy Headteacher
Senior Leader	Deputy Headteacher	Headteacher
Headteacher	Nominated Governor	Nominated Governor

- 5.2.2 Where the complaint regards an employee at the level of the appointed Grievance Officer, then the next level of management up will ordinarily deal with the matter.
- 5.2.3 For complaints regarding the Headteacher a nominated Governors shall have the authority to be the Grievance Officer and a nominated Governor will hear any appeal.

5.3 Interaction with Safeguarding

The school has a primary duty of care toward its pupils. Where a complaint of bullying or harassment involves behaviour that takes place in front of pupils, or otherwise impacts the culture of the school environment, the matter may also be treated as a safeguarding concern. In such cases, this policy will be used in conjunction with the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** to ensure that 'modelling behaviour' standards are maintained and that any risk to the student body is assessed and mitigated.

6. RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED

- 6.1 The employee may bring a companion to any grievance meeting or appeal meeting under this procedure. The companion may be either a trade union representative or a work colleague. The employee must tell the school who their chosen companion is, in good time before the meeting.
- 6.2 At the meeting, the employee's companion may make representations and ask questions but should not answer questions on the employee's behalf.
- 6.3 Acting as a companion is voluntary and the employee's colleagues are under no obligation to do so. If they agree to do so they will be allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay to act as a companion.
- 6.4 If the employee's choice of companion is unreasonable, the school may ask the employee to choose someone else, for example:

- If in the school opinion the companion may have a conflict of interest or may prejudice the meeting; or
- If the companion is unavailable at the time a meeting is scheduled and will not be available for more than five working days afterwards.

6.5 The school may, at its absolute discretion, allow the employee to bring a companion who is not a colleague or union representative (for example, a member of the employee's family) if this will help overcome a disability. Agreement to this must be sought in advance of the meeting.

7. POSTPONEMENT OF HEARINGS AND APPEALS

7.1 In accordance with Section 10 (4) of the Employment Relations Act 1999 the complainant may seek a postponement of a complaint hearing and propose an alternative time, if their chosen trade union or professional association official or work colleague is not available at the time proposed for the hearing by the employer. The Act states that the alternative time proposed by the employee must be reasonable and fall within five working days beginning the first working day after the day proposed by the employer.

7.2 In exceptional circumstances, where the efficient running of the school or the interests of the health and wellbeing of the parties involved is being compromised by the process; the hearing may be held in the absence of the complainant after considering representations.

8. RECORD KEEPING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

8.1 It is important that accurate and contemporaneous records are kept throughout the complaints handling processes, including any initial informal processes. Copies of meeting records should be given to the employee, including copies of any formal minutes that may have been taken.

8.2 Records will be held in a secure and confidential manner. Often the issues raised are particularly sensitive and it is essential that the circulation of information be minimised to that which is necessary to ensure a fair investigation and hearing. All meetings, documentation and proceedings should remain confidential.

8.3 In the event of a complaint being made, relating to Record Keeping and Confidentiality, leaders of the school will immediately inform the Governors.

9. RESOLVING COMPLAINTS INFORMALLY

- 9.1 Every effort should be made to resolve complaints informally by discussion between the individual member of staff and the appropriate level of management. This can often lead to a speedy resolution of the problem and is likely to be less damaging to working relationships.

9.2 Employees

In cases where an employee feels aggrieved by the words or actions of another; it is important for the employee to deal with this at an early stage. The employee should address the issue by one or more of the following options:

- An employee with a complaint must start by discussing it with their line manager at the earliest opportunity; it may be possible to resolve the complaint informally through discussion.
- If the employee has a complaint regarding their line manager, she or he may seek assistance from a more senior manager.
- The employee may also seek support from their Trade Union representative, Occupational Health, or a mediation service (see paragraph 9).

- 9.2.1 If the complaint is against a Headteacher see paragraph 16.

9.3 Management

When a complaint has been raised verbally or in writing in the first instance the line manager should offer a meeting to discuss the details of the complaint and seek to gain the employee's agreement to address the complaint informally. The line manager may decide to address the complaint by one or more of the following options:

- Offer the complainant a meeting with their manager and the person whom they have a complaint against to openly discuss any issues and agree a way forward.
- Speak to the person whom the complaint is made against on the employee's behalf.
- Refer the complainant and the person whom the complaint is made against to Occupational Health for support (if necessary).
- Arrange external mediation subject to agreement by both parties.

In all circumstances, managers should try to resolve the underlying problem informally as part of good management practice. However, the decision to attempt to achieve an informal resolution ultimately rests with the complainant.

10. MEDIATION

- 10.1 Mediation is a voluntary process where the mediator helps two or more people in dispute to attempt to reach an agreement without recourse to the formal procedures. Mediation should be undertaken by a neutral third person who is trained in mediation techniques.
- 10.2 Mediation, where it is successful, can produce quicker and more satisfactory results for the parties involved and may reduce the damage caused to working relationships and the health and wellbeing of both parties.
- 10.3 Employees may be offered mediation at any stage of the complaints process. Equally, either party or their trade union representatives may make this suggestion.
- 10.4 Even if mediation is not initially agreed by the parties, the offer of a mediated process can be re-offered as the case progresses.
- 10.5 Mediation may be used for:
- Resolving conflict between colleagues of a similar job or grade, or between a member of staff and their line-manager
 - Rebuilding relationships after a formal dispute has been resolved
 - Addressing personality clashes, communication problems and bullying and harassment

Please note, where disciplinary action is required; this process should be completed prior to mediation.

- 10.6 The details of discussions within mediation processes are confidential to the parties involved.
- 10.7 The mediation process is normally carried out without the involvement of trade union or management representatives.

11. THE FORMAL PROCEDURE

- 11.1 If it is not possible to resolve a complaint informally employees should raise the matter formally and without unreasonable delay (see paragraph 1.2) to the Headteacher/ Chair of Governors/ Chair of Trustees, depending whom the complaint is against, following the scheme of delegation. This should be done in writing and set out the details of the complaint and state that the complaint is being made on a formal basis.
- 11.2 During an investigation into sexual harassment or bullying, the school will consider 'interim measures' such as temporary redeployment or a change in reporting lines to ensure the complainant is not required to work with the accused party while the matter is live.
- 11.3 This will be documented and a robust risk assessment will be completed to determine protective measures.

- 11.4 Any interim measures, such as temporary redeployment or a change in reporting lines, are considered neutral acts to protect all parties involved.
- 11.5 They do not constitute a disciplinary sanction or an assumption of guilt.

11.6 Step 1 – The Complaint Letter

- 11.6.1 Details of the complaint should be forwarded in writing to the relevant person, in line with the scheme of delegation, by the complainant. The complainant should normally receive an acknowledgement of the complaint within five working days.
- 11.6.2 A formal complaint should normally be submitted without unreasonable delay following the action or decision under dispute (see paragraph 1.2).
- 11.6.3 The letter of complaint should carefully describe the complaint, giving a detailed account of what is alleged to have occurred, who was involved, detail of any witnesses and state when the event/s happened. In some situations, the school may need to ask the complainant to provide further information.
- 11.6.4 Should an investigation be necessary then the timescales for arranging a complaints hearing may vary. To minimise employee stress and to facilitate the efficient running of the school, all attempts will be made to complete the process in a timely manner.
- 11.6.5 The complainant must co-operate fully and promptly in any investigation. This may include informing the school of the names of any relevant witness, disclosing any relevant documents and attending interviews, as part of the investigation.
- 11.6.6 The school may initiate an investigation before holding a complaint meeting where the school considers this appropriate. In other cases, the school may hold a complaint meeting before deciding what investigation (if any) to carry out. In those cases, the school will hold a further complaint meeting with the complainant after the investigation and before the school reaches a decision.

11.7 Step 2 – The Complaint Meeting

- 11.7.1 The school will arrange a complaint meeting, normally within a week of receiving the written complaint or as soon as is practicable thereafter.
- 11.7.2 The complainant and their companion (if any) should make every effort to attend meetings. If the complainant or their companion cannot attend at the time specified, the complainant should inform the school immediately and the school will try, within reason, to agree to an alternative time.
- 11.7.3 The purpose of a complaint meeting is to enable the complainant to explain their grievance and how the complainant thinks it should be resolved, and to

assist the school to reach a decision based on the available evidence and the representations the complainant has made.

11.7.4 After an initial complaint meeting the school may carry out further investigation and hold further complaint meetings as the school considers appropriate. Such meetings will be arranged without unreasonable delay.

11.7.5 There are two possible outcomes:

Complaint - not upheld

The school may conclude that the complaint is not upheld, e.g. because the behaviour complained of did not occur or because there is insufficient evidence to support the complaint.

If, in such a case, the school is nonetheless satisfied that the complainant's distress is genuine and/or that there has been a serious breakdown in relationships the school may offer support to the colleagues in the restoration of their working relationship through mediation or other methods as appropriate.

Complaint upheld or upheld in part

If the outcome of the hearing is that the complaint is fully or in part proven, the matter will be referred immediately to the Disciplinary Procedure. The school will also conduct a post-incident risk assessment to identify what preventative steps failed.

While the complainant will be informed whether their complaint was upheld, specific details regarding disciplinary sanctions against another employee may remain confidential in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

If the complaint is not upheld, the employee will be informed of the right to take the complaint to an appeal hearing and how to do so.

11.8 Step 3 – The Appeal

11.8.1 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision from the complaint meeting, they should notify the school within five working days of receipt of the decision letter of their decision to appeal. The complainant must give specific reasons why they are dissatisfied with the outcome. An appeal can be made on the grounds of:

- Perceived unfairness of the decision.
- Disputing the facts of the case including new evidence coming to light.
- Procedural non-compliance.

11.8.2 The appeal will be dealt with impartially by a more senior Appeal Officer or Governor who has not previously been involved in the case in line with the scheme of delegation.

11.8.3 The appeal hearing will take place as soon as is reasonably practicable, employees will be given at least 5 working days notice of the appeal hearing date. The school will confirm its final decision in writing, usually within one week of the appeal hearing.

11.8.4 The decision will be final; there is no further right of appeal, and this is the end of the procedure.

12. DISCIPLINARY IMPLICATIONS ON THE OUTCOME OF COMPLAINTS PROCESS

12.1 Where a complaint of bullying, harassment or discrimination is upheld, school may take action under the disciplinary procedures, from which point the Disciplinary Policy will be followed.

12.2 Where the behaviour complained of is found to be inappropriate but not meriting formal disciplinary action, management may work with the person whom the complaint is made against to modify their behaviour through the use of management instruction, coaching, training, mentoring and mediation.

12.3 The making of vexatious or false complaints may result in disciplinary action being taken.

13. RESTORING WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

13.1 Whatever the outcome of a complaint, it is management's responsibility to re-establish effective working relationships amongst the employees involved; it is the employees' responsibility to co-operate to achieve this.

13.2 The school may seek agreement from both the complainant and the person who the complaint has been made against for the case to be referred to mediation.

13.3 Following the conclusion of any formal harassment or bullying complaint, Management will conduct a 'Lessons Learned' review. This is to determine if risk assessments, training, or workplace culture require adjustment to prevent a recurrence.

14. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & WELLBEING SUPPORT

14.1 The school has a duty of care to both parties involved in the case and should recognise that the process may be stressful and have an impact on the health and wellbeing of both parties. The school may seek occupational health support for either party where required.

14.2 The school will offer wellbeing support and signposting to both parties involved in the case.

15. IN-SCHOOL ARRANGEMENTS

- 15.1 In some cases, it may be difficult for employees to work closely together and, if possible, the school may use its discretion to offer suitable alternative employment within the school if able to do so.

16. COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE GOVERNING BODY

- 16.1 The school's legal advisors/HR providers (FushionHR) should be contacted for advice.
- 16.2 The same process will apply in terms of investigation and outcomes. It may be necessary for an external investigator to be appointed to mitigate any potential conflict of interest arising from such a complaint.

17. COLLECTIVE DISPUTES

- 17.1 Where more than one member of staff has lodged a complaint relating to the same or substantially the same issue, the school may deal with the complaints together in the interests of fair and consistent decision-making.
- 17.2 The trade union may initiate a collective grievance on behalf of more than one named employee where the issues are the same.

18. OVERLAPPING COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINARY CASES

- 18.1 Where an employee raises a complaint during a disciplinary process, the disciplinary process may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the complaint, at the discretion of the school. Where the complaint and disciplinary cases are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently or deal with the complaint as part of the disciplinary process.

19. RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTATION

- 19.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:
- **Whistleblowing Policy** (for disclosures in the public interest)
 - **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** (for conduct impacting pupils)
 - **Disciplinary Policy** (for outcomes involving formal conduct measures)
 - **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy** (for discrimination context)
 - **Staff Code of Conduct** (for expected standards of professional behaviour)
 - **Sexual Harassment Policy** (for allegations of Sexual Harassment)