



# Sexual Harassment

**Approved by:** Board of Trustees

**Date:** June 2025

**Last reviewed:** June 2025

**Next review due by:** As required

## **Policy Outline**

### **Reviewing the Policy**

Inspire Multi Academy Trust will keep the operation of this policy under review and will make such changes to the policy as deemed appropriate following consultation with the trade unions, where appropriate.

### **Summary of Changes**

This is a new policy.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

As with all policies that affect service users, the wider community or employees, schools should undertake an analysis of the potential equality impacts and record that assessment.

### **Contacts for help and assistance**

Please contact the Inspire Multi Academy Trust Central Team for help and assistance in applying the content of this policy.

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 We are committed to fostering a workplace where everyone feels respected, valued, and safe. We do not tolerate any form of sexual harassment in our organisation.
- 1.2 This Policy:
- Defines sexual harassment and outlines what constitutes inappropriate behaviour
  - Sets expectations for professional conduct and respectful interactions
  - Explains the process for reporting sexual harassment complaints
  - Details how complaints will be addressed and investigated
- 1.3 This Policy applies to all employees, workers, contractors, agency workers, consultants, casual workers, volunteers, and interns.

## **2. Associated and Alternative Procedures**

- 2.1 In dealing with matters in relation to, and prevention of, sexual harassment the Trust recognises that it may need to be part of a wider approach and therefore this policy may need to be read in conjunction with the following documents;
- Grievance Policy
  - Disciplinary Policy
  - Code of Conduct Policy
  - Data Protection Policy
- 2.2 Employees can request a copy of any additional policies referred to within this policy from their line manager or the school office.

## **3 Employee Health & Wellbeing**

- 3.1 This policy it sets out the measures in which the Trust will take to support all employees in maintaining their health and wellbeing whilst dealing with matters relating to sexual harassment.
- 3.2 We are committed to creating an environment that promotes good mental health and where staff can thrive and feel supported. However, we recognise that whilst dealing with complaints of sexual harassment it can be a difficult time for all staff involved, and that extends to those who may have witnessed sexual harassment, and anyone accused of sexual harassment.
- 3.3 Ultimately it is the Board of Trustees who are responsible for ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable, that the health and wellbeing of the affected employees is considered at all times and that the relevant officer(s) appointed to deal with matters relating to sexual harassment are continuing to support our wellbeing strategy.

- 3.4 Officer dealing with matters relating to sexual harassment should signpost affected employees to [where they can access help and support](#), where appropriate.
- 3.5 The Board of Trustees are also responsible for ensuring that the health and wellbeing of those officers handling complaints relating to sexual harassment feel supported throughout the process

## **4 What is Sexual Harassment?**

- 4.1 Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or degrading environment. It may involve physical, verbal, or non-verbal behaviour, and can occur in any form – including in person, via email, phone, or social media.
- 4.2 Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:
- Unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favours
  - Inappropriate comments, jokes, or gestures of a sexual nature
  - Displaying, sharing, or circulating pornographic material
  - Inappropriate touching, hugging, or other physical contact
  - Making sexually suggestive comments, jokes, or remarks
  - Commenting on someone's physical appearance in a sexual manner
  - Making sexually explicit comments in the presence of others
  - Unwelcome flirting or propositions
  - Offensive remarks or behaviour related to a person's gender or sexuality
- 4.3 Even if the person engaging in the behaviour does not intend to offend, the impact on the recipient is what matters. A single instance of inappropriate conduct may qualify as harassment if it creates a hostile environment.
- 4.4 Sexual harassment may also occur when someone is treated less favourably because they reject or submit to unwelcome sexual advances or behaviour.

## **5 Our Position on Sexual Harassment**

- 5.1 We have a zero-tolerance policy toward sexual harassment. We expect all individuals in the workplace to treat each other with dignity and respect, and to act in a professional, considerate manner at all times.

5.2 Key expectations include:

- Respecting personal boundaries: Do not engage in any behaviour that may make others feel uncomfortable, intimidated, or degraded.
- Avoiding inappropriate conduct: This includes comments, jokes, or physical actions of a sexual nature.
- Promoting a respectful environment: Always be aware of how your actions and words may impact others.
- Fostering inclusivity: Ensure all employees, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or background, feel safe and welcome at work.

5.3 We are committed to creating a work environment that is free from harassment and will take steps to ensure any complaints are handled fairly and promptly.

## 6 Raising a Complaint

6.1 If you believe you have been subjected to sexual harassment, or witnessed sexual harassment in the workplace, we encourage you to take the following steps:

1. **Address the issue informally (if safe to do so):** If you feel comfortable, you may choose to address the behaviour directly with the person involved. Sometimes, people are unaware of how their actions affect others, and a simple conversation can resolve the issue.
2. **Report the incident:** If you do not feel comfortable approaching the individual, you should report the incident to your line manager or the appropriate person within the organisation as outlined below at paragraph 6.3. You can do this informally, or formally, depending on your preference and the severity of the matter.
3. **Follow the Grievance Procedure:** If you wish to submit a formal complaint, please refer to our Grievance Policy, which provides a clear process for raising and resolving workplace issues.

6.2 We will take your complaint seriously and ensure that it is investigated promptly and fairly. If necessary, we may separate the parties involved while we conduct an investigation, in order to prevent any further distress.

6.3 When reporting concerns relating to sexual harassment, employees should discuss this with whomever they feel most comfortable talking to about the matter. This could be either their line manager, the Headteacher, the Chief Executive Headteacher, the Chair of the Local Governing Body, Chair of Trustees or the HR Officer who may be able to raise these concerns initially on their behalf.

## **7 Confidentiality**

- 7.1 To protect the interests of the person whom the complaint is made against, the person who has raised the complaint and any others who may be involved as witnesses or otherwise, confidentiality will be maintained during any investigation process as far as is reasonably possible. We will only share details with those who need to know in order to allow a full and thorough investigate and resolve the matter.
- 7.2 Anyone who fails to maintain confidentiality may face disciplinary action in line with the Disciplinary Policy.
- 7.3 We will also ensure, as far as is reasonably possible that no employee is victimised for making a complaint or for acting as a witness. Retaliation against anyone who reports sexual harassment in good faith is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Any evidence of this will be dealt with in line with the Disciplinary Policy.
- 7.4 We may place information and documents about a complaint raised by or about you on your personnel file. These will be held confidentially and in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and Retention Policy.

## **8 Consequences of Breaching this Policy**

- 8.1 Breaches of this policy will be taken very seriously. If an individual is found to have engaged in sexual harassment, they will face disciplinary action in line with the schools Disciplinary Policy. Depending on the severity of the matter alternative actions which may be appropriate include training, mediation or counselling
- 8.2 In cases where sexual harassment involves abuse of power, such as when a manager is found to have sexual harassed a subordinate, disciplinary action may be more severe.

## **9 Prevention, Training, and Risk Assessment**

- 9.1 We are committed to preventing sexual harassment through regular training, awareness campaigns, and proactive risk assessments. Our goal is to ensure that all employees, managers, and third parties understand what constitutes sexual harassment and how to prevent it, while also identifying and mitigating potential risks.
- 9.2 All employees will receive mandatory training on recognising and avoiding harassment, while managers will undergo specialised training on how to identify, intervene in, and address potential harassment situations. This training will equip managers to respond appropriately and maintain a respectful work environment.
- 9.3 In addition to training, we will conduct regular risk assessments to identify potential hazards for harassment within the workplace. These assessments will evaluate factors such as the physical environment, workplace culture, and existing reporting channels to ensure we are addressing any risks proactively.

- 9.4 We will also regularly review and update our policies and procedures to ensure they remain effective, relevant, and aligned with best practices and legal requirements. This ongoing process will help us stay vigilant in preventing sexual harassment and maintaining a safe and respectful workplace.

## **10 Third-Party Sexual Harassment**

- 10.1 In some circumstances it may be necessary to consider concerns raised in relation to an individual not directly employed by the Trust/school, where the Trust's policies and procedures do not fully apply; for example, supply teachers or contracted staff provided by an employment agency or business. Sexual harassment can also be perpetrated by third parties, such as parents or external visitors to the school.
- 10.2 We will continually assess the risk of third-party harassment and take appropriate steps to minimise those risks, including providing training to staff and clients where necessary.
- 10.3 If you experience or witness third-party sexual harassment, we encourage you to report this immediately to the most appropriate person, as detailed within paragraph 6.3 of this policy.
- 10.4 If any third-party harassment does occur, we will take immediate and appropriate action to address it. Where a concern is raised in relation to an individual not employed by the Trust/school, it may be necessary to discuss the concern with their employer where they are engaged through an agency or separate business. Where the concern is made in relation to a parent or external visitor, it may be necessary to inform the police.

## **11 Lessons Learnt**

- 11.1 Following any concerns raised in relation to sexual harassment, and at conclusion of such a case, the trust will review the circumstances to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the school's procedures or risk assessments to help prevent similar events in the future.

## Dealing with sexual harassment at work

To help you understand your rights and options, employees and employers can:

- [contact the Acas helpline](#)
- talk to your trade union representative, if you have one

Women who've experienced sexual harassment at work can get free legal advice from:

- [Rights of Women](#) – England and Wales
- [Scottish Women's Rights Centre](#)

If you're struggling to cope and need someone to talk to, you can contact:

- [Samaritans](#)
- [LGBT Foundation](#)