The Park Federation
ACADEMY TRUST

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Approved by	Board of Directors		
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Summary of Changes

Version	Date	Summary of Changes	Approved By
1	01 September 2026	New TPFAT Policy	Board of Directors

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

All employees have a right to be treated with dignity and respect at work and it is expected that they treat other employees with the same dignity and respect in return.

The policy provides a clear statement of The Park Federation Academy Trust's zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment in the workplace, and a clear framework through which issues can be identified and appropriate action taken.

Employees will receive training in respect of this policy to ensure familiarity and understanding of all forms of bullying and harassment. Employees who are found to be blameworthy of bullying and/or harassment behaviour will be subject to action under the Disciplinary Policy.

1.2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of The Park Federation Academy Trust. It is intended to cover all forms of bullying and harassment, which occurs both:

- Inside the workplace, and
- Outside of the workplace or normal working hours, such as on school visits or events, or at work related social functions and on social media.

The policy provides a clear statement of The Park Federation Academy Trust's expectations and intent in relation to bullying and harassment in the workplace, and a clear framework through which issues can be identified and resolved and appropriate action taken.

Recognised Trade Unions have been consulted.

1.3. Confidentiality

It is paramount that any report of bullying or harassment is considered and managed in a confidential and fair way, and it is essential that all reports and subsequent documentation are kept confidential. Anyone involved in any stage of the process, including witnesses, are required to respect the confidential nature of the process and not discuss the matter with anyone outside the process.

The Trust does not consent to the electronic recording in any meetings, in part or in whole, including the recording and/or automated minuting of online meetings.

It is not permissible at any point to electronically record in secret any meetings, in part or in whole.

1.4. Record Keeping

All reports and documentation will be kept securely and will only be made available to employees whose duties require access to this information.

1.5. Definitions

"The Trust" refers to The Park Federation Academy Trust.

"Principal" within this document may denote a Principal at any of the Trust's academies, or someone of the same level or higher depending on the specific circumstances e.g. the Chief Operating Officer (COO), the Chief Education Officer (CEdO) or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

2. BULLYING & HARASSMENT

2.1. Bullying

According to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS), bullying may be characterised as "offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient".

Examples of bullying behaviour can therefore include:

- behaviour that is offensive, abusive, malicious, insulting or intimidating
- unjustified criticism
- action taken without reasonable justification
- changes in the duties or responsibilities of the employee to the employee's detriment without reasonable justification
- misuse of power or position to undermine or intimidate the employee
- exclusion or victimisation
- allocating additional workload
- withholding work responsibility
- changing priorities and objectives unreasonably
- imposing impractical deadlines
- excessive and unreasonable supervision
- unnecessary invoking of disciplinary or capability procedures

Any bullying by an employee of the Trust may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal in line with the Trust's disciplinary policy.

2.2. Harassment

Harassment is "any unwanted physical verbal or non-verbal conduct 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".

Harassment is unlawful when in relation to one or more "protected characteristics" and will constitute a breach of the Equality Act 2010. The protected characteristics referred to are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- race
- religion or belief
- pregnancy and maternity
- sex
- sexual orientation

Employees are also protected:

- on the basis of being perceived to possess the above protected characteristics, whether they have them or not;
- on an associative basis i.e. because of their association with a person who has a protected characteristic.

The following list is not exhaustive but provides examples of behaviour that constitutes harassment at work and is unacceptable in the workplace:

- unwanted physical contact, ranging from unnecessary touching to serious or sexual assault.
- verbal or written unwanted personal or derogatory comments including jokes, offensive language, gossip, slanderous correspondence, unwelcome sexual advances, offensive flirtations, continued unwelcome suggestions for social activity outside the workplace, suggestive remarks, and lewd comments.
- circulation or display of offensive and/or inappropriate material including email.
- any other unwanted behaviour or situation, rooted in the definition, in which the employee feels they have been subjected to harassment.

Employees may also complain of behaviour they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.

Any harassment by an employee of the Trust may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal in line with the Trust's disciplinary policy.

2.3. Sexual Harassment

The Equality Act 2010 also specifically covers sexual harassment. This is defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. The conduct need not be sexually motivated, only sexual in nature.

In addition to that listed in section 2.2, employees are also protected from less favourable treatment because they have either submitted or failed to submit to sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment.

The Trust will take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees in the workplace and in the course of their employment, which may include:

- reviewing Policies: ensuring compliance with the new duty
- displaying posters: reinforcing the Trust's commitment to zero-tolerance of bullying and harassment behaviours
- engagement: Proactively engage with staff and trade unions to find out whether there are any potential issues in a workplace and whether the steps already being taken are working
- risk assessment: Carry out a risk assessment identifying the potential issues in a workplace and steps that could be taken to minimise the risk of sexual harassment
- reporting: Ensure that all staff are aware of how to report complaints of sexual harassment
- training: Train all staff on what sexual harassment is, what to do if they experience or witness it, and how to handle any complaints of harassment
- resolving complaints: Ensure that staff complaints are handled appropriately (resolved quickly and confidentially and that steps are taken to protect the complainant and any witnesses from further harassment or victimisation)
- preventing third-party harassment: Take steps to prevent sexual harassment by third parties (can include customers, parents, consultants, contractors, colleague family members), such as putting reporting mechanisms in place and action plans for addressing the risks in high-risk work spaces and highlighting school policies to the third parties
- monitor and evaluate: Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken to prevent sexual harassment and implement new steps to address any change in the risk profile

- support reminders: Whether further support can be accessed by contacting the Trust's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), a confidential 24-hour telephone counselling service.

Any sexual harassment by an employee of the Trust may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal in line with the Trust's disciplinary policy.

2.4. Third Party Harassment

Third-party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed or sexually harassed by someone who does not work for the Trust, but with whom they have met during their employment.

Third-party harassment could include, for example, unwelcome sexual advances from a contractor, agency or supply worker or any other visitors including parents/carers/family members, visiting the Trust's premises. This also includes where a person is visiting a contractor, or any other external third-party including parents/carers/family members in another location in the course of their employment, for example home visits.

Third-party harassment will not be tolerated. An employee who is harassed or witnesses any third-party harassment is strongly encouraged to report it in accordance with this policy.

If any third-party harassment occurs, the Trust will take steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again. Action may include:

- warning the harasser about their behaviour
- banning the harasser from Trust sites
- reporting any criminal acts to the police

Any harassment by an employee of the Trust against a third-party may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal in line with the Trust's disciplinary policy.

2.5. Examples of unacceptable behaviour

Unacceptable behaviour 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, 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.

3. PROTECTION FROM VICITMISATION

Victimisation is treating someone less favourably or detrimentally than others because they have reported harassment or supported/intend to support someone in making a complaint of harassment.

Any victimisation by an employee of the Trust may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal in line with the Trust's disciplinary policy.

4. REPORTING INCIDENTS OF BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

It is acknowledged that reports of bullying and harassment may be of a sensitive nature and may be received by:

- the employee's s line manager
- the employee's Principal
- another member of the leadership team
- the HR team
- a union representative

The Trust encourages all staff to promptly come forward with any concerns in relation to harassment, sexual harassment and bullying.

If an employee believes they have been bullied and/or harassed, they should raise this immediately in line with the Trust's Grievance Policy. The Trust will deal with any concerns raised about bullying and harassment in accordance with the Trust's Grievance Policy.

5. EMPLOYEE SUPPORT

Support will be made available to:

- employees who have experienced bullying or harassment
- employees who have witnessed sexual harassment
- employees who are involved with managing a sexual harassment case
- anyone accused of bullying or harassment

Support may include:

- directing an employee to the Trust's employee assistance programme (EAP)
- referring an employee to OH
- arranging for an employee to speak or meet with a mental health first aider
- sign-posting an employee to an external party for further support, such as a GP, talking therapies or specialist support organisation

6. FALSE OR MALICIOUS ALLEGATIONS

It is important that employees reporting incidents of bullying and harassment do so because they have a genuine issue or concern. A false or malicious report made by an employee, for example, for the purposes of damaging the career of a colleague, may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal in line with the Trust's disciplinary policy.