



THE NOTTINGHAM DIOCESAN CATHOLIC MULTI-ACADEMY TRUSTS

DIGNITY AT WORK, BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY



Christian communities are called to offer support to the educational mission of families, and they do this first of all with the light of the Word of God.

Pope Francis, 20 May 2015



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Commitment to Equality

We are committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. We have developed a number of key policies to ensure that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in relation to human dignity and dignity in work become embedded into every aspect of school life and these policies are reviewed regularly in this regard.

This Dignity at Work, Bullying and Harassment Policy has been subject to consultation with the Recognised Trade Unions. It was approved and adopted by the CMAT as detailed below:

Policy Approved By:	Date of Approval
Board of Directors – Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi Academy Trust	17 July 2025
Board of Directors – St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust	10 July 2025
Board of Directors – St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi Academy Trust	08 July 2025

It will be reviewed after 24 months in consultation with the Recognised Trade Unions.

Signed by Director of CMAT Trust Board:

NIGEL STEVENSON

Signed by CEO:

JAMES MCGEACHIE



DEFINITIONS

In this Dignity at Work, Bullying and Harassment policy, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions, where they appear, shall have the following meanings:

- i. 'CMAT' means the Catholic Multi Academy Trust, that is the company responsible for the management of the Central Team and the Academies and, for all purposes, means the employer of staff within the Central Team and the Academies.
- ii. 'Board' means the board of Directors of the CMAT who are responsible for carrying out the employment functions of the CMAT.
- iii. 'Central Team' means all staff employed in the Central Office functions of the CMAT.
- iv. 'Chair' means the Chair of the Board of the CMAT as appointed from time to time.
- v. 'Companion' means a willing work colleague not involved in the subject matter under which the policy is being invoked, a trade union official, an accredited representative of a trade union or other professional association of which the employee is a member.
- vi. 'Diocesan Education Service' means the education service provided by the diocese in which the CMAT is situated, which may also be known, or referred to, as the Diocesan School Commission.
- vii. 'Directors' means directors appointed to the Board of the CMAT from time to time.
- viii. 'Governor' means a member of the Local Governing Body of the school.
- ix. 'Headteacher' means the most senior teacher in the school who is responsible for its management and administration. Such teacher may also be referred to as the Head of School or Executive Headteacher.
- x. 'Local Governing Body' means the Governors appointed from time to time to carry out specified functions in relation to the school as delegated by the CMAT.
- xi. 'Resolution Manager' or 'Manager' means person to conduct the formal procedure set out in Paragraph 7. This may include or refer to a panel of Directors.
- xii. 'School' means the Academies named at the beginning of this Policy and Procedure and includes all sites upon which the CMAT undertaking is, from time to time, being carried out.
- xiii. 'Vice-Chair' means the Vice-Chair of the Board of the CMAT as appointed from time to time.
- xiv. 'Working Day' means any day on which an employee would ordinarily work if they were a full-time employee. In other words, 'Working Day' will apply differently to teaching and non-teaching staff. However, part-time and full-time staff will not be treated differently for the purposes of implementing this Policy and Procedure.

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"Some seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge: that is curiosity. Others seek knowledge that they themselves be known: that is vanity. But there are still others who seek knowledge in order to serve and edify others, and that is charity."

St. Bernard of Clairvaux

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The CMATs in the Diocese of Nottingham have a strong commitment, aligned to our values, as well as a duty to provide a working environment that promotes dignity amongst the whole workforce and is free from any form of harassment, intimidation or bullying (including cyber-bullying). The CMAT aims to have an environment where issues of harassment or bullying will be resolved without fear of ridicule or reprisal.
- 1.2 Employees and those working on behalf of the CMAT have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to work in a harmonious and supportive working environment and behaviour contrary to this will not be tolerated. The CMAT therefore, seeks to create conditions in which all employees, agency personnel, contractors, visitors and third parties are treated fairly and where cultural diversity and equity is valued. No-one who makes a request for Dignity at Work, or a Bullying or Harassment complaint will be subject to any detriment or loss of career development opportunities.
- 1.3 The CMAT will not tolerate discrimination, bullying or harassment of any kind regardless of the seniority of those involved. Neither will the CMAT condone harassment or intimidation of, or by employees when dealing with third parties, e.g. parents/contractors/visitors/agency personnel.
- 1.4 If parents or carers discriminate, bully or harass an employee this should be immediately (or as soon as reasonably practicable) reported to the Headteacher who will treat the matter seriously. An investigation will be undertaken and appropriate action taken with the parent or carer concerned and the employee will be updated.
- 1.5 All allegations of discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation will be investigated and, if appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken. If, following the disciplinary procedure, an allegation of discrimination, bullying or harassment is proven, this could constitute gross misconduct. Following a fair process including a hearing this may result in dismissal without notice. Where disciplinary action is not applicable but organisational learning can be taken from the investigation findings, these will be taken seriously and progressed accordingly.
- 1.6 Even where a formal complaint has not been made by an employee, the CMAT is required to, and will investigate, and deal with any treatment, behaviour or conduct which is contrary to this policy, such as inappropriate “banter”, aggressive attitudes or insensitive “jokes”.
- 1.7 The CMAT will take all reasonable practical steps to resolve complaints of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation fairly, quickly and discreetly.
- 1.8 The CMAT recognises that it has an equal duty of care to both, the employee making the complaint and the alleged harasser.
- 1.9 This policy does not form part of the contract of employment and may be amended at any time following consultation with the recognised trade unions.
- 1.10 This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to:
- The Equality Act 2010
 - Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
 - Protection from Harassment Act 1997
 - The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
 - Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023

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Hear, my child, your father's instruction, and do not reject your mother's teaching; for they are a fair garland for your head, and pendants for your neck.

Proverbs 1: 8-9

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2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy covers the unwanted behaviours of and by employees, agency staff, contractors and anyone else engaged to work at schools, whether by direct contract or otherwise. If the complainant or alleged harasser is not employed by the CMAT, for example, if the worker's contract is with an agency, this policy will apply with any necessary modifications; for example, the school/academy could not dismiss but would refer the matter to the agency where investigation and appropriate action can be taken.
- 2.2 The application of this policy and the standards of behaviour set out also extend to any work-related setting outside of the workplace, e.g. training courses, trips and work-related social events.
- 2.3 The CMAT's priority is to ensure a respectful, inclusive, and safe working environment for all employees. The CMAT will continue to uphold a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment, and related behaviours that undermine workplace dignity and respect.

3. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CMAT

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the CMAT:
- To provide employees with a clear framework to raise a complaint
 - To provide assistance to employees in order to informally resolve a complaint if possible
 - To ensure formal complaints are investigated in a thorough and timely manner, providing parties with appropriate written and verbal feedback in a timely manner and ordinarily we would expect this to be within three working weeks.
 - To ensure consistency and fairness of treatment – in respect of both parties
 - To take appropriate action, including disciplinary action, where applicable

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EMPLOYEE

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of the employee:
- To comply with the CMAT's Code of Conduct and treat all colleagues and stakeholders with dignity and respect at all times
 - To raise complaints only in relation to legitimate concerns and not of a malicious/vexatious nature
 - To engage with managers in seeking to resolve any complaint that has been raised– by attending meetings and / or participating in any investigation
 - To act in a respectful and professional manner towards all parties
 - To maintain confidentiality

5. BEHAVIOUR THAT MAY AMOUNT TO BULLYING, HARASSMENT OR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- 5.1 Bullying is usually defined as behaviour that is repeated, intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally, often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.
- 5.2 Harassment is unwanted behaviour that violates someone's dignity or creates a hostile environment based on protected characteristics like sex, race, or disability. Sexual harassment is a specific type of harassment involving unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating a hostile environment.
- 5.3 Bullying, harassment or sexual harassment may be by an individual against an individual (perhaps by someone in a position of authority such as a Line manager), by a third party or involve groups of people. It may be obvious, or it may be insidious. Whatever format it takes, it is unwarranted and unwelcome to the individual and is unacceptable in our organisation.



- 5.4 Bullying or harassment may include conduct which is related to sex, age, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, membership of a trade union or taking part in the activities of a trade union, but conduct can amount to bullying or harassment without it relating to any of these categories. Sexual harassment occurs when an employee is subjected to unwanted conduct in the form of spoken or written words, banter, imagery, physical gestures, facial expressions, or aggression, which is of a sexual nature. This conduct does not need to be sexually motivated, only sexual in nature.
- 5.5 Employees are able to complain of behaviour, treatment or conduct that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them and they do not have the relevant characteristic themselves.
- 5.6 The following is a list of examples of behaviour that may be bullying or harassment:
- Offensive, abusive, intimidating or sexual comments, insensitive jokes or pranks, derogative or stereotypical remarks
 - Displaying or distributing sexually graphic or pornographic material, abusive literature or graffiti or other material that some people may find offensive
 - Deliberately excluding someone from conversations or work activities
 - Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour including looks, staring and gestures
 - Unwanted physical conduct including touching, pinching, grabbing
 - Ridiculing, humiliating or belittling someone
 - Inappropriate remarks about someone's performance
 - Overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position including making promises in return for sexual favours
 - Making threats or comments about job security without foundation
 - Deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism
 - Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone by word or behaviour (particularly on the grounds of protected characteristics)
 - Preventing colleagues progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities
 - The use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or information from YouTube to bully or harass others.
- 5.7 The list is not exhaustive. What one employee finds acceptable, another may not and therefore all employees ought to ensure that they treat one another with respect.
- 5.8 It is not necessary that the treatment, behaviour or conduct in question was directed at the employee raising the concern or the complaint. Harassment, sexual harassment or bullying can include behaviour which creates an intimidating and offensive environment for the employee and anyone else who may witness that behaviour.
- 5.9 Harassment, sexual harassment or bullying may take place in a work situation, during work situations like social events, outside of work situations like on social media or outside of a work situation where the incident is relevant to their suitability to carry out the role.

6. COMPLAINTS AGAINST THIRD PARTIES

- 6.1 Sometimes the allegation of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment may be against someone a colleague comes across as part of their work e.g. a supplier or visitor. In this case the complaint should be made to the Headteacher or central team line manager, who will then discuss with the employee how best to deal with the situation.



- 6.2 in a school environment, there are stakeholders – notably parents/carers – over which the School and the CMAT have no direct authority. In a situation where there is an allegation of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment, in person or online, towards an employee, the employee should be supported throughout any period of investigation, and beyond it if necessary. In circumstances such as this, the HR Manager should be notified.
- 6.3 There may be an allegation of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment made against a Board member. In such circumstances, this should be reported to the Director of People for the three CMATs who would investigate. Following the conclusion of an investigation, the CMAT will act accordingly. This may include censure by, or removal from, the Board where evidence of wrongdoing has been found.

7. PROCEDURE

- 7.1 The CMAT is committed to fostering an inclusive, respectful, and safe workplace, where dignity, fairness, and respect for everyone is upheld. This policy underpins the CMAT's commitment to equality, fairness, and the elimination of discrimination, covering all employees irrespective of location.
- 7.2 Employees can follow this procedure if they have concerns related to bullying or harassment, rather than using CMAT's Grievance Resolution Policy and Procedure. The employee may want to take advice from a trade union if a member.
- 7.3 Employees can reach out to a trusted colleague, trade union representative or HR for guidance and support.

INFORMAL RESOLUTION

- 7.4 The CMAT appreciates there will be matters that can be resolved informally either through a Line Manager, the Headteacher (where applicable, or if the complaint relates to the Headteacher, the CEO) or, where possible, with the other party.
- 7.5 Where there is scope to reach a resolution informally, various strategies will be discussed with the employee, and the employee may wish to suggest possible strategies that may assist in reaching informal resolution. In these cases, there will be a record of action taken.
- 7.6 Examples of informal action may include directly communicating with the individual causing the issue, expressing that their behaviour is unwelcome and needs to stop. If the employee feels uncomfortable approaching the individual directly, or has attempted to do so without resolution, they should seek support from their Line Manager or Headteacher provided those individuals are not implicated.

FORMAL RESOLUTION

- 7.7 If an employee does not feel that there is a reasonable prospect of resolution informally and/or if attempts to do so have been unsuccessful, they may raise a formal complaint under this procedure by writing to the Headteacher or CEO (if the Headteacher is involved or the complaint is against a central team employee) giving as much detail as possible about what happened, when, where and if any witnesses were present. The desired outcome should also be specified where possible.
- 7.8 The employee will be invited to a meeting to explain the concerns and may bring a trade union representative or work colleague if they wish. The meeting may be rearranged within five working days, or at a mutually agreed time and all matters will be kept confidential by all parties.
- 7.9 Following the meeting the Resolution Manager will undertake any further investigation necessary and conclude whether or not the complaint is upheld or not. This will be confirmed in writing following this determination, along with a right of appeal.



- 7.10 If the complaint involves serious misconduct or may indicate a case of gross misconduct, the Headteacher (or the CEO of the CMAT if the Headteacher is involved) should consult with HR for guidance on how to proceed.
- 7.11 The outcome of any investigation under this policy may include recommending disciplinary measures, or other helpful actions to prevent further issues. Any disciplinary action will be undertaken in line with the Disciplinary Policy and will be kept confidential so cannot be shared with the complainant.
- 7.12 The employee will be informed in writing if the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. If the employee is dissatisfied with this outcome, there is a right of appeal.

8. APPEALS

- 8.1 If the employee is dissatisfied with the written outcome they can appeal against the decision and a manager not previously involved in the matter will be appointed to consider specific grounds of appeal. The appeal should be made in writing within ten working days of the outcome being received and the specific grounds of the appeal need to be stated, as well as the outcome the employee is seeking.
- 8.2 The employee will be invited to an appeal meeting with at least five working days' notice and the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative will be given.
- 8.3 The decision of the appeal is the final stage of the internal process.

9. FALSE, VEXATIOUS OR MALICIOUS COMPLAINTS

- 9.1 Making false, vexatious or malicious complaints under this procedure is a serious disciplinary offence which could result in disciplinary action. If the Resolution Manager believes the grievance is false, malicious or vexatious a new investigation under the CMAT's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure will take place. The fact that an allegation has not been substantiated following a formal investigation does not mean that it will be automatically considered false, malicious or vexatious.

10. TRAINING

- 10.1 The CMAT is dedicated to creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace ensuring that all employees are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to uphold dignity at work and prevent any form of bullying, harassment, or sexual harassment.
- 10.2 The CMAT will provide training and briefings for all employees that focus on:
- Understanding the principles of respect, equity, and inclusion to foster a positive and supportive work environment.
 - Identifying and addressing behaviours that could constitute bullying and harassment, ensuring that all employees feel valued and safe in their roles.
 - Educating employees on what constitutes sexual harassment, including inappropriate behaviours and language to prevent accidents and promote respectful interactions.
- 10.3 The training offers clear guidance on recognising, reporting, and addressing issues related to dignity at work. The CMAT also encourages open communication, empowering employees to voice concerns without fear of retaliation and to participate actively in cultivating a workplace where everyone is treated with respect and integrity.
- 10.4 This commitment reinforces the CMAT's zero-tolerance stance on any behaviours that undermine the dignity or well-being of our employees.



11. SUPPORT

- 11.1 The CMAT is committed to supporting any employee who experiences or witnesses bullying, harassment, or sexual harassment. We recognise the importance of providing a safe, confidential, and supportive environment where all employees feel empowered to address these issues.
- 11.2 To ensure employees have access to the resources they need, the CMAT offers the following support:
- All CMAT employees have access to our confidential Employee Assistance Program offering counselling and emotional support services.
 - All employees are encouraged to reach out to their Line Manager, trusted colleagues or HR who can offer support and guidance. The CMAT promotes a culture where employees feel comfortable discussing sensitive matters without fear of judgment or retaliation.
 - To help prevent and address issues of bullying and harassment, all employees are encouraged to participate in the CMAT's training. These sessions provide practical advice on managing difficult situations, understanding rights and responsibilities, and recognising behaviours that undermine workplace dignity and respect.
 - If the experience impacts on the performance of the employee, we will seek to understand any support needed and may seek advice from Occupational Health where applicable.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 12.1 Confidentiality by all concerned is crucial throughout the process and any breach of this will be taken seriously. This includes gossip both inside and outside work, social media posts and unprofessional behaviour towards others due to involvement in the case.

13. MONITORING

- 13.1 The policy will be monitored to ensure consistency of application and adherence to Equalities Legislation. Reports will be presented via JCC on incident numbers at the CMAT.

14. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

- 14.1 This Policy is reviewed after 24 months in consultation with the recognised trade unions. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively and is in line with Equalities legislation.



**Diocese of
Nottingham**
Multi Academy Trusts

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
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