

Staff Bullying and Harassment Policy

This policy (and the procedure outlined within) is available on the SSMAT website and is accessible from the CTA website.

POLICY APPROVAL and REVIEW

Review date: **July '21**

Approval needed by: **Trust Board**

Adopted: **July '19**

Next review date: **July '23**

1. Introduction / Overview

- 1.1 Stephen Sutton Multi-Academy Trust (SSMAT) aims to provide a caring, constructive learning environment for students and safe, supportive working conditions for staff. Colleagues are entitled to work in a climate of respect and ought not to be subject to intimidating, hostile or humiliating treatment of any type.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all employees of SSMAT. The Trust is committed to equality and diversity in the workplace and regards bullying and harassment as a form of discrimination. As all stages within this policy and procedure, and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, provision is made for any reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of individuals attending meetings / hearings.
- 1.3 This policy applies equally to bullying and harassment that is work-related, even where this occurs away from the normal workplace.

2. Bullying and Harassment - Definitions

- 2.1 There is no legal definition of bullying. The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as ‘offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour; an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient’. There is a subjective element regarding bullying, related to how someone feels and their perception of a situation, an action or a series of actions.
- 2.2 For the purposes of this policy, SSMAT defines bullying as ‘persistent behaviour directed against an individual, or group of individuals, which creates a threatening or intimidating environment that undermines the confidence and self-esteem of the colleague(s) subject to the bullying behaviour.
- 2.3 For the purposes of this policy, harassment is defined as ‘unwanted conduct (persistent or isolated) that violates a person’s dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- 2.4 Some harassment relates to protected characteristics, including: sex, race, disability, religion / beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, age and gender reassignment.
- 2.5 Examples of behaviour that may constitute bullying or harassment include:
 - spreading malicious rumours;
 - professional or social exclusion;
 - insulting behaviour;
 - unwelcome sexual advances, or physical contact;
 - unfounded threats related to job security;

- calculated undermining of a colleague's confidence, e.g. through the allocation of an unreasonable or unfair workload or overbearing levels of supervision;
- physical assault;
- verbal abuse, threats, derogatory name-calling, ridicule, insults and offensive or embarrassing jokes;
- offensive texts, emails or communications over social media; and
- inciting others to commit any of the above.

3. Complaints Procedure

- 3.1 Any colleague who believes that they have been subject to bullying or harassment should raise the matter as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- 3.2 In most circumstances, colleagues are advised to discuss the matter with their line manager or, where the concerns related to the behaviour of their line manager, with the Head of School. The colleague should describe the behaviour and explain that this is unacceptable to them and they feel that they are being bullied or harassed.
- 3.3 The line manager should consult with the Head of School, or with a senior member of staff, to consider the range of options that may be available, on an informal basis (including professional discussions and mediation). However, any action short of a formal procedure must be acceptable to the complainant. At any stage, the complainant is entitled to raise a formal grievance, through the provisions of the Trust's Staff Grievance Policy.
- 3.4 Where a colleague is unhappy with the outcome of the formal grievance procedure, there is an appeals process with which they can engage. Any complaint, formal or informal, must be investigated thoroughly and fairly.
- 3.5 At any stage in the process, a colleague may wish to get advice and support from their trade union. SSMAT works constructively with trade unions to support colleagues and address unacceptable behaviour.

4. Consequences

- 4.1 Bullying and harassment are disciplinary offences and are therefore addressed through the Trust's Staff Discipline Policy. They may, in some cases, also constitute criminal offence, punishable by a fine and/or imprisonment.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 Colleagues are responsible for their own behaviour and are accountable for their actions, in relation to this policy.

- 5.2 Managers are responsible for the welfare of colleagues in their teams and for the prompt, confidential, fair and thorough implementation of this policy, involving the Head of School, or other senior colleagues as appropriate.
- 5.3 The Head of School and Governing Body of the school have an overall responsibility for the consistent application of this policy.
- 5.4 The Trust Board is responsible for reviewing the policy and evaluating its effectiveness on a regular basis, supported by the Executive Headteacher, who monitors its implementation through liaison with the Head of School.

Stuart Jones; July '21