



## Dignity at Work Policy 2023 - 2025

**Equality Impact Assessment:** Askham Bryan College recognises the importance of the Equality Act 2010 and its duties under the Act. This document has been assessed to ensure that it does not adversely affect staff, students or stakeholders on the grounds of any protected characteristics.

### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Askham Bryan College is committed to creating a work environment free of harassment and bullying, and where staff feel safe.
- 1.2 The College recognises that harassment and bullying at work (including inappropriate behaviour by parents/guardians/carers and or visitors to College premises), can make people unhappy, may cause them stress and affect their health, family and social relationships, may affect their work performance and even cause them to leave.
- 1.3 Investigating and dealing with harassment and bullying can consume the organisation's time, and if not properly handled, leaves it open to legal claims and ultimately, damages the organisation's reputation. For all these reasons, the College has a zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment. Because of this, if a complaint is brought to the attention of management, it will be investigated promptly and appropriate action taken.
- 1.4 Employees found guilty of harassment or bullying may face disciplinary penalties, up to and including dismissal and could be personally liable to pay compensation in legal claims. Serious harassment may be a criminal offence.
- 1.5 In the case of parents/guardians/carers and or visitors to College who are found to have harassed or bullied staff, appropriate action will be taken depending on the nature and severity of the harassment, bullying and or inappropriate behaviour, and how long it has been happening. The action taken will very much depend on the facts of the situation.
- 1.6 Nothing in this policy, however, will prevent a parent/guardian/carer or visitor to the College from making a complaint, in circumstances where they feel they are justified in doing so. However, any complaint must be pursued via the College's Customer Services and Complaints Policy. Please note: having raised a complaint, the College is required to investigate that complaint. There may therefore be some time between the

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making of the complaint and the College's response, to allow this to happen, so we would ask that if you do make a complaint, you are patient with us whilst it is properly investigated. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of that investigation, then you have the right of appeal against that decision.

- 1.7 Staff who wish to raise a complaint should do so either with their line manager or directly with People Services.

## 2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This Policy applies to employees, students, and any visitors to the College, for example parents of students, those carrying out works, or visitors to the attractions

## 3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

### What is Harassment?

- 3.1 Incidents of harassment result from any conduct which is not (or is no longer) wanted by the recipient, or any conduct which affects the dignity of an individual or group of individuals at work. It is unwanted conduct which has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. It could be reasonably considered by that person to have that same impact, even if it wasn't intended by the person responsible for the conduct.
- 3.2 Harassment may be repetitive or an isolated occurrence against one or more individuals. It can take a number of forms, i.e. overt physical contact to subtler forms creating an unpleasant and intimidating environment at work.
- 3.3 Harassment may include the following:
- Physical - contact e.g. touching, patting; assault or gestures, intimidation, aggressive behaviour
  - Verbal - unwelcome remarks, suggestions and propositions, malicious gossip, insults, name calling, sectarian songs/chants, slander, jokes and banter, unreasonable requests.
  - Non-verbal - offensive literature, images or pictures, graffiti, texts, emails, ignoring someone at work, isolation or non-co-operation or exclusion from social activities, intrusion via pestering, spying or following.

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### What is Bullying?

- 3.4 Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power which is meant to undermine, humiliate or injure the person on the receiving end.
- 3.5 According to the HSE and other authorities, bullying at work can take many forms, e.g.
- Constant criticism, removal of responsibility, or being given trivial tasks to do.
  - Shouting at staff, persistent picking on people, in front of others or in private.
  - Overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position.
  - Blocking promotion or other opportunities.
  - Regularly ignoring or excluding people from work activities.
  - Spreading malicious rumours.
  - Overloading, or setting impossible deadlines to fail.
  - Insults or pejorative comments, either face-to-face or less openly, constantly making someone the butt of jokes.
  - Copying individuals into memos or emails that are critical about someone who do not need to know.
  - Repeated comments on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, religion or belief or any other protected characteristic.

### What is inappropriate behaviour?

- 3.6 Examples of the types of behaviour that the College regards as unacceptable are:
- using bad language or swearing at College staff;
  - any physical violence or threat of physical violence;
  - verbal abuse;
  - harassment;
  - persistent or unrealistic demands that cause stress to staff (requests will be met wherever possible and explanations given when they cannot);
  - causing damage/stealing from the College premises, staff, students or others.
- 3.7 Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

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## **4. RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **4.1 Askham Bryan College will:**

- actively promote the College's Policy on Dignity at Work and ensure its principles are embedded in strategies and work plans and in the behaviours of Governors and the Senior Management Team;
- take a zero-tolerance approach to harassment, bullying, and victimisation.

### **4.2 Line Managers will:**

- take seriously any claims of bullying or harassment raised with them;
- promote a culture of respect towards all colleagues for others to emulate;
- deal with interpersonal problems promptly to prevent larger problems emerging;
- report any cases of bullying or harassment that they are aware of to People Services.
- where appropriate, and following consultation with People Services and if necessary, the College's Legal and Compliance Adviser, make every effort to resolve problems promptly and at an informal level, for instance, by inviting the other party concerned into College, to explain the College's position and why it finds that person's behaviour unacceptable, but also to hear that person's side of the story;
- but where that is not possible, escalating internally.

### **4.3 People Services will:**

- promote the policy and communicate its content and principles to all staff, including new starters to the organisation;
- review the policy from time to time to ensure it promotes best practice and upholds the law;
- monitor cases raised under the policy and note and act upon learning points arising;
- support the complainant in contacting the police when an alleged assault or alleged behaviour is considered to be a criminal offence.

### **4.4 All staff must take responsibility for their own behaviours and act with respect towards each other and to parents/guardians/carers and visitors to the College.**

## **5. SUPPORTIVE FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 The College recognises that making a complaint of bullying or harassment is likely to be a distressing experience and that it may be difficult for individuals to raise complaints directly with line managers. Similarly, having a complaint made about you, or even being involved as a witness into an alleged case of bullying or harassment may be a distressing experience. Therefore, individuals may approach a colleague or

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a trade union representative to raise the issue with management on their behalf in line with the College's procedure on Dignity at Work.

- 5.2 Independent counselling is available free of charge through the College's Employee Assistance Programme, to all staff and their immediate family.
- 5.3 For the protection of all parties it is important that any claims of harassment remain confidential at all times throughout this process.

## **6. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 6.1 It will be the responsibility of the Executive Director of People and Organisational Development to review and monitor the progress of this policy and bring about changes where necessary. This will be done in consultation with employee representatives.

## **7. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

Staff Disciplinary Policy  
Staff Disciplinary Procedure  
Student Disciplinary Policy  
Student Disciplinary Procedures  
Staff Grievance Policy  
Staff Grievance Procedure  
Customer Service and Complaints Policy  
Customer Service and Complaints Procedure  
Access to College Policy  
Estates Security Policy  
Zero Tolerance Statement

## **8. RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

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