Staff Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy

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Associated Documents *Grievance Policy* *Disciplinary Policy & Procedure* *Equal Opportunities Policy* *Staff Code of Conduct* *Whistleblowing Policy* *Data Protection Policy Behaviour Management Policy*		

1. INTRODUCTION/POLICY STATEMENT

1.1. OneSchool Global UK (OSG UK) is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for its staff members. This includes an environment that is free from bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, and victimisation, where every member of staff is treated with respect and dignity and where no staff member feels threatened or intimidated for any reason.

1.2. All staff members are responsible for treating their colleagues (which may include consultants, contractors and agency workers) with respect and dignity. Every member of staff should consider whether their words or conduct could be offensive to others. Harassment, sexual harassment, victimisation, discriminatory and bullying behaviour may not always be intentional, but it is never acceptable. As a result, OSG UK has a robust approach towards bullying and harassment and furthermore, we will take proactive steps to prevent the harassment of all staff.

1.3. Harassment, including sexual harassment is unlawful and will not be tolerated.

1.4. Harassment constitutes a breach of the Staff Code of Conduct as well as this policy and those found to be in breach may be subject to disciplinary action, up to, and including summary dismissal.

1.5. Anyone who is the victim of, or witness to harassment, including sexual harassment is encouraged to report it in accordance with this policy.

1.6. The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 places the obligation upon OSG UK to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of staff members in the course of their employment and this policy aims to meet OSG's legal obligations and:

1.6.1. ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding their behaviour and conduct;

1.6.2. outline the processes and actions taken in order to resolve any bullying or harassment incidents;

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1.6.3. promote a climate in which staff members feel able to bring forward complaints without fear of victimisation; and

1.6.4. ensure that all allegations are responded to promptly, fairly and with the utmost confidentiality.

1.7. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023
- ACAS (2015) 'Code of practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures'.
- Employment Rights Act 2025

1.8 Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent a staff member from going to the police if they feel that they have suffered any form of harassment or bullying which constitutes a criminal offence.

2. PURPOSE

2.1. The purpose of this policy is to stop harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, discrimination or victimisation within the workplace. The term 'harassment' will be used to encompass harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, discrimination and victimisation hereafter.

2.2. The purpose of this policy is also to set out a framework for line managers and other senior members of staff to deal with harassment, including sexual harassment, that occurs in the workplace by staff (which may include consultants, contractors and agency workers) and also by third parties such as parents, suppliers or visitors to school premises.

2.3. A complaint of harassment is a type of grievance; therefore, this policy interacts with the Grievance Policy with additional information on how to handle a complaint of harassment.

2.4. Harassment at work is inappropriate behaviour, it will not be permitted, or condoned, and serious cases will be treated by OSG UK as misconduct, which may include gross misconduct warranting dismissal. Complaints of harassment will be dealt with sensitively, discreetly, and as quickly as possible.

2.5. Members of staff raising a complaint of harassment should be able to do so without fear of victimisation. All those involved have a duty to act honestly and without malice to anyone else. Any Individual found to be raising complaints maliciously will be subject to disciplinary action.

2.6. All cases will be dealt with in a non-discriminatory and consistent way.

2.7. The staff member has the right to be accompanied by a suitably appointed work colleague or by a Trade Union Official or Representative during all stages of the procedure.

2.8. Members of staff who witness unacceptable behaviour should, where possible, challenge it. OneSchool Global UK may vary its Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy and/or Procedure Guide, where it is appropriate to do so, in order to comply with its statutory duty and to provide an effective procedure.

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3. SCOPE

3.1. This policy applies to all OSG UK staff members and volunteers, including those employed on a temporary basis, which may include consultants, contractors and agency workers.

3.2. This policy covers sexual harassment which occurs at work and/or at work related events (e.g. school trips, conferences) or social functions and/or on work related social media.

3.3. All trustees are expected to conduct themselves in a way that is consistent with both the provisions of their own code of conduct and, where applicable, this policy.

3.4. The Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy applies to all complaints made by a staff member relating to their employment which may be either:

3.4.1. a grievance relating to a relevant issue arising in the workplace; or

3.4.2. a dignity at work issue involving alleged incidents of harassment (as defined in clause 4 below).

3.5. The Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy does not apply in the following cases:

3.5.1. Where the staff member has not submitted their complaint following legislative requirements.

3.5.2. If the staff member raises a concern in compliance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act; please refer to the Whistleblowing Policy for further details.

3.5.3. Where the case has already been heard and there is no new evidence

4. DEFINITIONS

As defined in in the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, employers must take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the course of their employment. For the purposes of this policy the following terms are defined as such:

Term	Definition
Bullying	Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.
Harassment	Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading humiliating or offensive environment. The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Unlike bullying, harassment can be an act of behaviour through which there is no clear intent to cause the person to suffer.
Sexual Harassment	Unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. 'Unwanted conduct' can cover a wide range of uninvited behaviour and if it has one of these effects it can constitute sexual harassment even if the effect was not intended, even if the conduct was not

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	directed at the affected staff member and even if the affected staff member does not object to it. Examples include: • making sexual remarks about someone's body, clothing or appearance. • making unwelcome sexual advances e.g. standing too close. • asking questions about someone's sex life. • telling sexually offensive jokes or using crude language. • making sexual comments or jokes about someone's sexual orientation. • displaying or sharing pornographic or sexual images, or other sexual content. • touching someone against their will, for example hugging them. • sexual assault or rape.
Victimisation	Less favourable treatment of individuals because they submit to, or reject bullying, harassment or sexual harassment or have made a complaint or allegation of harassment or have acted as a witness or informant in connection with an incident or allegation of harassment.
Relevant protected characteristic	As defined by the Equality and Human Rights Commission technical guidance on sexual harassment and harassment at work (2024) the relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief (including non-belief), sex and sexual orientation.

5. POLICY STATEMENT HARASSMENT

5.1. Harassment consists of unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of individuals in the workplace. It includes unwelcome physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct and may amount to unlawful discrimination.

5.2. Harassment can involve a single incident or be persistent, it may be directed at one or more individuals and may be related to a relevant protected characteristic.

5.3. Harassment can take place when an individual is discriminated against because of individuals they associate with. Harassment can also take place if others wrongly believe that the individual has a certain characteristic, e.g. they harass the individual because of their sexual orientation, but their assumptions are incorrect.

5.4. It is acknowledged and understood that harassment can happen outside of usual working environments including on school trips and at staff socials etc.

5.5. OSG UK recognises that what some people might consider as joking, 'banter' or part of their workplace culture can still be sexual harassment.

5.6. Sexual harassment does not need in any way to ‘relate to’ sex or any other protected characteristic and the conduct does not need to be sexually motivated.

5.7. A single incident can amount to sexual harassment.

5.8. A personal may be sexually harassed even if they were not the intended target.

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5.9. Harassment does not always come from individuals within the organisation; it may come from a third party such as a parent, contractor, pupil, customer or a client. Third party sexual harassment can result in legal liability and will not be tolerated. All staff are encouraged to report any third-party sexual harassment they are a victim of, or witness, in accordance with this policy. Where a complaint of harassment is made in this instance OSG UK will take steps to remedy any complaints and endeavour to take reasonable steps to prevent harassment from happening again. Similarly, any sexual harassment by a member of staff against a third party may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including summary dismissal.

BULLYING

5.10. Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour which, through the abuse or misuse of power, makes the recipient feel vulnerable, humiliated and threatened. It includes persistent criticism and personal abuse and/or ridicule, either in public or private, which is humiliating or demeaning. Bullying behaviour can also include berating or belittling staff members, unreasonably changing an staff member's workload, hours, or place of work without their knowledge / agreement.

5.11. Unwanted physical contact includes unnecessary touching, patting, pinching, brushing against another individual's body, insulting or abusive behaviour or gestures, physical threats, assault or sexual assault.

5.12. Unwanted verbal conduct includes unwelcome advances, such as repeated requests for 'dates', patronising titles or nicknames, propositions or remarks, innuendo, lewd comments, jokes, banter or abusive language which refer to an individual's or group's relevant protected characteristic.

5.13. Unwanted non-verbal conduct includes, graffiti referring to individual characteristics or private life, abusive or offensive gestures, leering, whistling at someone i.e., 'wolf whistles', displaying pornographic or suggestive literature, pictures, or films/videos or inappropriate use of ICT equipment i.e. computers, communication devices, software e.g. emails, teams, zoom, WhatsApp this list is not exhaustive.

5.14. Bullying can also be in the form of 'cyberbullying' whereby the methods used to undertake the bullying behaviour are through information and communications technology, particularly mobile phones and the internet. **VICTIMISATION**

5.15. Victimisation consists of treating an individual or group of individuals less favourably than others in the same or similar circumstances because they have made a complaint or allegation of harassment or have acted as a witness or informant in connection with any incident or allegation of harassment.

5.16. Any staff member found to have reacted against or victimised an individual involved in an investigation into allegations of harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, in accordance with OSG UK's Disciplinary Policy.

5.17. The above list is not exhaustive. What constitutes harassment is specific to individuals and relates to their feelings of dignity and respect.

5.18. OSG UK recognizes that bullying, harassment and victimisation can be direct or indirect. It may not just occur face-to-face, but also in written communications such as social media, emails or phone conversations.

5.19. Complaints of harassment will be handled as quickly, and fairly as possible and informal complaints will be resolved by the Campus Principal. If the complaint concerns the Campus Principal, then the Regional Principal will try and informally resolve the matter. If the Regional Principal is accused of unacceptable behaviour and an informal approach to the situation has failed, the member of staff will refer the issue directly to the Regional Director of Education, in order to follow the formal procedure, set out below. Timescales specified will apply unless varied by agreement between both parties.

5.20. Staff involved in any investigation will not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result of their participation in the investigation.

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6. PROCEDURES

INFORMAL PROCEDURE

6.1. If a staff member is not certain whether an incident or series of incidents amounts to harassment, the staff member should initially contact their line manager to informally for confidential advice, if this incident relates to the Campus Principal the member of staff should initially contact the Regional Principal.

6.2. If a staff member believes they are being harassed and they consider they are able to do so, they may approach the individual causing harm. They should approach and explain to them that their behaviour is inappropriate and politely ask them to stop. We recognise, however, that this may be difficult or inappropriate depending on the circumstances and that members of staff should refer to their line manager for further guidance.

6.3. This preliminary stage does not detract from the sensitivity or the potential seriousness of the situation. Rather, it allows complainants greater flexibility in choosing the most appropriate option they wish to follow having sought advice.

6.4. In cases where it is not possible or appropriate to manage the situation using informal procedures, then the following formal procedures should be followed.

FORMAL PROCEDURE

6.5. The complainant may choose to make a formal complaint under the harassment and bullying procedure if:

6.5.1. The informal stage is not successful in resolving the situation.
6.5.2. The complainant does not wish to raise the matter informally.
6.5.3. It is otherwise considered inappropriate by the complainant due, for example, to the seriousness of the complaint.

6.6. The decision whether to progress a formal complaint is up to the staff member. However, OSG UK has a duty to protect all staff and a member of management, or the People and Culture (P&C) department can initiate the harassment and bullying procedure on becoming aware that harassment, including sexual harassment, may have taken place, if considered in all of the circumstances, it is considered appropriate to do so.

6.7. The formal procedure will be thorough, impartial and objective and will be carried out with sensitivity and due respect for the rights of all parties concerned.

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STATEMENT OF COMPLAINT

6.8. A staff member who wishes to raise a formal harassment complaint should put their complaint formally, in writing without unreasonable delay, to their line manager, specifying the nature of their complaint. Where the complaint is about their Campus Principal, the grievance should be raised to the Regional Principal. If the complaint concerns any member of regional or national staff, then the grievance should be raised with their line manager in the first instance.

6.8.1. The staff member should indicate, as part of their formal written statement, what solution they seek.

INITIATING THE INVESTIGATION

6.9. On receipt of the complaint, in all cases, the Campus Principal or Regional Principal, if complaint is about the Campus Principal, will refer to the Regional Partner, People & Culture regarding next steps and appoint a Grievance Manager, to evaluate and determine next steps this will include assessment on whether any immediate action should be taken, e.g., paid management leave pending investigation.

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6.10. The Grievance Manager must not have had any previous dealings with the case and should be impartial. The Grievance Manager must be at an appropriate level of seniority and must have sufficient experience and/or training to allow a thorough understanding of relevant issues.

6.11. The person against whom the complaint is made will be informed by the Campus Principal/Regional Principal of the nature of the complaint lodged against them and of the availability of advice and support. Any immediate action taken (such as paid management leave) will be notified.

6.12. The Grievance Manager will write to the staff member who has raised a grievance to invite them to a grievance meeting normally within 10 working days of the receipt of the grievance.

GRIEVANCE MEETING

6.13. The grievance meeting will be carried out by the Grievance Manager without undue delay. We will in all cases aim to complete the grievance investigation within 15 working days after the date of the grievance meeting, unless there are exceptional circumstances to prevent this.

6.14. The investigation will include a formal meeting between the Grievance Manager and the complainant to discuss the complaint. Subsequent to this meeting, the Grievance Manager will arrange a meeting with the respondent and any identified witnesses, by either party.

6.15. Both parties are entitled to be accompanied by a suitably appointed work colleague or trade union representative at this meeting and will have an opportunity to make oral submissions.

6.16. Everyone involved, including any witnesses, will maintain strict confidentiality throughout the investigation. The complainant and the person(s) against whom the complaint is made, and any witnesses will be interviewed separately, and a detailed record of all interviews must be kept.

6.17. The investigation will be carried out thoroughly, impartially and with due sensitivity to the nature of the complaint. The key aim of the investigation will be to establish the facts.

6.18. All parties will be kept informed simultaneously about the progress of the investigation, where appropriate.

6.19. The complainant should take all reasonable steps to attend the Grievance Meeting.

6.20. If the complainant is unable to attend the Grievance an alternative date will be arranged, normally within 5 working days. If the reasons are medical, then a medical certificate may be required to be submitted by the employee.

6.21. After the Grievance meeting and subsequent investigation, the Chair will provide the outcome in writing, normally within five working days. Staff members have the right to appeal.

GRIEVANCE REPORT

6.22. The Grievance Manager will create a written report which will include any evidence of whether the alleged conduct took place, and whether that conduct had the purpose or effect of violating the complainant's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the complainant. The report could include:

6.22.1 a recommendation to invoke disciplinary action as there is evidence to suggest that harassment had taken place

6.22.2 a recommendation other than disciplinary action, in line with the complainant's wishes as outlined in their grievance. This could include for

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example:

- Mediation
- Written or verbal apology

6.22.3 a recommendation other than disciplinary action, for example

- Additional Training

6.22.4 a recommendation to take no further action on the complaint. This will be appropriate if the Grievance Manager has been unable to find evidence relating to the complaint or that there is evidence to suggest that alleged behaviour did not take place.

6.23. Where there is evidence that the alleged behaviour did not take place or that the complaint is malicious, the Grievance Manager's report will recommend further investigation of the circumstances which may lead to disciplinary action against the complainant.

6.24. The complainant will receive a letter setting out the grievance outcome from the Grievance Manager and outlining the appeals process.

APPEAL

6.25. If the staff member wishes to appeal, they must formally write to the senior manager named in the outcome letter advising of their grounds for appeal. This must be received within 5 working days (7 calendar days) of receiving written confirmation of the outcome of the grievance meeting.

6.26. The appeal must be heard by three members of the National Leadership Team and/or Principal Team who have previously had no dealings with the case. At this meeting, the complainant is entitled to be represented by a suitably appointed workplace colleague or a trade union representative and will have an opportunity to make oral submissions at the meeting. The panel will consider the staff member's reasons for raising an appeal and the details of their original complaint, it is not a rehearing of the original grievance. The panel will deliberate following the meeting, and the complainant will receive, in writing, the final decision of the appeal.

6.27. The decision made at the Appeal Hearing is the final.

KEEPING RECORDS

6.28. Written records will be kept in accordance with OSG UK Data Protection Policy. Records should include:

- The nature of the harassment
- A copy of the written complaint
- Action(s) taken
- Reasons for action(s) taken
- Whether there was an appeal and, if so, the outcome;

6.29. All records will be treated as confidential. Copies of notes will be given to the staff member. In certain circumstances, for example to protect a witness, OSG UK might withhold some information. If witnesses request to remain anonymous, all practical steps will be taken to protect the identity of employees, however in some circumstances it may be inevitable that their identity is revealed. Confidentiality of the staff members' identity therefore cannot be guaranteed.

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CONFIDENTIALITY

6.30. To avoid any potential of prejudicing the grievance process, OSG UK and the staff member will keep the reasons for it, the circumstances surrounding it, and any investigations or outcomes strictly private and confidential.

6.31 The staff member is required to refrain from discussing these matters with anyone, directly or indirectly, such as (but not limited to) any former or current members of campus or wider OSG staff, students, parents, trustees, or volunteers, or contractors contracted to OSG UK, other than appropriate contact (e.g., with their companion and/or designated point of contact, subject to them also maintaining the confidentiality of this matter) for the purposes of preparing for the grievance meeting.

6.32 These confidentiality obligations will not prevent the staff member from making a protected disclosure under section 43A Employment Rights Act 1996 (i.e., whistleblowing) and you may make disclosures which would otherwise not be permitted by clause 6.31 above:

- to the staff member's professional and medical advisers (including therapists) subject to them also maintaining the confidentiality of these matters;
- to the police or any law enforcement agency, the SRA (or any applicable regulator) or as otherwise required by law; and
- to the staff member's immediate family on the understanding that they agree to keep the forthcoming investigation meeting, the reasons for it and the circumstances surrounding it, and any information which the staff member discloses to them about such matters strictly private and confidential.

6.33. Any breach of these confidentiality obligations will be taken seriously and may lead to disciplinary proceedings.

SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR MEMBERS OF STAFF

6.34. Staff members can approach their Campus Principal or Regional Partner, People & Culture for support. In some cases, a referral may be made to the Occupational Health Unit for counselling.

6.35. Alternatively, staff members who are a member of a Trade Union may wish to contact their Trade Union Official or The Education Support Partnership (Employee Assistance Programme). Members of staff can self-refer for counselling support through the Employee Assistance Program on 08000 856 148. These services are free and confidential, are available 24/7 and can offer advice, support, and counselling services.

7. VERSION CONTROL

Policy Code	Date	Version No.	Nature of Change
QSC/72	February 2021	1.0	New policy
QSC/72	March 2023	2.0	Minor updates
QSC/72	November 2024	3.0	Update to legislation surrounding sexual harassment
QSC/72	January 2024	3.1	Protected characteristics added to the definitions table
QSC/72	June 2025	3.2	Minor Updates
QSC/72	June 2026	3.3	Update to legislation terminology surrounding sexual harassment

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