



# **DIGNITY AND RESPECT AT WORK POLICY**

Date approved by Governors  
April 2021

# TENTERDEN SCHOOLS TRUST

## Policy to Promote Dignity and Respect at Work

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years

**DATE OF POLICY: APRIL 2021**

**DATE OF REVIEW: APRIL 2024**

**Member of staff responsible for Policy:**

**Chief Executive Officer**

**Signed**



**Chief Executive Officer**

**Signed**



**Chair of the Trust Board**

## COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

### MISSION STATEMENT

Tenterden Schools Trust engenders and promotes an ethos of mutual respect. There is an expectation that this core value will be upheld by all. Our objective is to promote harmony and dignity throughout the school and we expect any communication or interaction between staff, children, parents/carers, visitors or the local community to be conducted with mutual respect in an open and honest manner.

Despite efforts to provide positive, supportive, clear and consistent communication, at times difficulties may arise. Aggressive behaviour from parents/carers or members of the community is unacceptable and can have an intimidating and stressful effect on staff. This may include physical or verbal acts of violence, discrimination or harassment. Such unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated at Tenterden Schools Trust.

The Trust also expects its staff to behave professionally and attempt to diffuse, if possible, difficult situations, seeking support from colleagues where necessary.

## RESPONSIBILITY

Schools within the Trust provide support to a child with regards to their learning and welfare. Parents/carers are expected to take responsibility for a child's attitude whilst they are at school and work with staff to ensure that learners reach their full potential.

## WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The majority of communications with parents, carers and members of the community are positive especially when all parties take their duty seriously and are willing to work together to resolve conflict and promote the wellbeing of all concerned.

Tenterden Schools Trust is fully committed to ensuring that all members of the school's staff are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect and are entitled to work and study in an environment that is free from unfair treatment, harassment, discrimination or intimidation (see Appendix 'A' for code of conduct and Appendix 'B' for definitions).

There are occasionally times when difficulties may arise. The types of behaviour below will not be tolerated and may result in Headteacher, Governor, CEO, Local Authority or Police intervention.

- Physical contact: pushing, hitting, kicking etc.
- Abusive language/swearing or threatening behaviour.
- Bullying or Intimidation of any kind including via social media or messaging
- Aggressive or impolite hand gestures.
- Making/writing abusive comments.
- Discrimination - racist, homophobic, ageist or sexist remarks.

- Slanderous or libellous comments.

In all of these types of behaviour, further communication will need to take place outlining the need for mutual respect (see Appendix 'C'). Where necessary, and particularly in cases of threats, physical violence or discriminatory comments, the support of the police should be sought. Guidance for staff is included in Appendix 'D'.

## **SUPPORTING HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK**

### **Preventing Violence at Work**

The Health and Safety Executive leaflet, "*Violence at Work: a guide for employees*" defines violence against staff as:

*"Any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work"*

- It is the duty of the Governors of the school to ensure that full support is given to members of staff who are threatened or assaulted during the course of their duties.
- Staff should identify situations of possible risk and take the appropriate preventative action. This may include holding a meeting in a public area, inviting additional personnel to the meeting, or making a telephone call rather than a face to face meeting.
- The procedures for ensuring safe practices at work, including Lone Working, are set out in the Health and Safety Policy.

### **Reporting to Kent County Council**

Schools are required to report racial and bullying incidents to the Local Authority. Please see attached link to Kelsi:

<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/school-management/data-and-reporting/managementinformation/racial-and-bullying-reporting>

If incidents of discriminatory, violent or offensive behaviour to KCC result in exclusion/s this must also be reported to KCC

<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/pru-inclusion-and-attendance-service-pias/exclusion-andreintegration/guidance-on-exclusion>

### **Associated procedures and documents:**

- Health and Safety Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Ethos for Learning Policy
- Staff Disciplinary Policy
- KCC document "Preventing Violence at Work"
- Health and Safety at Work regulations 1999

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

### **WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP Objectives:**

- To promote harmony and dignity throughout the school.
- To take positive action to promote staff wellbeing.
- To ensure staff are treated in a way that enables them to perform their duties to the best of their ability.
- To enjoy polite and courteous communication within the school and wider community, showing respect towards one another. Any behaviour that undermines this will be pursued using the school's complaints policy.
- To prevent and take action against all forms of bullying, discrimination, harassment, threatening behaviour or assault.
- To understand that repeated unacceptable behaviour by parents/carers which has the potential to affect wellbeing, may be referred to the Headteacher and/or result in a ban from the school site or police involvement.

### **This will be achieved by:**

- Taking all allegations of bullying, discrimination, harassment, threatening behaviour or assault seriously and the governing body undertaking a full investigation.
- Taking individual responsibility for challenging, preventing and stopping inappropriate behaviour, seeking appropriate advice and support where necessary and intervening directly only when it is safe to do so.
- Taking action and reporting incidents of inappropriate behaviour.
- Raising awareness of the types of behaviour which will not be tolerated.
- Working with parents/carers to ensure they play their part in upholding and supporting the school's values
- Taking action to terminate meetings/discussions where any of the above commences and arranging a future appointment when parties have calmed down.

## DEFINITIONS OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

**Regular Bullying** may include intimidation, threats or humiliation, deliberately isolating or excluding people, unwarranted criticism, the abuse of power, displaying offensive material, aggressive behaviour (including offensive touching or standing too close), threats, verbal abuse and undermining staffs' professionalism including via social media.

**Discrimination** may include remarks or acts that reinforce stereotypes or prejudice, different or unfavourable treatment because of gender, ethnic background, religion, sexual preferences, age or disability.

**Harassment** may include unwanted conduct that is offensive or objectionable to the recipient, inappropriate humour or use of language (such as offensive or obscene remarks, ridicule or humiliation).

**LETTER TO PARENT/CARER FOLLOWING AN UNACCEPTABLE OR ABUSIVE COMMUNICATION**

**This letter should be adapted to suit individual circumstances and be sent by Line Managers.**

Dear

This letter is to inform you that the school considers your actions on ..... when you..... to be unreasonable/unacceptable (delete as appropriate)

I would ask you to understand that such behaviour can be distressing to staff who are trying to support you and your child.

I am aware that you have raised some concerns and would advise you that the School is addressing these by .....

Please note that the School's Policy sets out standards of behaviour expected of all people in their dealings with the School. These include:-

- Behaving in an appropriate manner showing due courtesy and respect.
- Avoiding harassing and threatening behaviour.
- Avoiding physical and verbal aggression at all times.

Whilst it is recognised that you were frustrated at being informed that ....., your behaviour was unreasonable/unacceptable and I therefore ask that for the foreseeable future, any communications are directed through..... (add name or means of communication).

I would ask that you allow the School time to resolve the issues according to the correct procedures and would assure you that we shall take every possible step to move this process forward as quickly as possible.

I am confident that you will respect our need to maintain a calm and welcoming environment at all times.

Yours sincerely

## GUIDANCE TO STAFF

The following strategies should be adopted by staff to encourage positive interactions with parents/carers or members of the community:-

### Diffusing a situation

- Give the situation/conversation your full attention and speak in a quiet, slow and friendly manner, summarising what is being said.
- Be clear about the reason for communication and provide specific examples to illustrate the points you make.
- Focus on a child's strengths before areas of concern. This is helpful in engaging support and promoting positive partnerships.
- Provide reassurance if appropriate, and emphasise that your goal is to help every student to succeed.
- Keep calm and avoid interrupting – reassure that you are taking the concern seriously. Clearly outline what action **will** be taken.

### Aggressive and abusive communications

If a communication becomes abusive or a member of staff finds themselves in a situation where they feel bullied intimidated or threatened they should:

- Telephone call: Politely inform the perpetrator that the conversation will not be continued and will have to be terminated if they continue to behave in this manner;
- If this does not resolve the situation, then provide a polite warning that the conversation will be terminated and then end the call.
- Face to face: Give a polite warning that the perpetrator will be asked to leave and if the behaviour continues; call for assistance to escort the person from the site.
- Dojo: This means of communication should not be used to communicate complaints, if it is, parents/carers should be directed to the school office to arrange a meeting.
- E-mail: politely conclude the email exchange, seeking advice from line manager as appropriate. Primary phase will say that they need to contact their Line Manager for advice.
- Seek advice and support from another member of staff and/or your Line Manager.

Dependent on circumstances, it may be necessary for a member of staff to:-

- Call again or arrange/reschedule a meeting when the perpetrator feels able to meet or talk in a reasonable manner, ensure that another member of staff is present.
- Speak with a Line Manager for support.
- Line Manager to flag to Principal/Headteacher for them to send a letter (Appendix 'C'), outlining circumstances and concerns. Secondary phase will be directed through a Line Manager and recorded on CPOMS as per guidance – (Appendix 'E'). Primary Phase will use CPOMS to record the incident



- Arrange a meeting to be held with the Line Manager and perpetrator

In serious instances the incident should be reported to the Headteacher who may decide to involve the governing body, report an incident to the police, ban a person from the school site or insist that any communication into school comes through a set point. If the incident involves injury, police will be called immediately and legal advice sought following the incident. The matter must be reported via the accident/incident report form, with referral to the Health and Safety Executive if appropriate.

A record on CPOMS must be held of all incidents.

If a parent/carer feels that they have not been treated with dignity and respect or if they feel that they are a victim of discrimination, harassment or threatening behaviour, they should contact the school office/reception who will raise their complaint with the Headteacher.

## RECORD OF INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARENTS/CARERS

**Please note – this log is completed on CPOMS in each school**

(and should be completed when a letter is sent home or if there is any other inappropriate communication with a parent/carer)

### **CPOMS Guidance - Secondary**

Click Add Incident

Record the incident under the student's name

Write a full account of the conversation in the incident box

Tick the Parent Category and the sub category Inappropriate Communication

Assign to Debra Faulkner

Alert the Student's College Office

Submit

### **CPOMS Guidance - Primary**

Click Add Incident

Record the incident under the pupil's name

Write a full account of the conversation in the incident box, or copy and paste the email/dojo message

Tick the Parent Category and the sub category Inappropriate Communication

Assign to the DSLs

Submit