

## Harassment of Staff Policy

**Written by:** Kaycee Fordham  
**Approved by:** Council of Trustee  
College of Management  
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**Date:** November 2017

### Policy statement

South Devon Steiner School as an employer has a legal duty of care to its employees. In addition to this basic requirement, under the Health & Safety regulations, the school monitors the wellbeing of all staff. Wellbeing includes the physical, emotional, financial and spiritual needs of members of staff. Staff have the right to work without the fear of threat and harassment from all individuals related to the school.

### Staff stress levels

It is known that high workloads and general stress levels affect the wellbeing of staff members and subsequently the effectiveness of their work tasks. This in turn affects the quality of the education.

Staff therefore need to be free to direct their will and being into their primary tasks, without distraction or undue stress. The school therefore prioritises the educational needs of its pupils, over parent educational questions and concerns.

Parents are warmly invited to bring their concerns to the attention of the school through the appropriate channels (scheduled parent-teacher conversations, class contacts, concerns & complaints procedure).

### Relationship between the family and the school

Steiner Waldorf Education, to be fully effective, requires a reciprocal relationship between parents (family) and the school, and, in particular, with the staff in the school.

This relationship is reflected in many of the school's policies and is also part of the agreement made between the school and the parents at the time of admission when the family joins our 'learning community'.

Parents are expected to actively and overtly support the education and in the event that something is not clear or understood, or if there is a concern or complaint, to follow the procedures outlined and contained in the appropriate policies.

### Harassment

With the above thoughts in mind, harassment in any form is not acceptable.

Harassment means any form of intimidation, verbal or otherwise. It also includes instances where confidentiality is not upheld as for instance where parents express concerns inappropriately with each other or criticise the school or staff in front of children.

## **Definitions**

Harassment within the context of this policy means misconduct of a physical, verbal or non-verbal nature, which is unwanted and personally offensive to the recipient. It includes, but is not limited to, inappropriate behaviour based on race, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or disability.

Harassment is any behaviour which causes an individual to feel humiliated, threatened, patronised, bullied, denigrated, distressed or harassed. Action may also be considered as harassment if it disrupts or interferes with another person's work performance.

Some forms of harassment may constitute a criminal offence. In addition, under the law, employees and parents may be personally liable for their actions and required to pay compensation.

It is important to note that harassment is often defined in the way it feels to the recipient, rather than by the intent of the person causing the offence. It cannot, therefore be excused or justified by claiming that it was unintentional or humorous.

## **Banning a person from the school site**

School premises are private property and parents, staff and visitors have the permission from the school to be on the premises, at specific times. However, in cases of abuse or threats to staff, pupils or other parents, we may ban a person from entering the school and grounds.

Aggressive, abusive, insulting or threatening behaviour or language from a person may be considered to present a risk to staff, pupils and parents. It is enough for an individual to *feel* threatened.

In such circumstances, schools have a power in common law to bar the parent from the premises.

If it is decided that an individual should be banned from the site, this decision will be communicated in writing, by email and letter (recorded delivery) to the individual concerned. The site ban will be considered an interim measure for 14 days, to allow the individual time to express their thoughts, and offer their side of the story before a permanent ban is put in place. Such an appeal, will be considered by the Senior Leadership Team, in consultation with the College of Management if deemed necessary.

If no appeal is made within the timescale prescribed, the site ban will be confirmed as either temporary (time to be confirmed), permanent or elapsed.

## **Procedures**

All members of the school community are required to follow the prescribed complaints procedures as contained in the school's Concerns & Complaints Policy.

Where a member of staff feels they have been intimidated by another member of the community, they may submit an Informal Concern or Formal Complaint to the Concerns & Complaints Designated Person.

The school Mediation Group is available to support any attempt to reconcile differences, depending on the nature and seriousness of the concern/complaint.

If the harassment is severe and has caused the staff member to fear for their safety, then emergency measures will be taken immediately. No staff member will be expected to suffer further threats to their safety by meeting with the other party until full resolution is met.

Where a formal complaint is upheld, this may result in the person(s) being barred from the school for a period of time or permanently. Depending on the severity of the situation, individuals may also be asked to leave the school, and / or the police may be involved.

#### **Information/advice/guidance:**

- DfE publication: Advice on School Security: Access to, and barring individuals from school premises December 2012:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-security>
- Keeping Children Safe in Education:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

#### **Compliance:**

- Independent School Standards:  
[https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283/pdfs/ukxi\\_20143283\\_en.pdf](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283/pdfs/ukxi_20143283_en.pdf)

#### **References:**

- Concerns and Complaints Policy
- Health and Safety Policy