



Vexatious Complaints Policy

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1. Purpose

This policy sets out how the Trust and its academies will manage unreasonable, vexatious or persistent complaints, communications, or behaviours. It ensures that while legitimate complaints are fully considered and addressed in line with the Trust's Complaints Policy, staff, governors, and trustees are protected from behaviour that is abusive, harassing, or places excessive demands on time and resources.

2. Scope

This policy applies once the Trust's Complaints Policy has been followed and the complaints process has concluded. It also applies to communications with the Trust and its academies where behaviour is deemed unreasonable, regardless of whether a formal complaint has been lodged. This policy does not override statutory rights of appeal or escalation, e.g. safeguarding referrals, SEND Tribunal, or Ofsted complaints.

3. Definitions of Unreasonable or Vexatious Behaviour

Behaviour may be considered unreasonable, persistent or vexatious where it includes one or more of the following:

- Persistently raising the same complaint despite the matter having been properly investigated and closed.
- Submitting repeat complaints with minor additions/variations that do not materially affect the outcome.
- Excessive or disproportionate demands on staff time and resources. (Including excessive e-mails to school).
- Refusal to accept a decision or repeatedly seeking to reopen a closed matter.
- Harassment of staff, governors or trustees through multiple channels (e.g. email, telephone, social media).
- Aggressive, abusive, offensive, or threatening language or behaviour.
- Recording meetings, calls, or conversations without prior consent.

4. Trust Approach

The Trust is committed to responding to all complaints fairly, consistently, and transparently. Where behaviour becomes unreasonable or vexatious, the Trust reserves the right to take proportionate and appropriate action. Such decisions will be made by the Headteacher (for academy-level issues) or the CEO/Governance Lead (for Trust-level issues), with escalation to the Chair of Trustees where necessary.

5. Possible Actions

Depending on the severity and persistence of behaviour, actions may include:

- Requiring all communication to be directed to a single named individual.
- Restricting contact to specified times or communication channels (e.g. email only).
- Declining to respond to correspondence that is abusive, repetitive, or harassing.
- Notifying the complainant that future correspondence will be filed without response unless it raises new issues.
- Seeking legal advice, or in extreme cases, reporting behaviour to external agencies including the police.

6. Recording and Reporting

All decisions to apply restrictions will be documented, with a rationale recorded and retained. The Governance Lead will maintain a central log of restrictions in force, which will be reported to the Audit & Risk Committee. Minutes of governance meetings will reflect awareness of restrictions applied, without disclosing confidential personal data.

7. Communication with the Complainant

Where restrictions are applied, the complainant will be informed in writing of:

- The nature of the unreasonable behaviour.
- The restrictions being applied and their rationale.
- The date from which restrictions take effect.
- The date of review of the decision.

The complainant will also be reminded of their right to statutory escalation routes (where applicable).

8. Review of Restrictions

Restrictions will be reviewed after six months, or sooner if circumstances change. The outcome of the review will be communicated to the complainant. Restrictions may be maintained, varied, or withdrawn depending on the behaviour evidenced.

9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if guidance changes.

The CEO is responsible for approval and oversight.

