

## **BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY (CTTC 12)**

### **Scope and Purpose**

This policy relates to all trainees of Colchester Teacher Training Consortium. This policy applies to harassment or bullying involving any individual encountered during a trainee's period of training, including fellow trainees, mentors, teachers, school staff, CTTC staff and any other person with whom a trainee comes into contact as part of their training or placement.

CTTC has a firm commitment to equality and diversity and will not tolerate the harassment or bullying of one member of its community by another or others. The purpose of this policy is to promote the development of a working environment in which harassment and bullying are known to be unacceptable and where individuals have the confidence to complain about harassment and bullying, should they arise, in the knowledge that their concerns will be dealt with appropriately and fairly.

Harassment and bullying may take place in person or through digital or online means. This includes, but is not limited to, emails, messaging platforms, social media, online meetings, learning platforms or any other form of electronic communication used during training or placement.

The policy outlines procedures to be followed if a trainee feels they are being harassed or bullied during their period of training at CTTC. It covers actions or events that may occur at the CTTC centre, online or in a placement school. Information can also be found in CTTC's Equalities Policy.

### **CTTC's Commitment**

CTTC, as part of its commitment to equality and diversity, believes that every trainee has a right to work and study in an environment which encourages harmonious relationships. CTTC is committed to preventing harassment and bullying and its commitment to equal opportunity is enshrined in the principles on which it was founded.

Every trainee is also personally liable under the Equality Act 2010 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. Allegations of harassment and bullying will be treated very seriously by CTTC and could result in disciplinary action being taken against the perpetrator.

CTTC will ensure that any trainee raising a genuine concern under this policy is not victimised as a result.

In line with the Whistleblowing Policy, concerns of bullying or harassment could be raised by a peer. CTTC encourage the 'whistle blower' to raise the matter internally in the first instance. Concerns should normally be raised with the Director. Where the concerns relate to the Director, the complaint should be brought to the attention of the CEO or Principal of the Lead School. On receipt of a disclosure, an investigation into the matter will be arranged in line with the Whistleblowing Policy.

CTTC recognises that not all complaints will be upheld. A complaint made in good faith, even if it is not substantiated following investigation, will not result in any adverse consequences for the trainee raising the concern. Only allegations that are found to be deliberately false or malicious may result in disciplinary action.

This Policy links to the trainee Code of Conduct, notably:

- Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.
- Be professional in your relationships with mentors and all staff, respecting and valuing their role and expertise.
- Show respects to others.

Any non-compliance with any of the above is a breach of the Code of Conduct. In the event of a breach of the Code of Conduct, CTTC will take appropriate action in accordance with its own policies.

### Responsibilities

All trainees are expected to:

- Treat others with dignity and respect
- Behave professionally in all training and placement contexts
- Raise concerns of bullying or harassment promptly and appropriately

CTTC staff and those working with trainees are expected to:

- Model respectful and professional behaviour
- Take concerns seriously and respond appropriately
- Act in accordance with this policy and related procedures

CTTC is responsible for:

- Providing a safe and inclusive training environment
- Investigating concerns fairly and promptly
- Taking appropriate action where concerns are upheld

### Harassment and Bullying – Definitions

Harassment and bullying can take a variety of different forms, ranging from repeatedly ignoring a person or subjecting them to unwelcome attention, intimidation, humiliation, ridicule or offence. More extreme forms of harassment and bullying include physical threats or violence. Behaviour that may appear trivial as a single incident can constitute harassment or bullying when repeated, or in the context of the staff/trainee relationship. Harassment and bullying may not always be intentional but are always unacceptable, whether intentional or not.

Some of the most prevalent forms of harassment and bullying include the following in line with the 9 Protected Characteristics, as protected by the Equality Act 2010:

**Sex** Sex discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because they're either male or female, regardless of any other protected characteristic that they may possess.

**Race** Race discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of their colour, nationality, or ethnic or national origins. People who share these characteristics are part of the same racial group, although someone can be part of several racial groups.

**Disability** Disability discrimination is where a person is treated unfairly for a reason connected with any physical or mental impairment that's having a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to do normal day-to-day activities.

**Sexual orientation** Discrimination by reason of sexual orientation is where someone is treated unfairly because they're either gay, lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual.

**Religion or belief** Discrimination by reason of religion or belief is where someone is treated unfairly because they follow a particular faith or hold a certain belief, where belief encompasses both religious or philosophical beliefs, and includes a lack of belief.

**Gender reassignment** Discrimination by reason of gender reassignment is where a person is treated unfairly because they're transgender, including those who want to reassign their sex from their birth sex to their preferred sex, or do this by changing physical or other characteristics. Gender reassignment is a personal not a medical process, where an individual doesn't have to be under medical supervision or undergo medical treatment to be afforded protection as a transgender person.

**Age** Age discrimination is where a person is treated unfairly because of their age, or because they're part of a particular age group or age range.

**Marriage or civil partnership** Discrimination by reason of marriage or civil partnership is where someone is treated unfairly because they're married, provided this is a union recognised as a marriage under UK law, even if they didn't marry in the UK, or in a registered civil partnership, including same sex partnerships registered outside the UK.

**Pregnancy or maternity** Discrimination by reason of pregnancy or maternity is where someone is treated unfairly because either they're pregnant, have a pregnancy-related illness, or they've recently given birth and are on maternity leave.

### **Bullying**

Bullying is the exercise of power over another person through negative acts or behaviour that undermines him/her personally and/or academically. Bullying can involve threatening, insulting, abusive, disparaging or intimidating behaviour which places inappropriate pressure on the recipient or has the effect of isolating or excluding them. Bullying can take the form of shouting, sarcasm, derogatory remarks concerning academic performance or constant criticism and undermining. Bullying is to be distinguished from vigorous academic debate or the actions of a teacher or supervisor making reasonable (but perhaps unpopular) requests of his/her trainees. Please see Appendix C for Examples of Reasonable Requests.

The above list of examples is not exclusive and harassment can also take place which is on the grounds of a person's age, style of dress or any other characteristic that makes them different from the majority or from the person who harasses or bullies them. Although the terms 'harassment' and 'bullying' are not synonymous, the guidance in this policy document relates to both issues and the term 'harassment' will be used from this point onwards to encompass both.

### **Harassment - General Principles**

CTTC will treat all concerns of bullying or harassment sensitively and, where possible, in confidence. Information will be shared only with those who need to know in order to investigate and resolve the matter.

However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where:

- There is a safeguarding concern

- There is a risk of harm to an individual or others
- Disclosure is required by law

In such circumstances, the trainee will normally be informed of what information is being shared and why.

Any trainee who feels that they are the subject of harassment, either by a fellow trainee, a member of staff or anyone else with whom they come into contact in the course of their period of study at CTTC, may wish to make a note of incidents, dates, times and any witnesses, for future reference. Any trainee who considers themselves to have been the subject of harassment has the right to be listened to and to be given informed advice on how the matter may be resolved. There are usually a number of options. Anyone who feels they have been harassed is likely to wish to speak to someone with whom they feel they share something in common. For this reason they should be able to approach one of a number of different people within CTTC.

### **Sexual harassment**

Sexual harassment is any unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- Unwanted physical contact or invasion of personal space
- Sexual comments, jokes, gestures or suggestive remarks
- Unwanted attention, advances or requests
- Sharing or displaying sexual images or content
- Comments about a person's appearance, body or personal life of a sexual nature

Sexual harassment can occur in person or online and may be a single incident or a pattern of behaviour. It is always unacceptable.

### **The Procedure**

Trainees, and those in the wider CTTC community, should understand that:

- Every complaint of bullying will be taken seriously
- Members of CTTC staff will deal with a complaint correctly and effectively
- There is a solution to nearly every problem of bullying
- A trainee who complains of bullying will receive support and advice
- The primary aim will be for the bullying to cease, with further action taken against the perpetrator if necessary

CTTC recognises that raising or responding to a grievance relating to harassment or bullying can be distressing. Appropriate support will be offered to trainees throughout the process. This may include wellbeing support or additional guidance and check-ins, where appropriate.

### **Personal resolution**

Grievances are best resolved informally, and it is expected that a trainee will seek to discuss his/her concerns with the other trainee/s directly with a view to amicably settling the matter. If a trainee

feels anxious about this process, s/he might seek support from their union, a friend or colleague. Some additional guidance to help trainees manage this process is at Appendix A.

If a trainee feels they are being bullied, harassed or victimised they must report this to a Director. This does not prevent the trainee from seeking to resolve the matter through direct dialogue with the person concerned.

It is advisable for trainees to keep details of all incidents and issues, including any informal discussions. It is recognised that it may be the cumulative effect of another's conduct or behaviour which constitutes a grievance rather than a single incident.

Where an individual feels unable to make a personal approach, or this approach is unsuccessful in resolving the matter, individuals should seek support from a Director to facilitate discussions with a view to resolving the grievance informally.

### **Raising a grievance**

A trainee may raise a grievance verbally or in writing, although in law, a formal grievance must be in writing and must explicitly state that it is a grievance. The grievance should be raised with a Director as follows:

- Where a grievance is against another trainee - raised with an Assistant Director or Director
- Where the grievance is against an Assistant Director – raised with the Consortium Director
- Where the grievance is against the Consortium Director – raised with the Executive Principal

The appropriate manager will manage the informal stage where relevant and the formal stage of the grievance procedure.

### **Informal Stage**

However they are raised, all complaints or concerns will be taken seriously and the relevant manager will discuss the concerns with the trainee in the first instance with a view to resolving the matter informally, not least to avoid any escalation of the problem and to resolve matters at the earliest possible stage.

The informal stage will normally involve the relevant manager talking to the complainant, the person/s identified in the grievance and where appropriate any witnesses. A written submission may be sought from the person/s identified in the grievance. Where appropriate a three-way meeting will be arranged to facilitate an appropriate discussion and positive solution.

The outcome of these informal discussions will be confirmed in writing by the manager.

It is recognised that not all grievances can be resolved informally.

### **Formal Stage**

If the conduct which gave rise to the complaint continues after informal resolution or the matter could not be resolved through informal action, trainees should raise the matter formally and promptly under the grievance procedure. At this stage the trainee must put their concerns in writing to the relevant manager. See Appendix B for a suggested format. In the letter, the trainee should:

- be clear that they are raising a grievance

- provide concise and factual information about the nature of their grievance
- where possible, evidence can be presented
- avoid language which may be considered insulting, abusive, emotional or provocative
- indicate the redress they seek.

Any redress should be realistic and appropriate. If a trainee needs help writing their grievance s/he should seek advice from a friend, colleague or representative.

The person against whom the grievance has been raised will be provided with details of the complaint. Occasionally, depending on the content of the grievance, it may be appropriate to summarise the main areas before it is given to the relevant parties. This is subject to agreement by the aggrieved.

### **Investigation**

On receiving a written grievance, the relevant manager will make such enquiries as are necessary to gather relevant information to reasonably consider the grievance. This may involve interviewing witnesses, and normally, the person(s) identified in the grievance. A record of any such discussions will be made and signed by the person interviewed. Although there is no statutory entitlement, consideration will be given to accepting any request for these trainees to be accompanied by a trade union representative, an official employed by a trade union or work colleague at any such meeting. Any relevant information gathered during this enquiry stage will be considered at any formal grievance meeting. Where appropriate and where both parties agree, a three-way meeting with all parties may take place at this stage with a view to resolving the grievance.

Investigations will be conducted as promptly as possible and without unreasonable delay. Where investigations are likely to take longer, all parties will be kept informed of progress and expected timescales.

### **The formal meeting**

Where it is not possible to resolve the matter on conclusion of the investigation the relevant manager will invite the aggrieved trainee to at least one formal meeting at a reasonable time and place at which the grievance can be discussed. This meeting will be arranged as soon as practicable. At least 5 working days' notice will be given of the meeting. The trainee has the right to be accompanied at this meeting by trade union representative; an official employed by a trade union or colleague and must make his/her own arrangements for this. Such representatives should make themselves available to accompany the trainee concerned within a reasonable period of time. If however, the trainee's chosen companion is not available, for a reason that was not reasonably unforeseeable, at the time proposed for any meeting or hearing, one alternative date will be set, normally no later than five working days from the original date.

The purpose of the meeting is for the trainee to set out the basis of their grievance and the remedy they are seeking. The meeting may adjourn for the minimum period necessary, to allow further investigation and to seek further information.

At the conclusion of the meeting all of the information gathered and presented will be formally considered and the decision and the reasons for it will be confirmed in writing to the person raising the grievance and the person whom the grievance is raised against, within 5 working days of the meeting. The trainee will be informed of their right of appeal.

## **Resolution**

Clearly, the desired outcome of the implementation of the procedure is that the behaviour or conduct complained of ceases. However, whatever stage the procedure reaches, and without presupposing the outcome of any formal proceedings, there may be a range of possible remedies where a complaint is upheld, including:

- Formal apology
- Training
- Mediation
- Occupation Health Support
- Counselling
- Changes to work methods/styles
- Formal disciplinary action against the perpetrator

Trainees raising a grievance should be aware that where their grievance is upheld, the need for confidentiality may mean that they are not given details about any action taken involving another person.

## **Appeal Stage**

If the trainee wishes to appeal s/he must confirm this intention in writing within five working days of receipt of the written notification of the outcome of the formal stage, clearly stating the grounds upon which the appeal is made. An Appeal will be convened as soon as practicable.

The appellant will be given at least five working days' notice of the appeal meeting in writing. Along with the written invitation the appellant will be sent a copy of the papers to be considered at the Appeal. The trainee should take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting and again has the right to be accompanied. If, however, the trainee's chosen companion is not available, for a reason that was not reasonably unforeseeable, at the time proposed for any meeting or hearing, one alternative date will be set, normally no later than five working days from the original date.

Those hearing appeals will be provided with minutes of the original meeting and any relevant papers/information gathered by the person that made the initial decision who dealt with the formal stage and the outcome. The trainee will be advised in writing of the outcome of the appeal as soon as possible and in any event within 5 working days of the hearing. There is no further internal appeal after the Appeal has reached and notified a decision.

## **Withdrawal of a grievance**

If an trainee withdraws their grievance at any stage of the procedure, the reasons will be clarified and fully recorded.

## **Links with other policies**

AT P7: Whistleblowing Policy  
CTTC Code of Conduct  
CTTC Complaints Policy  
CTTC Equality Policy

Where concerns of harassment or bullying raise safeguarding issues, CTTC's safeguarding procedures set out in the Safeguarding Policy will take precedence and the matter may be escalated in line with safeguarding policy and statutory guidance.

**Policy Reviewed: January 2026**

**Next Review: January 2028**

## **Appendix A: Resolving Grievances Personally**

Whether you are the victim or a witness, it is recognised that you may be uncertain or apprehensive about how to deal with an incident and may tell yourself that you have imagined it or that the harasser did not mean it.

You may feel that it would be disproportionate to pursue the matter and not want to get the other person into trouble or you may feel scared about the consequences of raising the matter.

Alternatively, you may feel harassed but be unsure about the cause of those feelings.

### **Seeking support**

As a first step, you might find it helpful to talk to someone you trust about your situation. An objective perspective may:

- help to clarify your perceptions and/or the root of your feelings
- help you to identify any personal issues which need to be addressed
- enable you to articulate your concerns, feelings etc.
- give you confidence to deal with the matter
- provide the support you need to move forward.

However, you should avoid discussing widely as this may make the situation worse.

You must report incidents of bullying and harassment to a relevant manager.

Irrespective of whether the matter can be resolved informally or moves to the formal stage you can ask for support which may include:

- Counselling
- A period of leave of absence without detriment
- Additional management support for a period
- Assignment of a mentor
- Assertiveness training.

### **As an individual**

If you feel able to do so, approach the party/ies directly. Speak to the person calmly and make it clear that the conduct complained of is unwelcome and unacceptable. Tell them precisely what was offensive/upsetting and that you want it to stop. Alternatively put it in writing and keep a copy.

Some timescales are included in the procedure; all incidents should be dealt with without undue delay.

### **As a witness**

You will need to make a judgement about what approach would be appropriate. If in doubt, you should discuss what you saw with a relevant manager.

If appropriate and where you feel confident to do so, approach the party/ies directly. Tell them what you witnessed and explain your concerns. Where you have an appropriate relationship with the

individual, you could discuss the matter with them. Where appropriate you could direct the person to this procedure and encourage them to follow it.

### **Keeping records**

It is important to keep notes of incidents and action you take. You should record:

- the nature of the concern, including how it affected you
- dates and times of incidents
- any witnesses
- any discussions you have with any parties to try to address the issue
- any discussions you have with managers
- any written communications you send

## Appendix B: Exemplar Grievance Form

### Grievance Form

(To be completed by aggrieved trainee)

If your grievance has not been resolved, through informal means, you may move to the Formal stage by setting out your grievance in writing to the Consortium Director.

N.B. If the grievance is against the Consortium Director, this form should be sent to the Chief Executive Officer.

All personal data will be collected, processed, held, and retained in accordance with the data protection policy and retention schedule.

#### A. THE GRIEVANCE

Your name	
Your position	
Date	

B. Please state nature of the Grievance

- be clear about what you are raising as a grievance
- provide concise and factual information about the nature of your grievance
- where possible evidence should be presented

N.B. avoid language which may be considered insulting, abusive, emotional or provocative

C. What attempts have you made to resolve this informally and why have they been unsuccessful?

D. What redress do you seek? (Indicate the redress you seek; it should be realistic and appropriate)

E. I agree that the above accurately reflects my grievance.

Signed ..... signed by the aggrieved

## Appendix C: Examples of Reasonable Requests

- Asking a trainee to meet agreed deadlines for planning, assessment, assignments or administrative requirements.
- Requiring a trainee to follow published policies and procedures, including safeguarding, behaviour management, assessment, attendance and professional conduct expectations.
- Providing constructive feedback on teaching, planning or professional conduct, including identifying areas for improvement and setting clear targets.
- Requesting a trainee to revise lesson plans, resources or assessments in response to feedback or to meet curriculum or training requirements.
- Asking a trainee to attend scheduled training sessions, meetings, mentor meetings or review meetings as part of the programme.
- Setting expectations regarding punctuality, dress code, communication standards and professional behaviour in school or training settings.
- Managing performance concerns through appropriate support plans, monitoring or formal procedures where necessary.
- Asking a trainee to engage with reflective activities, evidence collection or self-evaluation as part of their professional development.
- Implementing classroom observation, assessment or quality assurance processes in line with published frameworks and requirements.