

Sexual Harassment

1 Introduction

- 1.1** The Trust and its academies are committed to ensuring that it provides a working and learning environment free from harassment, sexual harassment and bullying. It is committed to ensuring that all staff, learners, governors, visitors and the wider Trust community are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect.

The Trust takes a zero-tolerance approach to harassment, sexual harassment and bullying. This is enshrined in the Trust's Bullying and Harassment policy.

The Trust recognises its responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010 and will have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations

- 1.2** The Trust recognises that harassment, sexual harassment and bullying can occur both in and outside the workplace, such as residential trips, sports trips, visits off-site, training days, conferences, work-related social events or on social media.

- 1.3** Harassment, sexual harassment, bullying or victimisation of any member of staff, or anyone they come into contact with during the course of their work, can be unlawful and will not be tolerated.

The law requires the Trust to take reasonable steps to prevent unlawful sexual harassment of its staff during the course of their employment.

The Trust will take active steps to help prevent the harassment, sexual harassment, bullying and victimisation of all staff.

- 1.4** Anyone who is a victim of, or witness to, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying or victimisation is encouraged to report it in accordance with this policy or the Trust's Bullying and Harassment policy.

This will enable the Trust to take appropriate action and provide support. Harassment, sexual harassment, bullying and victimisation can result in legal liability for both the Trust and the perpetrator, whether they work for the Trust, or are a third-party outside of the Trust's control.

Harassment, sexual harassment, bullying and victimisation may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

This policy should be read alongside the Trust Staff Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Staff Grievance Policy, and the Acceptable Use policies of Trust academies.

2 Aims & Objectives

- 2.1** The purpose of this policy is to assist Trust staff including senior managers and line managers to deal with any allegations of sexual harassment, bullying or victimisation

Policy document

that occurs involving staff (which may include peripatetic staff, contractors and agency workers) and stakeholders such as trustees, governors, learners and their parents. It also addresses how to respond to issues involving third parties such as members of the public, contractors, suppliers or visitors to the Trust.

The Trusts will respond to any allegations against third parties in the following way:

- Where an allegation against a third party concerns a learner or learners the Trust will use the Safeguarding and Managing Allegations policies.
- Where an allegation against a third party concerns a member of staff, trustee, or governor, the Trust will consider what action would be appropriate to deal with the problem and prevent a reoccurrence.

2.2 This policy is based upon the SFCA/NJC model Harassment/Sexual Harassment Policy from September 2025.

2.3 This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or contract to provide services, and the Trust may amend it at any time, following consultation with the recognised trade unions on the Joint Trust Staff Committee.

3 Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all employees, peripatetic staff, agency workers, contractors, agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors and volunteers - all of whom have access to the protections and procedures contained in this policy.

Their duties and the Trust's obligations under this policy also extend to job applicants.

4 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy but has delegated responsibility for overseeing its implementation to Director of HR, Director of Operations and the Principals/Heads of the Trust's academies. Suggestions for change should be reported to the Director of HR and/or the Director of Operations.

4.2 Line managers at in Trust academies have day-to-day responsibility for this policy and employees should refer any questions about this policy to them in the first instance. Line managers and HR colleagues should undergo training to support such complaints.

4.3 This policy is reviewed annually by the Director of HR and the Director of Operations in consultation with the recognised trade unions.

5 Our Commitment

5.1 The Trust will not tolerate sexual harassment and will take active steps to try to prevent sexual harassment of, or by, its staff.

Preventative measures may include

- ensuring good management practice, including competent, respectful people management, recognition of harassment and sexual harassment and bullying behaviour and appropriate intervention.
- undertaking risk assessments, including for hybrid workers or those working from home, that include consideration of power imbalances, job insecurity including use of zero-hours contracts, lone working,

public-facing duties, lack of diversity in the workforce, alcohol consumption.

- appropriate induction and training on harassment and sexual harassment and about this policy for all staff, including supervisors, managers and new staff; providing a copy of the policy to all staff, and to all new workers on induction; if appropriate, the policy will also be available to all staff electronically in translated versions for linguistically diverse workforce, and additionally the policy will be available in various languages and accessible formats such as braille, large print and sign language; specific training for HR staff and all managers and supervisors potentially responsible for investigating complaints.
- awareness-raising about the issues of harassment, sexual harassment and bullying and the requirement of respectful behaviour; confidential staff surveys.
- ensuring workers have somewhere to go for a confidential discussion of their situation and signposting ways of taking further action.
- improving diversity and inclusion as well as the gender balance at all levels of the organisation

If any harassment, sexual harassment or victimisation of staff occurs, the Trust will take steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again. Action may include updating relevant policies, providing further staff training as well as taking disciplinary action against the perpetrator.

6 What is harassment?

6.1 Harassment occurs when an individual is subjected to unwanted conduct which has the purpose (intentional) or effect (unintentional) of:

- violating a person's dignity, or
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

In discrimination law (Equality Act 2010) there are three types of harassment:

- harassment related to certain 'protected characteristics'.
- sexual harassment.
- less favourable treatment as a result of harassment.

Moreover, it is also unlawful to subject an individual to harassment on the grounds of that individual's membership or non-membership of a union.

Harassment may also relate to a combination of protected characteristics (e.g., sex and race), and the Trust recognises intersectional discrimination

The Trust will not tolerate harassment or bullying in any form.

It is the individual's perception of whether the conduct in question was unacceptable that is important in determining whether harassment occurred. Where the conduct in question is found to have been unintentional, it will be viewed as having the effect of harassment if this could be regarded as a reasonable conclusion when taking into account all the circumstances, including the complainant's perception.

It should be noted that a single incident can amount to harassment and that a person may be harassed even if they were not the intended target, if the behaviour creates an offensive environment.

Further details can be found in the Trust's Bully and Harassment Policy available at <https://heartofmercia.org.uk/about-us/policies-reports/>

7 What is sexual harassment?

7.1 Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature has the purpose or effect of violating another person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

This type of harassment does not need to be related to a protected characteristic, and a person can be sexually harassed by someone of the same or different sex.

The Trust takes a zero-tolerance stance on all harassment, including sexual harassment. Any breach of this will lead to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal for gross misconduct. This includes sexual harassment:

- in a work situation.
- during any situation related to work, such as at a social event with colleagues.
- against a colleague or other person connected to the Trust outside of a work situation, including on social media.

Sexual harassment may also occur via digital means, including messaging apps (e.g., WhatsApp, Teams), online platforms, virtual meetings, and the use of personal devices.

The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 places a preventative duty on the Trust and its academies to anticipate scenarios where employees may be subject to sexual harassment in the course of their employment and take action to prevent it. Furthermore, where sexual harassment has taken place, the Trust and its academies should take action to prevent any further such occurrences.

It should be noted that a single incident can amount to sexual harassment, and a person may be sexually harassed even if they were not the intended target. For example, a person may be sexually harassed by sexually graphic images displayed on a colleague's computer in the workplace.

<https://www.acas.org.uk/sexual-harassment>

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/guidance/sexual-harassment-and-harassment-work-technical-guidance>

7.2 Examples of sexual harassment include:

- (a) unwanted physical contact including touching, hugging, kissing and grabbing.
- (b) leering and suggestive gestures.
- (c) sexual jokes or comments.
- (d) unwelcome sexual advances.
- (e) sending sexually explicit emails/texts/videoclips and images sent by mobile phone or posted on the internet.
- (f) displaying sexually graphic images.
- (g) sexual posts or contact on social media.
- (h) continued suggestions for sexual activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome.
- (i) intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life or a person discussing their own sex life.

8 What is victimisation?

8.1 Victimisation is the state or process of being victimised or becoming a victim. Victimisation, as defined in Section 27 of the Equality Act 2010, takes place where one person treats another less favourably because he or she has asserted their legal rights in line with the Act or helped someone else to do so.

Victimisation is a specific type of discrimination under the law (Equality Act 2010). This states that victimisation means 'suffering a detriment' (being treated worse than before and/or having their situation made worse) because they have done or intend to do a 'protected act'.

A 'protected act' means taking action related to discrimination law. This includes:

- making a complaint of discrimination or harassment
- supporting someone else's complaint
- gathering information that might lead to a complaint
- acting as a witness in a complaint
- saying something or giving evidence that does not support someone else's complaint

The Trust takes a zero-tolerance stance on victimisation. Any breach of this may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal for gross misconduct. This includes victimisation:

- in a work situation.
- during any situation related to work, such as at a social event with colleagues.
- against a colleague or other person connected to the Trust outside of a work situation, including on social media.

Policy document

- 8.2** In the context of sexual harassment, victimisation may include, for example:
- (a) denying someone an opportunity because it is suspected that they intend to make a complaint about sexual harassment.
 - (b) excluding someone because they have made an allegation of sexual harassment.
 - (c) failing to promote someone because they have supported another staff member in making an allegation of sexual harassment.

9 What is third-party sexual harassment?

- 9.1** Third-party sexual harassment occurs where a person is sexually harassed by someone who does not work for and who is not an agent of the Trust, but with whom they have come into contact during the course of their employment.

Third-party sexual harassment could include, for example, unwelcome sexual advances from a supplier, member of the public or visitor to Trust premises or where a person is visiting a supplier's premises or other location in the course of their employment.

- 9.2** Third-party sexual harassment can result in legal liability and will not be tolerated by the Trust.

The law requires employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment by third parties. Although it is not possible to bring a claim for third-party harassment alone, it can still result in legal liability for the Trust when raised in other types of claims.

All Trust staff are encouraged to report any third-party harassment they are a victim of, or witness, in accordance with this policy.

- 9.3** Any sexual harassment by a member of staff against a third-party will lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

- 9.4** The Trust will take active steps to try to prevent third-party harassment of staff. Action may include warning notices to visitors, suppliers, member of the public or recorded messages at the beginning of telephone calls, notices on the Trust's website, Trust communications such as email, messages on sign-in sheets/electronic registers.

- 9.5** If any third-party harassment of Trust staff occurs, the Trust will take steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again (e.g. through the Trust complaints procedure).

Action may include:

- warning the harasser about their behaviour.
- banning them from Trust premises.
- reporting any criminal acts to the police and sharing information with other academies of the Trust
- reiterating to the harasser that harassment will not be tolerated.
- notifying their employer (where applicable).
- reconsidering engagement of Trust suppliers.
- providing support to employees.

10. Risk Assessment

As part of fulfilling its preventative duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of workers during the course of their employment, the Trust and its

academies will produce a risk assessment for sexual harassment using the template in Appendix 1.

These risk assessments enable the Trust to consider the risks of sexual harassment occurring during employment, consider what steps it can take to mitigate those risks to prevent sexual harassment of their workers, consider which steps are deemed reasonable to take, and implement those steps.

The Trust and its academies also produce a risk assessment for sexual harassment and data on sexual harassment is reported annually as part of the HR report to Trustees in the summer term.

11 Stage One: If an employee is being sexually harassed or victimised - informal steps

11.1 If an employee is being sexually harassed, they should consider whether they feel able to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. They should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes them uncomfortable. Where this has been done, they should notify their line manager or the HR department at their academy.

If, for any reason, they feel unable to do so, they should speak to their line manager, the HR Department or a trade union representative, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally.

If they feel unable to speak to their line manager because the complaint concerns them, they should speak informally to the HR Department or an appropriate senior colleague at the Trust. If this does not resolve the issue, they should follow the formal procedure below.

11.2 If the employee does not want to take the matter further, the HR Department will keep a note of the concern and periodically check with them to find out if the situation has improved.

The Trust will respect the wishes of the complainant but there may be some circumstances where the sexual harassment or victimisation is of such a serious nature that the Trust will need to take action because of the high immediate risk to the safety of the complainant, their colleagues or someone else the harasser may come into contact with.

In such situations, the Trust will put in place appropriate safeguards to prevent further sexual harassment or victimisation of the complainant.

11.3 If an employee is not certain whether an incident or series of incidents amounts to sexual harassment or victimisation, they should initially contact their line manager, their trade union, an appropriate senior colleague or the HR Department at their academy informally for confidential advice.

11.4 Anonymous reports will be considered and investigated where sufficient information is provided. The Trust encourages open reporting but recognises that anonymous disclosures may be appropriate in some circumstances

11.5 If informal steps are not appropriate, or have been unsuccessful, the employee should follow the formal procedure set out below.

12 Stage Two: If an employee is being sexually harassed or victimised - formal complaint

12.1 If an employee wishes to make a formal complaint about sexual harassment or victimisation, the allegation should be submitted in writing to the Principal/Head of the appropriate academy or if it pertains to a senior post holder of the Trust or a member of the Trust Central team, the Chief Executive.

If the allegation is about the Chief Executive, it should be given to the Director of Governance.

In the written complaint the employee must outline his/her allegations of sexual harassment or victimisation in writing, giving full details of the incidents and any action taken to date.

The investigation of the complaint will then be conducted as detailed in Section 14 of this policy.

12.2 As a general principle, the decision whether to progress a complaint is up to the complainant, and the Trust will endeavour to respect their wishes.

However, the Trust has a duty to protect all staff and may pursue the matter independently if, in all the circumstances, it considers it appropriate to do so because for example, the allegations are of such a serious nature.

12.3 If the sexual harassment is believed to be a criminal offence, such as a sexual assault, indecent exposure, stalking and offensive communications, the Principal/Head/Chief Executive/Director of Governance should advise the complainant to report the matter to the police as soon as possible and give them appropriate support.

In cases where the police are involved, the Trust will liaise with the police regarding the disciplinary process and take advice on how to conduct a fair process. If it is believed that there is an ongoing risk of serious harm to an individual, the Principal/Head/Chief Executive/Director of Governance will contact the police themselves and inform the complainant that they have done so.

12.4 Where the allegation is that a student has harassed or bullied an employee, the same procedure applies as set out in Section 14 of this policy. If the allegation is upheld, the Trust and/or its academies should take appropriate action and may refer to the student disciplinary procedure.

12.5 Malicious allegations and false statements

Unfounded allegations of harassment and/or bullying for malicious reasons will not be tolerated by the Trust. Any such cases will be investigated and dealt with under the Trust

disciplinary procedures and may be serious enough to constitute gross misconduct, which may result in summary dismissal.

Where a student makes an unfounded allegation of sexual harassment and/or victimisation for malicious reasons, this will be dealt with under the student disciplinary procedure and may result in the expulsion of that student.

Where a witness is found to have deliberately misled an investigation, this will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

12.6 Complaints against Senior post holders of the Trust

Where the complaint is against a senior post holder of the Trust, the same steps as set out in Section 14 of this policy should be taken to investigate the matter.

The Trust will appoint an appropriate Investigating Officer to investigate the complaint. This may be another senior post holder of the Trust, a senior manager from the relevant academy, or an external investigator, depending on the circumstances.

If the complaint is upheld and disciplinary action may be required, the matter must be referred to the Trust Board who should follow the Trust Senior Post Holders Disciplinary policy.

13 If an employee witness's sexual harassment or victimisation

13.1 Staff who witness sexual harassment or victimisation are encouraged to take appropriate steps to address it. Depending on the circumstances, this could include:

- (a) intervening where they feel able to do so.
- (b) supporting the victim to report it or reporting it on their behalf.
- (c) reporting the incident where they feel there may be a continuing risk if they do not report it.
- (d) cooperating in any investigation into the incident.

13.2 All witnesses will be provided with appropriate support and will be protected from victimisation. Confidential support may also be available to anyone else concerned about the sexual harassment or victimisation of others.

14 Investigation of Stage 2 - formal allegations

14.1 The investigation of the formal allegations should be conducted in a sensitive manner and without undue delay.

It is recommended that no more than 28 days should elapse from the Trust or one of its constituent academies' receipt of an employee's written complaint to the resolution of the formal procedure unless a different timescale is agreed by both parties.

The Trust and its academies will endeavour to adhere to this recommended timescale wherever possible. It is also regrettably inevitable that delays may occur should school/college holidays take place during the procedure detailed below.

Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.

14.2 The Principal/Head/Chief Executive/Director of Governance should appoint an appropriate senior manager to investigate the allegation (the Investigating Officer). The investigation should be conducted in an impartial and objective manner. The Investigating Officer should not be involved with the case in any way.

14.3 In cases which appear to involve serious misconduct, and there is reason to separate the parties, the Trust or an academy of the Trust may consider temporarily relocating either party during the investigation; a complainant should only be relocated with his/her/their agreement.

Alternatively, a short period of suspension of the alleged harasser may need to be considered while the investigation is carried out. Suspension should be with pay.

14.4 The Investigating Officer must, as soon as possible and without any delay, invite the complainant to an investigation meeting to investigate his/her complaint. The complainant has the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a work colleague or trade union representative. In exceptional circumstances, the Trust may allow a companion who is neither a workplace colleague nor trade union representative to accompany an employee (see Appendix 2). Any such exception must be approved in advance of the meeting by the Investigating Officer.

At the meeting, the complainant will have the opportunity to provide a full account of the circumstances related to the complaint and the Investigating Officer will have the opportunity to ask any questions and discuss any points that require further discussion. Reasonable adjustments will be made for disabled or neurodivergent staff, including additional time, modified questioning, or alternative formats for providing evidence as appropriate.

14.5 The Investigating Officer should also invite the alleged harasser to an investigation meeting where he/she will have the opportunity to respond to the allegations against him/her. Prior to this meeting the alleged harasser should be provided with a copy of the written allegations. The alleged harasser may submit a written response to the allegations prior to their meeting with the investigating officer. The alleged harasser should be given the opportunity to be accompanied at this meeting by a work colleague or trade union representative. In exceptional circumstances, the Trust may allow a companion who is neither a workplace colleague nor trade union representative to accompany an employee (see Appendix 2). Any such exception must be approved in advance of the meeting by the Investigating Officer.

Policy document

Five working days' notice of this meeting should be given.

14.6 The Investigating Officer should meet with any witnesses cited by either the complainant or the alleged harasser. Notes of these meetings should be taken, and the Investigating Officer may take statements from the individuals.

14.7 Where there is conflicting evidence, the Investigating Officer may wish to meet with any of the parties again to clarify and complete the investigation.

14.8 The Investigating Officer should assess the evidence and author a report summarising the findings of the investigation. The Investigating Officer's decision in relation to the allegations should be communicated in writing to the complainant and the alleged harasser without undue delay, explaining the outcome of the investigation and the reasons for the decision.

14.9 The report will state whether sexual harassment and/or victimisation occurred and will outline any recommendations for action. For example:

- Sexual Harassment and/or Victimisation did not occur – no or limited action required. In such circumstances the Investigating Officer may, if necessary, recommend steps to improve the working relationship between the parties following the complaint.
- Sexual Harassment and/or Victimisation did occur – recommendations for action short of disciplinary action. It may be concluded in light of the facts that disciplinary action is unnecessary. In such circumstances the Investigating Officer may recommend other appropriate action to address the behaviour, such as:
 - training/coaching/mentoring.
 - re-arrangement of working conditions.
 - redeployment of one or both parties on a temporary or permanent basis on terms and conditions that are no less favourable than existing terms and conditions of employment; and/or
 - monitoring of the situation.
- Sexual Harassment and/or Victimisation did occur – disciplinary action required. In such circumstances the alleged harasser will be asked to attend a disciplinary hearing (refer to the appropriate Trust disciplinary policy).

14.10 Whether or not a complaint is upheld, the Trust will consider how best to manage the ongoing working relationship between the complainant and the person concerned. It may be appropriate to arrange some form of mediation (with the agreement of both parties), training, and/or counselling, or to change the duties, working location or reporting lines of one or both parties. This could include a reminder about appropriate behaviour and/or, where the complaint is upheld, an instruction to stop the behaviour in question. Where the complaint is upheld and if relocation proves necessary, the

harasser and not the complainant will be relocated unless the person complaining requests otherwise.

- 14.11** Any staff member who deliberately provides false information or otherwise acts in bad faith as part of an investigation may be subject to investigation and action under the Trust Disciplinary policy.

However, the complainant will not be disciplined or treated detrimentally because their complaint has not been upheld.

15 Appeals

- 15.1** Where the complainant believes that their issue has not been satisfactorily resolved or they have concerns about the conduct of the investigation, they have the right to appeal.

If the complainant wishes to appeal, they should state in writing their grounds for appeal within 14 calendar days of receiving the decision in relation to the allegations made.

A review of the investigation will be arranged within 14 calendar days of receipt of the appeal letter (subject to staff availability during school/college holidays). This review will be conducted by an appropriate senior manager.

- 15.2** Appeals may be raised by the complainant on the following grounds:

- Instances of maladministration or procedural irregularity where it is alleged that Stage 2 of the procedure has not been followed correctly.
- Instances where essential evidence was not considered in the original decision or given insufficient weight by the decision maker (the investigating officer).

The remit of the investigation review will not be to conduct a re-investigation of the original complaint or consider any new evidence but may address points which the complainant believes were not properly considered or given sufficient weight during Stage 2.

- 15.3** The complainant will be notified in writing by the appropriate senior manager (investigation reviewer) of the outcome of the appeal within 1 calendar month of receipt of the appeal letter.

The outcome of the investigation review may be to:

- confirm the original decision.
- reach a different decision where essential evidence was not considered in the original decision or given insufficient weight by the investigating officer.
- to make different or additional recommendations to those made by the investigating officer.

Policy document

- in instances where maladministration or procedural irregularity are identified the investigation reviewer may determine to refer the matter back for further investigation.

A decision at this stage of the procedure is final.

16 Records

16.1 Records of complaints

The Trust and its academies will keep a confidential record of complaints and investigations, which will include the names of the people involved, dates, the nature of the incident(s), the action taken, and any follow-up and monitoring information.

The Trust will keep such records for 6 years from the end of employment. Where a complaint was unsubstantiated, this will be clearly stated in the Trust or academy's record. All sensitive information will be treated confidentially and in compliance with the requirements of GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

16.2 Confidentiality is an important part of the procedures provided under this policy. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused must only be disclosed on a 'need to know' basis. Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action under the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure. Confidentiality is subject to any requirement to involve external agencies where a criminal offence may have been committed or where maintaining confidentiality would pose a risk to the complainant, or to others

16.3 Where appropriate and possible, where a complaint is upheld, the Trust will advise the complainant of the action that has been taken to address their specific complaint and any measures put in place to prevent a similar event happening again.

17 Protection and support for those involved

17.1 Staff who make complaints, report that they have witnessed wrongdoing, or who participate in good faith in any investigation, must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure.

17.2 If an employee believes they have suffered any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result of a complaint they should inform their line manager, an appropriate senior colleague or the HR Department. If the matter is not remedied, they should raise it formally using this procedure.

17.3 The Trust offers access to confidential counselling, which is available for anyone affected by, or accused of, harassment, sexual harassment or bullying. This is available from Education Support Employee Assistance Programme. The helpline number is 08000 856 148. This may include paid time off to attend counselling sessions, if appropriate.

18 Equality Impact

The Trust's responsibilities towards promoting equality, diversity and inclusion have been considered when drafting this policy.

Date of review	Date agreed	LGBs	MAT Board	Review date	Comments
November 2025	November 2025	Spring 2026	December 2025	November 2026	

Appendix 1

SEXUAL HARASSMENT RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk				Control measures to minimise risk	Post-mitigation risk: Acceptable/Not Acceptable
Description of Hazard	L	I	S		
Risk of sexually harassed (verbally or physically).				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	
Risk of sexually harassed (verbally or physically) at school/college as a result of:					
• power imbalances					
• Job insecurity e.g. use of zero hours contracts, agency staff or contractors					
• Lone working or night working					
• The presence of alcohol					
• Customer facing duties					
• Particular events that raise tensions locally or nationally					
• Lack of diversity in the workforce, especially at senior level					
• Workers being placed on secondment					
• Travel to different work locations					
• Working from home					
• Attendance at events outside of the usual working environment, e.g. training, conferences or work-related social events					

• Socialising outside work					
• Social media contact between workers					
• The workforce demographic, e.g. a predominantly male workforce					

Likelihood (L)		
1	Low	Very unlikely to occur
2	Modest	Unlikely to occur
3	Medium	As likely to occur as not
4	High	Likely to occur
5	Absolute	Very likely to occur
Impact (I)		
1	Negligible	Almost no impact or consequence
2	Marginal	Small impact/consequence
3	Medium	Significant impact/consequence
4	Considerable	Highly significant impact/consequence
5	Critical	Critically significant impact/consequence

Appendix 2

THE RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED AND THE ROLE OF THE COMPANION

(1) The right to be accompanied.

Employees of the Heart of Mercia Multi Academy Trust have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or a trade union representative.

The Trust also recognises its legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and will make reasonable adjustments here for disabled employees of the Trust.

In exceptional circumstances, the Trust may allow a companion who is neither a workplace colleague nor trade union representative to accompany an employee. Any such exception must be approved in advance of the meeting by:

- the Investigating officer for an investigative interview.

As the statutory right to be accompanied does not extend to legal representatives, friends, or family members, any decision to allow this remains at the discretion of the Trust.

If a Trust employee would like someone other than a trade union representative or workplace colleague to accompany them, they should make a request to the Trust in writing, explaining why this person is suitable and why it is reasonable for that person to accompany them. Please address any such request to the Heart of Mercia Trust HR Director at anna.meade@heartofmerciamultiacademytrust.org.uk

The person accompanying an employee is known as a companion.

If a Trust employee makes a request to be accompanied, he or she should do so reasonably. For example:

- it may not be reasonable to choose a companion who is in geographically remote location when a suitable person is available at the place of work.
- It would also not be reasonable to choose a companion whose presence would prejudice the process or who has a conflict of interest.

If the employee's chosen companion cannot attend on the date proposed, the employee can propose an alternative time and date, so long as it is reasonable and is no more than five working days later than the date originally proposed by the Trust.