



HARASSMENT POLICY

(2023-2024)

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Approved by:	Ms. Suzan Khashan
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Harassment Policy

General Principles

- The Board of Governors recognizes that the staff are its most valuable asset and as such have a right to be treated with dignity and respect. The Board of Governors is committed to providing a safe and harmonious working environment for its staff through pro-active and sensitive management.
- Staff are required to undertake their duties in a professional manner, to comply with all reasonable instructions and to co-operate in the promotion of harmonious working relationships.
- Al Shorouq Private School acknowledges that harassment can adversely affect a member of staff's confidence and job performance and that it creates an intimidating and uncomfortable working environment.
- Furthermore, harassment can constitute a threat to a member of staff's health, safety and welfare. Harassment at work may contravene the law and will not be permitted or condoned. Should harassment occur staff that are affected have a right to complain about it and should not feel or be made to feel guilty or embarrassed about exercising that right.
- Al Shorouq Private School is committed, through the dissemination and explanation of this policy document to all staff, to ensuring that harassment does not occur in the school and undertakes to deal with allegations of harassment seriously, sensitively and in confidence.
- Staff who bring a complaint of harassment will be protected against victimization or retaliation and staff that are guilty of harassment or victimization will be subject to appropriate action in accordance with the agreed disciplinary procedures.



- In order to effectively implement its policy on harassment, Al Shorouq Private School has adopted a Code of Practice including measures to combat harassment in the school. The Code of Practice is designed to deal with circumstances where the complainant and person against whom the allegation is made are both members of staff. Matters involving students should be dealt with as per the schools' code of conduct procedure, discipline and pastoral care policies.

Code of Practice to Combat Harassment

Background Information

Purpose of the code of practice:

- To raise awareness among staff as to what constitutes harassment in the workplace;
- To define the duties and responsibilities of the Board of Governors, Principal, Deputy Principal and staff in implementing the school's policy;
- To emphasize that unacceptable conduct on any of the grounds outlined in the policy will not be tolerated and will be dealt with promptly and fairly;
- To raise awareness of the advice and support which is available;
- To establish procedures to be followed in relation to complaints of harassment;
- It is not to be used to make frivolous, spurious or vexatious allegations or complaints against others, nor to divert attention from or action in the application of other procedures.

What is harassment?

- Harassment takes many forms, occurs on a variety of grounds and may be directed at an individual or group of individuals. It is not the intention of the perpetrator but the deed itself, and the impact on the recipient, which determines what, constitutes harassment.
- Harassment can be seen as any unwanted conduct which adversely affects the dignity of women and men at work. Such behaviour is unacceptable where, for example:
 - ☐ It is unwanted, offensive to the recipient and unreasonable
 - ☐ It is used as the basis for an employment decision
 - ☐ It creates a hostile working environment

Grounds on which harassment can occur

For the purposes of this policy harassment can be defined as:

Any derogatory or discriminating behaviour which is offensive to others which causes them to feel threatened, humiliated, patronized or harassed, or which interferes with their work



performance, undermines job security or creates a threatening or intimidating working environment.

It is important to realize that harassment can arise on grounds other than those addressed by equal opportunities legislation.

For example, workplace bullying is a form of harassment which can take place for many reasons and can take many forms, both obvious and more subtle, on grounds which are not specifically covered by legislation. Bullying can be defined as:

“Offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating behaviour, abuse of power or authority which attempts to undermine an employee or group of employees and which may cause them to suffer stress”

Harassment on grounds other than those addressed by equal opportunities legislation is no less distressing for individuals and no less detrimental to working relationships within a school. This policy and code of practice aim to provide staff with protection from harassment on any grounds.

FORMS OF HARASSMENT

Harassment can take many forms, for example:

- Inappropriate physical contact ranging from unnecessary touching to physical assault or the threat of physical assault;
- Bullying, overt abuse of power;
- Inappropriate use of formal procedures such as disciplinary or grievance procedures;
- Constant negative criticism or undermining of a member of staff in front of others or in private;
- Coercion, requests for sexual favours;
- Verbal or written harassment including e.g. insensitive or embarrassing remarks, offensive language, gossip and slander, jokes, signals or gestures, racist comments, threats etc;
- Unwelcome comments about dress or appearance, unrelated to the promotion of dress codes or standards within the school;
- Offensive visual material e.g. pin-ups, pornographic pictures or literature, graffiti, etc;
- Isolation or non-co-operation at work, exclusion from social activities;
- Intrusion by pestering, spying, stalking.

The effects of harassment

Harassment exacts a high price from staff and school management alike. Staff can be subject to fear, stress, and anxiety, which can put great strains on personal and family life. It can lead to illness, increased absenteeism, an apparent lack of commitment, poor performance and even resignation. All these have a direct impact on school effectiveness.

A distinguishing characteristic of harassment is that staff subjected to it may be very vulnerable and are often reluctant to complain. They may be too embarrassed or unsure as to how to make a complaint or concerned that it will be trivialized. They may fear reprisals. They just want the unwanted behaviour to stop, so they suffer in silence.

In addition to discrimination claims, harassment may lead to criminal claims for assault.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Principal:

- The Principal and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for the implementation of the school's policy on harassment.
- The Vice Principal is also responsible for communicating the policy to staff and taking appropriate steps to promote the policy, (e.g. by including the issue as an agenda item for discussion at a staff meeting).
- The Vice Principal has an additional responsibility to strive to ensure that harassment does not occur amongst staff. Any indication of this type of behaviour must be dealt with immediately.
- The Principal must take all reasonable action practicable to ensure that potentially offensive material is not displayed or circulated.
- The Vice Principal must also ensure that any complaint of harassment is treated seriously, sensitively and in confidence.

Staff:

All staff have a responsibility to help ensure a harmonious working environment in which the dignity of colleagues is respected.

Staffs have a responsibility to maintain professional standards of work and conduct and to comply with the school's policy on harassment.

Staffs are also responsible for promoting and maintaining effective and harmonious working relationships within the school.

