



Diocese of Norwich  
Education and  
Academies Trust

## Academy's response to persistent complaints or harassment

This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the academy's complaints procedure. Taken together, these documents set out how each school will always seek to work with parents, carers and others with a legitimate complaint to resolve a difficulty.

However, in case of persistent complaints or harassment, the academy may take the following steps:

- Inform the complainant informally that her/his behaviour is now considered by the academy to be unreasonable or unacceptable, and request a changed approach.
- Inform the complainant in writing that the academy considers her/his behaviour to fall under the terms of the academy's complaints procedure.
- Require all future meetings with a member of staff to be conducted with a second person present. In the interests of all parties, notes of these meetings may be taken.
- Inform the complainant that, except in emergencies, the academy will respond only to written communication.

**The DNEAT Complaints Policy  
is available:  
on each academy's website  
as well as  
the Trust's website**

Both the Trust and its academies will work through the Complaints Policy as a matter of course and will guide any parents/carers who wish to raise a complaint to do the same.

## INFORMATION AND ADVICE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

We very much value the positive relationship with our parents and carers, however this policy will be applied in exceptional circumstances

## Persistent Complaints/Harassment Policy

The Diocese of Norwich  
Education and Academies  
Trust

[www.dneat.org](http://www.dneat.org)

Headteachers and Local Governing Bodies are committed to the improvement of their academies and all academies welcome feedback from parents and carers and will always try to resolve any complaints as quickly as possible.

Sometimes, however, parents or carers pursuing complaints or other issues treat staff in a way that is unacceptable. Whilst we recognise that some complaints may relate to serious and distressing incidents, headteachers and local governing bodies will not accept threatening or harassing behaviour. We always seek legal advice regarding slanderous or libelous behaviour.

### What the academy expects of you

DNEAT and the academy expect anyone who wishes to raise problems with the school to:

- Treat all academy staff and governors with courtesy and respect.
- Respect the needs of pupils, staff and governors.
- Look to resolve problems in a reconciliatory/non violent manner
- Recognise the time constraints under which members of staff (and governors) in academies work and allow the academy a reasonable time to respond to a complaint.
- Follow the academy's complaint procedure and subsequent outcome.

### What can you expect of the academy?

Anyone who raises informal or formal issues and complaints with an academy can expect the academy to:

- Keep in touch regularly in writing.
- Respond within a reasonable time.
- Be available for consultation within a reasonable time limit, bearing in mind the need of all the pupils at the academy.
- Respond with courtesy and respect.
- Attempt to resolve problems using reasonable means in line with the academy's complaints procedure and advice from DNEAT.

Full details relating to how academies will respond to complaints are set out in each academy's complaints procedure.

### What do we mean by a 'persistent complaint'?

A persistent complaint/complainant may be anyone who engages in unreasonable behaviour when making a complaint, including parents and carers, who pursue complaints in an unreasonable manner.

Unreasonable behaviour may include:

- Actions which are out of proportion to the nature of the complaint.
- Persisting with complaints – even when the complaints procedure has been exhausted.
- Personal harassment.
- Using abusive or threatening language.
- Using social media to target or contact members of the school
- Making complaints in public forums without following the complaints policy.
- Refusing to attend appointments to discuss the complaint.

### What is 'harassment'?

Harassment is the unreasonable pursuit of issues or complaints, particularly if the matter appears to be pursued in a way intended to cause personal distress rather than seek a resolution.

Behaviour will fall within the scope of this policy if:

- It appears to be deliberately targeted over a significant period of time at one or more members of academy staff/governors, without good cause.
- The way in which a complaint or other issues is pursued causes ongoing distress to academy staff and governors.
- It has a significant and disproportionate adverse effect on the academy community.

### Physical or verbal aggression

Neither DNEAT staff nor the academy will tolerate ANY form of physical or verbal aggression against academy staff and governors.

If the staff and/or governors are subject to this type of aggression the academy may:

- Ban the individual from entering the academy site, with immediate effect.
- Request an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO).
- Prosecute under Anti-Harassment legislation.

Legitimate new complaints will always be considered, even though the person making them is (or has been) subject to the academy's complaints procedure.