

United Learning Staff Protection Policy

Scope

The policy and procedure set out in this document applies to all staff employed by United Learning¹.

We are a values-led organisation which puts children first, expects the best from everyone and aims to bring out the best in everyone.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the United Learning Equality Guidelines.

Introduction

- 1.1 All our staff have the right to work in an environment that is free from abuse, harassment and victimisation. This policy outlines United Learning's approach to protecting its staff from unacceptable behaviour (physical and/or psychological) from parents/carers of students and visitors.
- 1.2 United Learning is opposed to any abuse, and takes a firm stance against bullying, harassment or victimisation in all its forms.
- 1.3 Unacceptable behaviour by students and staff should be dealt with under the school's behaviour policy or the [United Learning Disciplinary Policy](#) respectively.
- 1.4 Schools should also refer to their [Lone Working and Violence at Work Policy](#) and conduct any risk assessments as necessary.

2. Definition of Unacceptable Behaviour

- 2.1 United Learning expects all those who engage with our staff to be respectful, reasonable and courteous in all their communications, including the tone, content, volume and/or nature of such communications.
- 2.2 Unacceptable behaviour may take the form of, including but not limited to:
 - a) Verbal abuse;
 - b) Physical abuse (whether actual or threatened);
 - c) Bullying type behaviour, including harassment and victimisation;
 - d) Aggressive behaviour;
 - e) Inappropriate language, including swearing;
 - f) Undermining professional integrity and/or abilities;
 - g) Pressure to alter grades or give awards/responsibilities to students;
 - h) Any other unreasonable conduct (whether one off or persistent) which causes distress or harm (physical and/or psychological).
- 2.3 Unacceptable behaviour may take place in various contexts, including but not limited to:
 - a) In person (both one-to-one or in public, such as at a sports match or parents evening);

¹ The two companies (United Church Schools Trust and United Learning Trust) are referred to in this policy by their trading name, 'United Learning'.



- b) On the telephone;
 - c) In writing (including emails, texts and Instant Messaging);
 - d) Online (including posting malicious comments on websites and social media sites or messaging apps, other acts of “internet trolling”, and misuse of images/footage).
- 2.4 Schools should communicate and clearly display to parents/carers and visitors the expectation that all staff should be treated with respect, and that there may be sanctions for breaching this expectation.
- 2.5 United Learning supports staff against unacceptable behaviour and all such behaviour will be responded to appropriately by schools.

3. Verbal Abuse

- 3.1 Verbal Abuse may be defined as “the repeated improper and excessive use of language or tone of voice to humiliate someone, or to undermine someone’s dignity” including swearing. Verbal abuse which is related to a protected characteristic, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, faith, or age, may constitute hate speech.
- 3.2 Any member of staff subject to verbal abuse should firstly look to defuse the situation and politely ask the individual to remain calm and ask to discuss the matter (ideally with another member of staff present). Should the abusive behaviour continue, the member of staff should terminate the conversation.
- 3.3 Any member of staff subject to verbal abuse should record the nature of the incident, who was involved, any witnesses and examples of the alleged abuse as soon as possible. The incident should then be raised with the Senior Management Team (see section 7).

4. Correspondence

- 4.1 All correspondence that is unacceptable in tone, volume or content must be passed immediately to the relevant member of the Senior Management Team (such as the Headteacher, or Line Manager) at the earliest possible opportunity without replying to the individual.

5. Online Abuse

- 5.1 Any member of staff who receives inappropriate and abusive contact online e.g. emails, social media, direct messaging, etc. should raise the matter as soon as possible with the relevant member of the Senior Management Team.
- 5.2 Individuals should not respond to the inappropriate contact and should maintain a record of evidence e.g. frequency and time of contact, screen shots, etc.
- 5.3 Individuals should refer to any Social Media Policy in place at their school or workplace.

6. Vexatious, Malicious, Discriminatory or Defamatory Behaviour

- 6.1 United Learning takes very seriously any action (such as by a parent/carer and/or visitor) which, after careful consideration, is deemed vexatious, malicious, discriminatory, defamatory, or which sets out



to undermine the reputation of United Learning, the School and its staff, and/or which, on the balance of probability, may be found to have been intended to cause upset or distress to a member of staff.

- 6.2 All behaviour deemed vexatious, malicious, discriminatory or defamatory must be reported immediately to the relevant member of the Senior Management Team (Headteacher or Line Manager) at the earliest possible opportunity without discussion with the alleged perpetrator.
- 6.3 The member of staff concerned should provide the relevant member of the Senior Management Team with the evidence (e.g. screenshots from Social Networking sites, notes from the relevant conversation or the email concerned etc.).

7. Procedure for Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour

- 7.1 All incidents of unacceptable behaviour towards staff must be reported immediately to the relevant member of the Senior Management Team (Headteacher or Line Manager) and be followed up in writing as soon as practical.
- 7.2 If the alleged perpetrator is a visitor to the School, they should be asked to leave the premises immediately and be accompanied off site.
- 7.3 The Headteacher (or Chair of the LGB, as appropriate) will follow up the incident with the parent/carers or visitor involved by phone call or meeting. Appropriate sanctions may be applied and will take into account the severity and frequency of the incident(s).
- 7.4 The police will be involved as necessary to protect staff and others, and/or if an offence has been committed. United Learning will press charges in cases of staff being assaulted.
- 7.5 The member of staff involved will be kept informed during the process, unless this is not appropriate due to confidentiality or may hinder any investigation.
- 7.6 If the member of staff involved is not satisfied with the outcome of this procedure, they have the right to appeal through the United Learning Grievance Procedure.

8. Sanctions

- 8.1 The following sanctions may be applied:
 - a) Warning letters to parents/carers or visitors.
 - b) Permission to attend United Learning and/or School functions may be withdrawn, including (but not limited to):
 - (i) Sports matches.
 - (ii) Cultural activities.
 - (iii) Parent-teacher meetings.
 - c) Restrict all communication with United Learning/the School through a named member of the Senior Management Team.
 - d) Permission to be on United Learning/School premises, or to access online presentations or events, may be withdrawn. For further guidance on controlling access to school premises, please refer to the [DfE Guidance](#).



- e) Required removal or exclusion of the student from the School (Independent Schools only).

9. Supporting Members of Staff

- 9.1 United Learning recognise that experiencing and managing unacceptable behaviour can be distressing, and we will ensure appropriate support is provided for all staff involved. Staff are encouraged to seek support and advice from their trade union representative.
- 9.2 Employees can obtain free and confidential information, support and counselling on a wide range of work, personal, financial and family issues. All employees can access free support from Health Assured through [Perkbox](#). Health Assured can be contacted through <https://healthassuredeap.co.uk/home/>, 0800 756 0861 or 0800 028 0199. Employees can also contract their trade union for support.

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Appendix 1 – Template Letter Banning a Parent from the School Site

Please amend as appropriate to reflect your specific circumstances.

[date]

Dear

Re: [For example: Aggressive Behaviour Towards Staff]

Following a number of incidents this term in which your behaviour towards staff at the [Academy/School] has been [aggressive/ abusive and/ inappropriate], I am writing, reluctantly, to inform you that we can no longer allow you onto the school site [for three/six months]. This is not a decision that we have come to lightly but is, in my opinion, the only appropriate course of action for the time being.

[Detail of inappropriate behaviour, for example: Over the past few weeks, we have needed to intervene on a number of occasions when you have sworn at staff/ been physically intimidating towards my colleagues and/ behaved in ways that we are not prepared to accept as part of the safe operation of the school. These incidents have included your behaviour at pick-up time/ in the school office and/ in conversations with me and my colleagues.]

As a school we uphold the highest standards of behaviour for our pupils and expect the same of every adult who wishes to be part of the school community. As a school leader, I likewise have a responsibility for the welfare and safety of my colleagues and I will not tolerate behaviours that they find threatening or aggressive.

[Details of actions already taken, for example: I have previously warned you that such behaviour will not be tolerated in the school and have given you every opportunity to amend your behaviour so that you can continue to access the school like other parents.]

[Details of the ban, for example: Unfortunately, you have not heeded these requests and I therefore need to introduce alternative arrangements for the beginning and end of the school day and for any communication you wish to have with staff at the school. Thus, going forward, your [child/ren] will be taken to [gate location] at [3:30 pm] where they can be picked up by you. We will do this as promptly as possible at the end of the school day.

Secondly, if you wish to communicate with the school with regards to your [child/ren's] education or welfare, we ask that this is done in writing [to [emailaddress@school.com] rather than by telephone or in person. You are likewise banned from attending any events or meetings in school without express invitation until further notice.]

You are invited to make written representations on my decision to prohibit you from entering the school site and any representations received (which may include undertakings as to future conduct) will be taken into consideration by the [local governing body] when they review this decision on [date]. *[Please delete before issuing: the decision to bar an individual from the school site must be reviewed/affirmed by Governors. In practice, this is often conducted by the Chair]* Please send any written representations addressed to [job title – it is usually appropriate that these are sent to the



clerk/chair of the governing body] and ensure they are received by [date]. *[Please delete before issuing: following the review the Chair will decide either to withdraw the restriction or uphold the restriction. If your decision is confirmed, the letter from the Chair needs to confirm the original period for the restriction (3 or 6 months from its start)]*

It is important that you are aware that if you enter the school premises without prior written permission from me you will be committing an offence and you will be asked to leave. If you do not comply with this instruction, either I or a Senior Member of Staff will arrange for you to be removed from the premises and it may lead to a prosecution under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500 and a criminal conviction. Separate injunctions and protection from harassment orders may also be obtained if necessary.

[If appropriate: I am disappointed and saddened that we have had to take this action and, to be clear, it does not apply to your [wife/husband/partner] who remains welcome in the school.]

This decision will be re-reviewed on [date] once you have had sufficient time to reflect on your behaviour. *[Please delete before issuing: it is appropriate that you set a date for the Chair to re-review the decision. As in relation to the initial review, there is also a requirement to give the individual a reasonable opportunity to make written representation to the Governors in relation to their re-review]* If I have confidence that you would not behave inappropriately again, I will recommend that the ban be lifted by the Local Governing Board at that time, but again, you would be welcome to send written representations to [clerk/chair of LGB] by [date].

I am copying this letter to [the chair of the LGB] and the [Regional Director] at United Learning.

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher]