KEYS
Academy Trust

Preventing Sexual Harassment Policy

KEYS Academy Trust
Unlocking the future

Version control summary and overview details

TKAT Statutory Policy

- All schools require a policy on this area.
- There should be no changes to the core text.
- LGBs will minute that they have noted Trust approval and will adopt the policy effective immediately.
- This is a Trust policy to be implemented by all schools within The Keys Academy Trust to ensure a consistent approach for all.

Version control

Version	DATE	DESCRIPTION
1	Nov 2024	New policy
2	Nov 2025	Included BJ updates
3	Autumn 2026	• 2.2 addition of the word "all" due to change in legislation from October 2026. • Added 2.3 • Added 5.1b • Addition sentence added to 14.1 • Added 15.2

Reviewed by (Trust Officer)	Hester Wooller, CEO
Approved by TKAT Trustee Committee:	FAPPP
Trust date of approval:	Autumn 26
Trust date of next review:	Autumn 27

TKAT vision

We are a family of distinctive schools at the heart of the diverse communities we serve. In line with our Christian ethos, we aspire to excellent learning and pastoral care for pupils and staff and are committed to being open and welcoming to all.

Key areas of note

Please note the following, which will be applicable throughout the policy:

- Any reference to 'headteacher' should read as whatever title is relevant to the school using the policy (i.e. Executive Headteacher/Head of School or Headteacher). Anything else will be explicitly referenced within the policy.
- Any reference to 'everyone' to staff, trustees, local governors and pupils.
- Any reference to 'we' should be read as The Keys Academy Trust.
- Any reference to 'parents' should be read as 'parents, carers and guardians'.

KEYS Academy Trust
Unlocking the future

Table of Contents

1. Purpose 4
2. Aims 4
3. Scope 4
4. Unwanted conduct: what is sexual harassment? 5
5. Purpose of effect of unwanted conduct 6
6. Active prevention of sexual harassment 7
7. Third parties 8
8. Reporting sexual harassment 8
9. If you witness sexual harassment or victimisation 9
10. Informal steps to address reported concerns of sexual harassment 9
11. Raising a formal concern of sexual harassment 9
12. Action following the investigation 10
13. Appeals 11
14. Protection and support for those involved 11
15. Training 12
16. Confidentiality and data protection 12
17. Review of this policy 13

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish a safe, respectful and inclusive working environment across The Keys Academy Trust (TKAT), in which all staff are protected from sexual harassment, treated with dignity and able to carry out their responsibilities without fear of inappropriate behaviour, intimidation or victimisation.

1.2 TKAT recognises that sexual harassment can have serious consequences for individuals, their wellbeing and their professional lives. The Trust is committed to preventing sexual harassment through a proactive approach to identifying and managing risks, promoting appropriate professional conduct and addressing concerns promptly, fairly and effectively.

1.3 This policy establishes the Trust's commitment to taking all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, meeting its legal obligations and maintaining a culture in which sexual harassment is not tolerated.

2. Aims

2.1 Through this policy, TKAT aims to achieve the following:

a) Prevent sexual harassment by promoting a workplace culture based on dignity, respect, equality and professional conduct.
b) Identify, assess and reduce the risks of sexual harassment through proactive preventative measures, including appropriate risk assessments and regular review.
c) Ensure that all staff understand what constitutes sexual harassment, the standards of behaviour expected and their responsibilities in preventing and addressing inappropriate conduct.
d) Provide clear, accessible and confidential routes for reporting concerns, whether experienced directly or witnessed by others.
e) Ensure that reports of sexual harassment are taken seriously, addressed promptly and investigated fairly, sensitively and impartially.
f) Protect individuals who raise concerns, provide information or participate in investigations from victimisation or other detrimental treatment.
g) Provide appropriate support to those affected by sexual harassment, taking account of their individual circumstances and wellbeing.
h) Take appropriate and proportionate action where sexual harassment is identified, including disciplinary action where warranted.
i) Prevent and address sexual harassment by third parties, including parents, visitors, contractors and other individuals interacting with TKAT staff.
j) Ensure that concerns which may also constitute safeguarding allegations or low-level concerns are identified and managed in accordance with relevant statutory guidance and Trust procedures.
k) Provide appropriate training, communication and monitoring to ensure that preventative arrangements remain effective and are continually improved.

3. Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all TKAT employees, regardless of role, seniority, length of service, working hours or contractual arrangements. It also applies, where relevant, to trustees, local governors, agency workers, contractors, consultants, apprentices, volunteers, trainees and individuals undertaking work experience within the Trust.

3.2 The policy covers sexual harassment occurring in the course of employment or engagement with TKAT, including conduct within school and Trust premises, during off-site activities, work-related events, training, meetings, business travel, social functions, remote working and work-related communications, including electronic messaging and social media.

3.3 Conduct occurring outside normal working hours or away from the workplace may also fall within the scope of this policy where there is a sufficient connection to employment, professional responsibilities, workplace relationships or an individual's suitability to work within the Trust.

3.4 The policy also addresses sexual harassment of TKAT staff by third parties, including parents, carers, visitors, suppliers, contractors and other individuals who interact with staff in connection with their work.

3.5 This policy sets out the Trust's arrangements for preventing sexual harassment, recognising and reporting concerns, responding to incidents, conducting investigations, providing support, taking appropriate action and monitoring the effectiveness of preventative measures.

3.6 The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 places a responsibility on organisations to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their employees in the workplace. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, staff are entitled to a safe place and system of work.

3.7 The Employment Rights Act 2025 defines a disclosure that sexual harassment has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur, as a qualifying disclosure. Staff who make such disclosures are protected from detriment and dismissal as a result.

3.8 Where concerns involve children, safeguarding allegations, low-level concerns or potential transferable risks, the relevant safeguarding procedures will also apply, including the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education and any necessary referrals to the appropriate external agencies.

3.9 This policy should be read alongside TKAT's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Disciplinary Policy, Grievance Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and relevant data protection arrangements.

3.10 Any allegation of sexual harassment by an employee will be investigated; if there is a case to answer, the school/Trust will follow its Disciplinary Policy. The harassment may be treated as gross misconduct, leading to dismissal without notice pay.

3.11 The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy, with responsibility for its implementation delegated to the CEO and relevant school leaders, supported by the Trust's HR function.

3.12 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended by TKAT from time to time, subject to applicable statutory and contractual requirements.

4. Unwanted conduct: what is sexual harassment?

4.1 Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature; it can be physical, verbal or non-verbal and it has the purpose and/or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. It is important to be aware that, even if this is not the intent of the harasser, the effect of the behaviour on the receiving party may be taken into account.

4.2 Sexual harassment covers a range of conduct, which can include but is not limited to the following:

a) Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour, which the alleged harasser may or may not perceive as harmless, including but not limited to the following:
   i. Suggestive looks, staring, or leering.
   ii. Sexual propositions.
   iii. Requests or demands for sexual favours.
   iv. Sexual gestures.
b) Sexual comments, stories or jokes.
c) Comments on someone's appearance, with explicit sexual references or with sexual undertones and implications.
d) Intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life, or a person discussing their own sex life without a clear invitation to do so.
e) Posting and/or sharing offensive social media and/or internet content of a sexual nature.
f) Sending, displaying and/or circulating sexually explicit material, including but not limited to emails, text messages, WhatsApp messages, video clips, and images sent by mobile phone or posted on the internet.
g) Initiating or spreading sexual rumours about a person.
h) Unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging, patting, pinching, pushing, grabbing or kissing.
i) Continually asking for and/or suggesting sexual activity after it has been made clear that the questions and/or suggestions are not welcome.
j) Wolf whistling and catcalling.
k) Treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or that is related to gender reassignment or sex, in the past.

4.3 Anyone can experience sexual harassment, regardless of their sex and the sex of the alleged harasser. It can be carried out by men, women and people of any gender identity or sexual orientation.

4.4 TKAT will consider any aggravating factors, for example, abuse of power by a senior employee over a more junior colleague and/or previous harassing behaviour by the harasser and intersecting forms of harassment, such as racialised sexual harassment and sexual harassment targeted at LGBTQ+ people, when deciding what is the appropriate disciplinary action to take.

5. Purpose of effect of unwanted conduct

5.1 If unwanted conduct is intended to violate a person's dignity or create an offensive environment, the effect that it has on the individual is irrelevant. This is because the alleged harasser's intention alone can establish the offence, regardless of the actual impact on the victim; this principle emphasises that the mere act alone is sufficient to be considered sexual harassment.

5.2 Conduct can have the effect of violating a person's dignity or create an offensive environment and so amount to sexual harassment regardless of whether the alleged harasser intended for this outcome.

5.3 Conduct does not need to be explicitly objected to in order to be considered unwanted.

5.4 Unwanted conduct can occur as a single instance and does not need to be repeated to constitute sexual harassment.

5.5 Conduct does not have to be specifically directed at an individual to constitute sexual harassment, as it may still create an intimidating, offensive or degrading environment for them.

6. Active prevention of sexual harassment

6.1 TKAT recognises that employers are required by law to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees in the course of their employment. TKAT recognises that, whilst there is no prescribed minimum on what an employer can do to prevent sexual harassment at work, there are reasonable steps that can help prevent sexual harassment, including but not limited to:

a) Ensuring that the preventing sexual harassment at work policy is in place, regularly reviewed, and well communicated to all. including publishing the policy on the school/trust website.
b) Ensuring that all policies are cross-referenced and interact well with the preventing sexual harassment at work policy.
c) Ensuring that the effectiveness of policies is evaluated through means such as centralised records, allowing trends to be analysed; anonymous staff surveys; asking questions to obtain an accurate picture of sexual harassment within the workplace.
d) Ensuring that proactive opportunities are provided to workers to disclose or raise issues about sexual harassment, such as but not limited to sickness or return to work meetings, 1-to-1s, performance meetings and exit interviews.
e) Providing training to line managers on how to handle a sexual harassment complaint.
f) Ensuring all members of staff understand how to report sexual harassment which they may have been subject to or witnessed, and the process to follow if sexual harassment is disclosed to them.
g) Annual mandatory anti-sexual-harassment training for all, including acceptable/non-acceptable conduct.
h) Operating a zero-tolerance workplace culture in relation to sexual harassment.
i) Undertaking risk assessments in relation to sexual harassment, identifying the risks, including power imbalances, and the control measures necessary to minimise them.
j) Promoting a culture of transparency where staff feel empowered and are encouraged to speak up, by providing both formal and informal channels to report sexual harassment without the fear of repercussions.

6.2 TKAT will ensure that, amongst its staff, reasonable steps will be taken to prevent sexual harassment and pre-emptively educate via:

a) Inductions and contracts of employment and engagement.
b) Annual mandatory anti-sexual-harassment training for all staff.
c) Ensuring this policy is readily available and accessible to all staff.
d) Communicating the steps that will be taken in response to a report of sexual harassment and what the possible outcomes may be; for example, warning a colleague about their behaviour, banning the employee from attending events, reporting any criminal acts to the police, or sharing information in line with our statutory duty.

6.3 We will consider, at an early stage, whether a report of sexual harassment amounts to a potential criminal offence and whether the police should be informed. Sexual harassment amounting to a criminal offence may include but is not limited to sexual assault, indecent exposure, voyeurism, stalking, and offensive communications.

6.4 The decision to inform the police will be the employee's, unless TKAT considers that there is a serious and immediate risk of harm to the employee or another individual, in which case it is likely that the concern will amount to a safeguarding concern under KCSIE and will need to be reported to the LADO by the school. The LADO will follow their own procedures in considering what other agencies, if any, to inform. A decision to inform the LADO and/or police of a report of sexual harassment will not be taken lightly and we will seek the employee's cooperation in advance of doing so, where possible. If the LADO/police do become involved, TKAT will liaise with the LADO/police regarding our internal investigation into the report of sexual harassment and any subsequent disciplinary process, in order to prevent any prejudice to any criminal investigation and/or legal proceedings.

7. Third parties

7.1 The school/trust will make third parties aware of this policy and ensure that it is readily available and accessible to all.

7.2 This policy makes clear that TKAT will not tolerate sexual harassment of its staff, and sets out the actions that we may take if a third party sexually harasses a staff member, including speaking with or writing to the alleged third-party harasser or their superior (or both) about their behaviour, banning the alleged third party harasser from school premises (including parents and family members), banning the alleged third party harasser from working within or for TKAT; banning the third-party organisation and persons employed by the third party from premises, events, meetings, or contacting employees; terminating any business relationship with the third party; reporting criminal acts to the police (please see section 5 of this policy for further detail) or sharing the information in line with any statutory or regulatory duty.

7.3 TKAT will also undertake the following steps to minimise the risk of sexual harassment of its staff by third parties:

a) Putting up signs setting out acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
b) Including a term in all contracts with third parties notifying them of the trust's policy on sexual harassment and requiring them to adhere to it.
c) Regularly reviewing risk assessments for third-party interactions, identifying risks and control measures.

8. Reporting sexual harassment

8.1 If you are not certain whether an incident or series of incidents amounts to sexual harassment, you should initially contact your line manager informally for confidential advice and support. If the reported concern is about your line manager, you should refer it to the CEO.

8.2 However, it should be noted that any person who wishes to report sexual harassment should do so via whomever they feel comfortable. This could be a Headteacher, SLT member, line manager, Mental Health Lead, CEO or Union rep. TKAT will take reports of sexual harassment seriously from whomever reports it, or however it is reported.

8.3 Via any of the processes listed above, the person listening to the reporter of sexual harassment may ask questions to establish the facts and document the answers.

8.4 The listener should guide the individual making the report to review section 8 and/or 9 of this policy. This will help them understand the available options and decide on the appropriate course of action regarding the matters disclosed.

8.5 Should the individual reporting sexual harassment wish to raise a formal complaint, they should submit this in writing, setting out the full details of the conduct or behaviour in question, including the name of the alleged harasser, the nature of the sexual harassment, the date(s) and time(s) at which it occurred, the names of any witnesses, and any action that has been taken so far to attempt to stop it or prevent it from occurring. The written document may assist the reporter if they would like to avoid having to repeat their concerns verbally throughout the investigation process.

9. If you witness sexual harassment or victimisation

9.1 Staff who witness sexual harassment or victimisation are encouraged to take appropriate steps to address it and will be supported where they do so. Depending on the circumstances, this could include:

a) Intervening, where you feel able to do so.
b) Supporting the victim to report it or reporting it on their behalf.
c) Reporting the incident, where you feel there may be a continuing risk if you do not report it.
d) Co-operating in any investigation into the incident.

9.2 All individuals reporting concerns and witnesses will be provided with appropriate support and will be protected from victimisation.

10. Informal steps to address reported concerns of sexual harassment

10.1 If you are being sexually harassed and feel able and safe to do so, you may consider raising the issue initially with the person responsible. This will enable you to have the opportunity to directly explain to the person why their behaviour is unwelcome, considered to be unacceptable, how their behaviour made you feel, and that it is unwanted conduct that you want to stop.

10.2 This direct approach is not an expectation of TKAT, who will ensure that support is available if you would prefer not to approach the person responsible directly but would prefer an informal approach such as an appropriate manager or other appropriate staff member advocating for you.

10.3 If informal steps have not been successful, are not possible or are not appropriate, you can raise a formal concern following the procedure detailed in section 11. You can also raise a formal concern if you want to report sexual harassment as a witness.

11. Raising a formal concern of sexual harassment

Concerns about a staff member

11.1 If you wish to formally report a concern about sexual harassment, you should follow the Grievance Policy if it is about a staff member.

Concerns about third parties

11.2 If the concern or report is about someone else, you should inform the headteacher, whose role is to ensure that your concern is fully investigated and further action taken, where appropriate. This may include, following an investigation, reporting this to the police.

11.3 Once you have formally reported your concern, it will remain confidential between you and the headteacher or CEO, until you decide how you want to progress the matter and whether you want the reported concern to progress to a formal investigation.

11.4 In general, whilst it is up to you to decide how you want to progress the matter, we have a duty to prevent sexual harassment and to report matters that could amount to a safeguarding concern under KCSIE to protect all staff. We will pursue the matter if, in all the circumstances, we consider it appropriate to do so. These circumstances may include when there is a risk to your safety or to the safety of others. If the school/Trust does decide to take further action, despite your wishes, we will explain our decision and ensure that we have put in place appropriate safeguards to prevent you from being further harassed or victimised, and arrange support to deal with any impact the decision may have on you.

11.5 We have a duty to conduct a fair investigation from the perspective of all parties concerned, including the reporter of the concern, any witnesses, and the alleged harasser. If there is a case to answer, the school/Trust will follow the Disciplinary Policy or, in the case of non-employees, the relevant code of conduct or referral to the police.

12. Action following the investigation

12.1 If an investigation (either through the Grievance Policy or Disciplinary Policy) determines that sexual harassment has occurred, prompt action will be taken in response. This will include any further learning, if needed, and may also include a report to the LGB. Further consideration will be given at this point in relation to whether the conduct either amounts to, or continues to amount to, a reportable safeguarding concern under KCSIE, in addition to any transferable risks that may require consideration under KCSIE.

12.2 Where the alleged harasser is an employee, the matter may be dealt with as a case of potential misconduct or gross misconduct under our disciplinary procedure.

12.3 Where the alleged harasser resigns part way through an investigation or following the investigation, the school/trust will consider whether it is appropriate or not in the circumstances to proceed to a disciplinary hearing in the alleged harasser's absence. If the concerns have been assessed as amounting to a reportable safeguarding concern under KCSIE, the process will be seen through to completion in order to come to one of the five outcomes under KCSIE. In any event, headteacher /CEO will arrange a meeting with the person who has reported the concerns to provide an update and to discuss next steps.

12.4 Where the alleged harasser is a third party, appropriate action might be speaking or writing to the person and/or their employer about their conduct; or, in appropriate cases, banning the person from the premises or terminating our contract with them/their employer.

12.5 Whether or not your report of sexual harassment is upheld, and where the alleged harasser has not been dismissed because of the reported concern, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned. It may be appropriate to arrange some form of facilitated conversation, mediation and/or counselling or to change the duties, working location or reporting lines of one or both parties by agreement.

12.6 You will not be disciplined or treated detrimentally merely because you have reported a concern of sexual harassment, or if your reported concern was not upheld. If there is evidence that shows or indicates that a staff member has deliberately provided false information, or has acted dishonestly as part of an investigation, they may be subject to action under our disciplinary procedure which could result in dismissal.

13. Appeals

13.1 If the person reporting the concern is not satisfied with the outcome of an investigation they may appeal in writing to the local governing body/board of trustees, stating their full grounds of appeal, within five working days of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you.

13.2 We will endeavour to hold an appeal meeting, normally within 5 working days of receiving your written appeal. The appeal hearing will be conducted by a more senior manager/a committee of the local governing body/a committee of the board of trustees not previously involved in the case (although they may ask anyone previously involved to be present). You may bring a colleague or trade union representative to the appeal meeting.

13.3 The appeal hearing will not be a rehearing of all the evidence reviewed during the investigation. It will be a review of the decision-making process that led to the outcome of the investigation.

13.4 We will confirm our decision on your appeal in writing, usually within five working days of the appeal hearing. This is the end of the internal procedure, and there is no further right of appeal.

14. Protection and support for those involved

14.1 A staff member who reports a concern of sexual harassment or who participates in any investigation conducted under this policy must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result of reporting a concern. The reporting of sexual harassment will, depending on the circumstances, amount to a qualifying disclosure under the Employment Rights Act 2025 and therefore carries additional protections. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way may be subject to a disciplinary process, subject to the provisions set out in section 11.

14.2 Victimisation is subjecting a person to a detriment because they have:

a) Complained (whether formally or otherwise) that someone has sexually harassed them or someone else such as another staff member or third party connected to the employer; or
b) Supported someone to make a report of sexual harassment; or
c) Given evidence in relation to a reported concern of sexual harassment; or
d) Brought legal proceedings for sexual harassment under the Equality Act; or
e) Given evidence or information in connection with legal proceedings for sexual harassment under the Equality Act.

14.3 Victimising a person may include, but is not limited to:

a) Unreasonably denying their requests at work, for example annual leave requests.
b) Unreasonably denying them opportunities at work, for example promotions.
c) Bullying behaviour such as intimidation, mockery, being rude and/or dismissive.
d) Socially isolating them so they do not have the confidence to raise a grievance; or
e) Unfairly dismissing them.

14.4 If you believe you have suffered any such treatment you should inform the headteacher. If the matter is not remedied to your satisfaction, you can raise it formally using the channel outlined within section 9 of this policy, or via the grievance procedure if you wish.

14.5 Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone for making a report of sexual harassment, or assisting with an investigation under this policy may be subject to our disciplinary procedure.

14.6 If a report is made about your behaviour or conduct, it is important not to automatically dismiss it on the grounds that you were merely joking, or that the reporter is being overly sensitive. Recognise that individuals have diverse perceptions of acceptable conduct, and it is the right of every individual to define what is acceptable to them. It is important to respect these boundaries and to contribute to maintaining a work environment that is free from any form of sexual harassment. You may have offended someone without intending to. If that is the case, the person concerned may be content with an explanation, an apology, and an assurance that as you understand the conduct and/or behaviour was unwanted, you will be careful in future not to behave in a way that may cause offence.

14.7 We offer access to confidential counselling, which is available on request for anyone affected by, or accused of, sexual harassment. The details are available in confidence from the HR Manager or SAS Wellbeing Services.

14.8 Support and guidance can also be obtained from the following external services:

- The Equality Advisory and Support Service (www.equalityadvisoryservice.com).
- Protect (www.protect-advice.org.uk).
- Victim support (www.victimsupport.org.uk).
- Rape crisis (www.rapecrisis.org.uk).
- Rights of Women (England and Wales) (www.rightsofwomen.org.uk).
- ACAS (www.acas.org.uk).
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (www.equalityhumanrights.com).
- Education Support helpline - free and confidential emotional support for teachers and education staff - www.educationsupport.org.uk.

15. Training

15.1 Every current employee and worker must attend regular equity, diversity and inclusion training on at least an annual basis.

15.2 We expect all our staff to proactively support our equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives by attending events and workshops to educate themselves on the challenges faced by others, and how to help prevent and alleviate these issues in the workplace.

15.3 New staff will be expected to complete sexual harassment awareness training prior to (or soon after) employment.

16. Confidentiality and data protection

16.1 Confidentiality is an important part of the procedures provided under this policy. Everyone involved in the operation of the policy, whether making a report or being involved in any investigation, is responsible for observing the high level of confidentiality that is required. 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.

16.2 As part of the application of this policy, the school/trust may collect, process and store personal data in accordance with our data protection policy. We will comply with the requirements of data protection legislation (being the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018) and any implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time. Records will be kept on the employee's personal file in accordance with our staff privacy notice, our retention and destruction policy, and in line with the requirements of data protection legislation. This will include information about a complaint along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other documents compiled during the process.

16.3 As previously stated at paragraph 12.8, a breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action under our disciplinary policy and procedure.

17. Review of this policy

17.1 This policy is reviewed and amended annually by the board of trustees. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy on an annual basis to ensure it is working effectively. This includes but is not limited to the following:

a) Providing refresher training to line managers.
b) Providing refresher training to all staff.
c) Conducting anonymous staff surveys for feedback on this policy and its implementation.
d) Updating this policy in accordance with changes in the law, regulatory requirements, and best practice.