Horizon Academy Trust

Where anything is possible

Managing Unreasonable and Vexatious Communication and Behaviour Policy 1.1



Version Control 1.0

Version	Purpose/Change	Author	Date
1.0	Creation of policy	Governance Lead	April 2026
1.1	Addition of protecting staff from harassment	HR Lead	August 2026

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1. Policy Statement and Purpose

This policy sets out the Trust's approach to managing individuals whose actions, correspondence, or behaviour are considered unreasonable, vexatious, or disproportionately demanding of Trust/school time and resources.
This policy applies to parents, carers and/or complainants.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure that Trust/school staff can carry out their duties efficiently and effectively without undue harassment, distraction, or excessive demand.
- Define what constitutes unreasonable or vexatious behaviour.
- Establish clear and fair procedures for responding to and managing such behaviour.
- Protect staff from abuse, intimidation, and unreasonable demands.

2. Definition of Unreasonable and Vexatious Actions

Unreasonable or vexatious actions are defined as any behaviour that, because of its frequency, persistence, demand, or nature, significantly hinders the Trust/school's operations, interferes with staff duties, or causes distress to staff members.

This includes, but is not limited to:

A. Communication and Correspondence

- Excessive communication: sending a disproportionate number of emails, letters, or making excessive phone calls about issues that have already been addressed, or where the volume of communication itself constitutes harassment.
- Insistence on unreasonable outcomes: persisting in the pursuit of an issue after due process has been completed and the matter has been fully and properly addressed, and where no new evidence has been provided.
- Lengthy or AI-generated content: sending communications that are excessively long, often generated using AI tools, making it unreasonably time-consuming for staff to read, summarise, and respond.

The Trust/school reserves the right to request a concise summary of the core issue.

- Demands for unreasonable resources: demanding responses within unreasonable timescales, demanding meetings with specific Trust/staff members without legitimate reason, or demanding access to information beyond what is required by law or reasonable policy.
- Abusive or threatening Language: using profane, abusive, insulting, intimidating, or derogatory language towards any member of the Trust/school community.

B. Behaviour and Actions

- Recording staff (audio or video) without prior consent, unless otherwise agreed upon by the Trust or permitted by law.
- Harassing, bullying, or intimidating staff, pupils, or other parents/carers.
- Failing to observe the Trust/school's general policies

C. Protecting Staff from Harassment

- The Trust is fully committed to providing a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all staff. We believe that our staff have the right to work without fear of abuse, intimidation, or harassment of any kind.
- The Trust operates a strict zero-tolerance approach to all forms of harassment, abuse, or inappropriate behaviour directed at staff. This includes, but is not limited to, verbal abuse,

aggressive or threatening behaviour, malicious communications, and any form of sexual harassment or unwelcome sexual advances.
- We have a formal Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy in place, which includes third parties, and any breach of this will be investigated immediately.

3. Procedures for Managing Unreasonable and/or Vexatious Actions

Trust/school staff should report any behaviour they deem to be vexatious or unreasonable to the Head or other appropriate school staff.

Step 1: Initial Review and Warning

- The CEO/Head/senior staff member will review the reported behaviour. The Head can seek advice from the Governance Lead. If they deem it to meet the criteria for vexatious or unreasonable actions, will issue a Formal Written Warning, unless the matter is so serious as to require immediate action.
- This warning will clearly define why the behaviour is considered vexatious or unreasonable, refer to this policy, and state the consequences of continuation.
- The warning will also outline the reasonable level of future contact the Trust/school will maintain (e.g., limiting responses to one per week, requesting concise communication).

Step 2: Implementation of Management Strategy

If the unreasonable or vexatious behaviour continues after the formal written warning, the Head may implement a Management Strategy. This may include:

- Single point of contact (SPOC): limiting all future communication to a single, named member of staff and/or a specified email address. Staff will be instructed not to respond to correspondence sent to staff others than the named member of staff and/or not to the specified email address.
- A designated communication process, for example an online form
- Method of contact restriction: restricting the method of contact (for example, a single monthly email).
- Informing the individual that the Trust/school will no longer reply to lengthy, AI-generated, or repeated correspondence that seeks to reopen matters already concluded.
- Temporary suspension: suspending the individual's right to attend non-essential Trust/school events (e.g., assemblies, fetes) if their behaviour risks disrupting the Trust/school environment.
- In cases of severe abuse or harassment, the Trust/school reserves the right to seek a restraining order or refer the matter to the police.

Step 3: Notification and Review

- The individual will be formally notified in writing of the Management Strategy being applied and the duration (if applicable).
- The Strategy will be reviewed by the Head at appropriate intervals to determine if the restrictions can be lifted.

4. Ensuring Access and Fairness

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently. Applying this policy does not mean the school will refuse to address legitimate concerns or complaints. The school will always ensure essential communication about a pupil's welfare, academic progress, or safeguarding remains accessible, albeit within the defined limits of the Management Strategy.

5. Use of the Policy

The use of this policy is expected to be limited to situations where attempts to manage communication and interaction have been unsuccessful. Any actions taken using this policy will be open to the Complaint Policy or other reviews.

6. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years. Its impact will be monitored by the Education Forum.