

Zero Tolerance Policy - Verbal Abuse of Staff



Leigh
Stationers' Academy

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Policy Statement

Leigh Stationers' Academy is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and inclusive working environment for all staff. We operate a zero-tolerance approach to any form of verbal abuse, intimidation, or unacceptable behaviour directed at employees by external stakeholders. This includes, but is not limited to, parents, carers, contractors, visitors, and members of the public.

Verbal abuse includes, but is not limited to: raised voices, swearing, personal insults, aggressive language, threats, discriminatory remarks, or unauthorised recordings. Such behaviour has no place in our school community and will be addressed swiftly and appropriately.

Purpose

This policy is designed to:

- Protect staff from verbal abuse and related stress or harm.
- Promote constructive and respectful dialogue between the school and external stakeholders.
- Provide staff with a clear, consistent process for responding to and escalating incidents.
- Ensure the school responds proportionately to any breach.

Scope

This policy applies to all interactions between school staff and external stakeholders, whether in person, by phone, via email or through written correspondence.

The following are examples of verbal abuse and unacceptable conduct:

- Shouting or using an aggressive tone.
- Use of foul, offensive, or disrespectful language.
- Personal insults or belittling comments.
- Making threats, either directly or implied.
- Racist, sexist, homophobic, or otherwise discriminatory remarks.
- Repeated messages or confrontations intended to intimidate or harass.
- Unsolicited recordings of conversations without consent.
- Filming or audio recording of staff without prior permission or consent.
- Threatening to record staff, or threatening to share recordings made without consent, including on social media or with third parties.

These examples are not exhaustive, and any similar conduct may also be considered a breach.

Action from the Academy

Where abusive behaviour occurs, the academy will take appropriate action. This may include:

For Parents/Carers/Visitors:

- Verbal or written warnings
- Restriction or removal of access to the academy site
- Police involvement if necessary
- Referral to external safeguarding bodies where appropriate
- Immediate cessation of events and removal from the premises where unauthorised recording takes place
- Formal action taken in cases of threats to record, or to share unauthorised recordings

For Pupils:

- Behaviour sanctions in line with the academy's Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Sanctions for any unauthorised recording of staff
- Parental meetings

For Staff (if the abuse is internal):

- Addressed under the Trust's Disciplinary Policy or Staff Code of Conduct

Recording of Staff (Audio/Video)

Filming and Recording Prohibition:

Filming and recording by parents, carers, visitors, or any other third parties is strictly prohibited on academy grounds without the express prior permission of the Principal. Staff are advised to remind visitors of this prohibition if observed. Persistent breaches may result in the immediate cessation of the event and removal from the premises.

Permission Requests:

Any request to film or record must be made in writing to the Principal at least seven working days in advance. Any approval will be specific to the event, purpose, and scope of the recording.

Official Academy Recordings:

Where the academy arranges official recordings, parents and carers will be informed in advance. Consent will be obtained, and a clear opt-out process will be in place.

Suspicion of Recording:

All staff should operate on the assumption that conversations with third parties may be recorded. Recording a conversation without permission is not in itself a breach of GDPR; however, sharing it with third parties without consent constitutes a breach, and may be referred to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

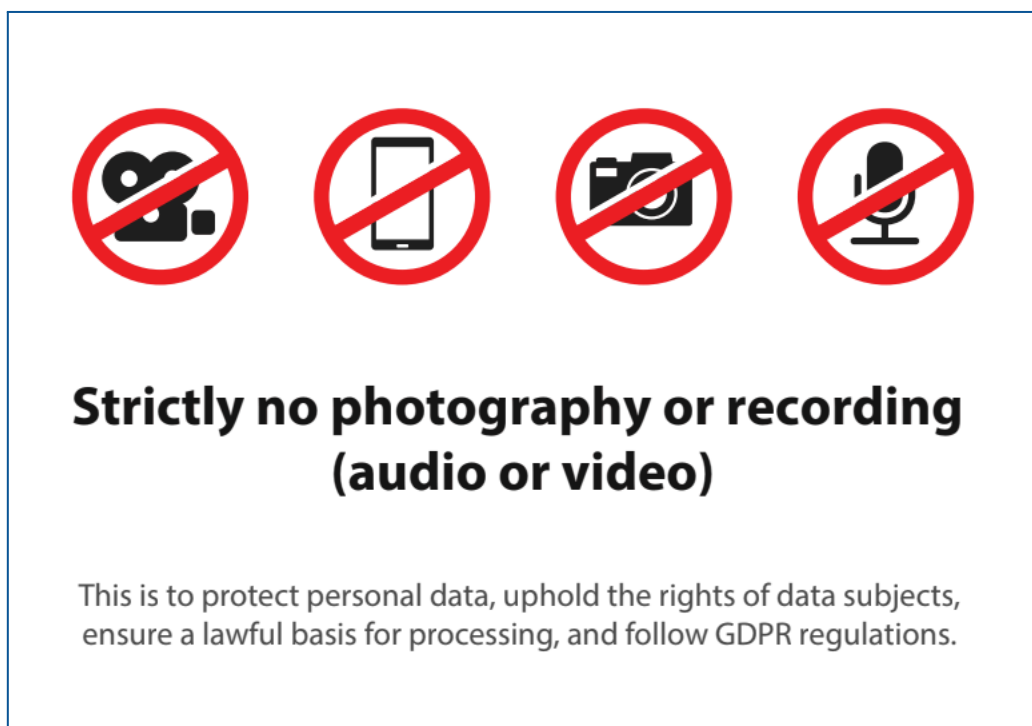
Threats to Record or Share:

Any threat to record staff, or to share recordings made without permission (including via social media, solicitors, or external agencies), is considered a form of intimidation and will be treated as a breach of this policy. The academy will take swift and proportionate action in response.

Signage and Visibility:

To reinforce this policy, clear posters (as shown below) are displayed in key locations across the academy site, including reception, meeting rooms, and main entrances. These signs state: "Strictly no photography or recording (audio or video)" and explain that this

is to protect personal data, uphold the rights of data subjects, ensure a lawful basis for processing, and comply with GDPR regulations.



These visual reminders ensure that all visitors are aware of the academy's expectations and support a respectful, safe environment for both staff and students.

Employee Response Procedure

Step 1: De-escalation and Boundaries

When faced with verbal abuse, employees are encouraged to respond calmly and assertively. Use the following suggested phrases to de-escalate or set boundaries:

- *"I want to help, but I will not tolerate being spoken to in this way."*
- *"If this behaviour continues, I will need to end the conversation."*
- *"Let's take a moment—this conversation will need to continue respectfully, or I will have to withdraw."*
- *"I understand you are upset. I am here to help, but I need us to speak respectfully."*
- *"I'm ending this call/meeting now. Someone from the Academy will be in contact with yourself in due course."*

If the abusive behaviour continues:

- Politely end the conversation or leave the area.
- State that another member of staff/manager/senior leader will be in contact.
- Do not respond further or engage emotionally.
- Ensure your personal safety is prioritised at all times.

Step 2: Reporting the Incident

As soon as possible after the incident:

- Report the event to your line manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- Include the following information:
 - Date, time, and location.
 - Names of those involved.
 - Exact words used (if recalled) and tone.
 - Witnesses (if any).

- How you responded and any immediate outcomes.

Step 3: Escalation by SLT

After reviewing the report, the SLT will take appropriate steps, which may include:

- A formal warning or written notice to the stakeholder involved.
- Suspension of in-person or phone contact with specific staff members.
- Requirement that all communication is in writing or via a nominated contact.
- Restricting the individual's access to the school site.
- Police involvement where threats, harassment, or criminal behaviour are present.

The school will notify the staff member of the outcome and any protective measures taken.

Step 4: Staff Support

Affected staff will be offered access to:

- Wellbeing or mental health support via Spotlight or Health Assured.
- HR advice and union representation if needed.
- Assistance in managing further interactions with the individual.
- Follow-up check-ins from line management.

Communication and Enforcement

- This policy will be shared with all staff and made available on the school's website.
- Signage communicating this policy is prominently displayed across the academy site, particularly in reception areas, meeting rooms, and main entrances.
- Breaches of the policy will be addressed formally and, where necessary, legally.