

Workshop sessions

Scenario-Based Challenges for Headteachers: Exploring challenges and solutions for educator wellness

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A problem shared is
a problem halved.

Many hands make
light work.

Sticks in a bundle
are unbreakable.

Two heads are
better than one.

The initial post...

I'm absolutely disgusted 🤔. Today my child was humiliated in front of the whole class by their teacher at Riverside Primary. Please share.

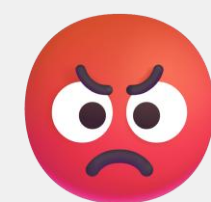
2h ago



124



32



58

Scenario 1: Viral Social Media Accusation

Challenges of Viral Accusations

Managing viral accusations involves protecting reputation, supporting staff, and choosing appropriate response methods.

Immediate Response Actions

Initial steps include fact gathering, staff reassurance, and monitoring misinformation spread online.

Long-term Strategies

Establish protocols, train staff on digital resilience, and involve governance for proactive communication.

Balancing Transparency and Confidentiality

Maintain staff morale while mitigating reputational damage through empathetic and consistent communication.

Subject: Urgent Concerns About Behaviour and Staff Wellbeing



Wed 28/01/2026 14:48

Dear Headteacher,

I'm writing because many staff feel increasingly overwhelmed, and the situation no longer feels sustainable. Behaviour has escalated to a level where colleagues are feeling unsafe, unsupported, and unsure of what will happen next. What used to be manageable now feels like a constant battle, leaving little capacity to focus on teaching.

Staff are exhausted. Some have gone home in tears; others are starting to dread coming in. Even the most resilient colleagues are saying they're reaching breaking point.

A key issue is inconsistency. Behaviour expectations and sanctions don't feel clear or reliably followed through, which puts staff in an impossible position. Without consistent consequences, pupils quickly realise the boundaries aren't firm.

Several staff have now contacted unions—not out of hostility, but because they feel they have nowhere else to turn. This shows how serious the situation has become.

We need visible, urgent leadership. Staff need to feel present support, clear expectations, and consistent follow-through. Without this, things will continue to deteriorate.

Please can we meet as a full staff team, with leadership present, to talk honestly about what support is needed and what changes can be made quickly? Something needs to change—and soon.

Kind regards,

Staff member

Scenario 2: Behaviour Crisis and Staff

Morale Dip

Behaviour Incident Impact

A spike in pupil behaviour incidents causes staff exhaustion and lowers morale, affecting school culture and wellbeing.

Immediate Stabilisation Actions

Deploying additional support, revisiting policies, and increasing leadership visibility help stabilise behaviour quickly.

Long-Term Wellbeing Strategies

Reviewing pastoral systems, staff training, and addressing curriculum or community causes sustain morale and prevent issues.

Leadership Resilience

Headteachers must balance emotional resilience and leadership through crisis to foster lasting cultural change.

Dear Headteacher and Chair of Governors,

I am emailing again as following a numerous meetings with your SENCo I am not happy at the support my child is receiving at your school.

As you know we are waiting for CAMHS to diagnose Sasha with ASD. During transition we told you that they cannot cope with change and found it difficult to follow school rules. We were called by the head of year yesterday to tell us that Sasha would need to a detention for using "inappropriate language" towards some girls, where he is alleged to have offended them. He will not be doing the detention; because of his ASD he does not understand what he is saying. Your suggestion that they do a social story to help them understand is not fair as they have done nothing wrong, he will also not be doing Sulp, he does not need this.

We are moving to a new house, (which is why I did not come to the meeting to discuss Sashas progress and support, as I was busy) and he is very upset by it so we will be keeping him at home until he is feeling better. The Year Leader said that school would not authorise any absence, but I do not need school permission to keep Sasha at home if as the parent think that is best. Monday is a really upsetting day for them and I think a reduce timetable to not come in Monday would be better. My child's mental health is just as important as physical health and therefore absence should be authorised.

When I judge them ready to return, they will not be doing French because they do not like the teacher and this upsets them , and the maths is too hard, so they need a 1:2:1 teaching assistant with them in maths lessons. They are entitled to this support for their disability.

I have been trying to educate you and your staff in how to support a child with ASD but none of you seem to understand what you need to do, I did not appreciate your suggestion that I go to the parenting courses you sent me.

I have spoken to the Chair of Governors and Sashas primary school teacher about all of this and they both agreed that my child was being let down by the lack of support at your school.

If this does not improve, I will be forced to report my concerns to the authority and Ofsted.

Yours

Mrs Grives

Head of Corporate Important jobs

Big Company with lots of award logs in email sign off

Scenario 3: Unrealistic parent expectations of SEN provision

Managing Parent-Governor Boundaries

Headteachers must maintain clear boundaries between governors and school operations to avoid procedural bypass.

Communication Policy Importance

Clear policies define complaint channels and clarify governor roles to prevent escalation.

Strategies to Prevent Escalation

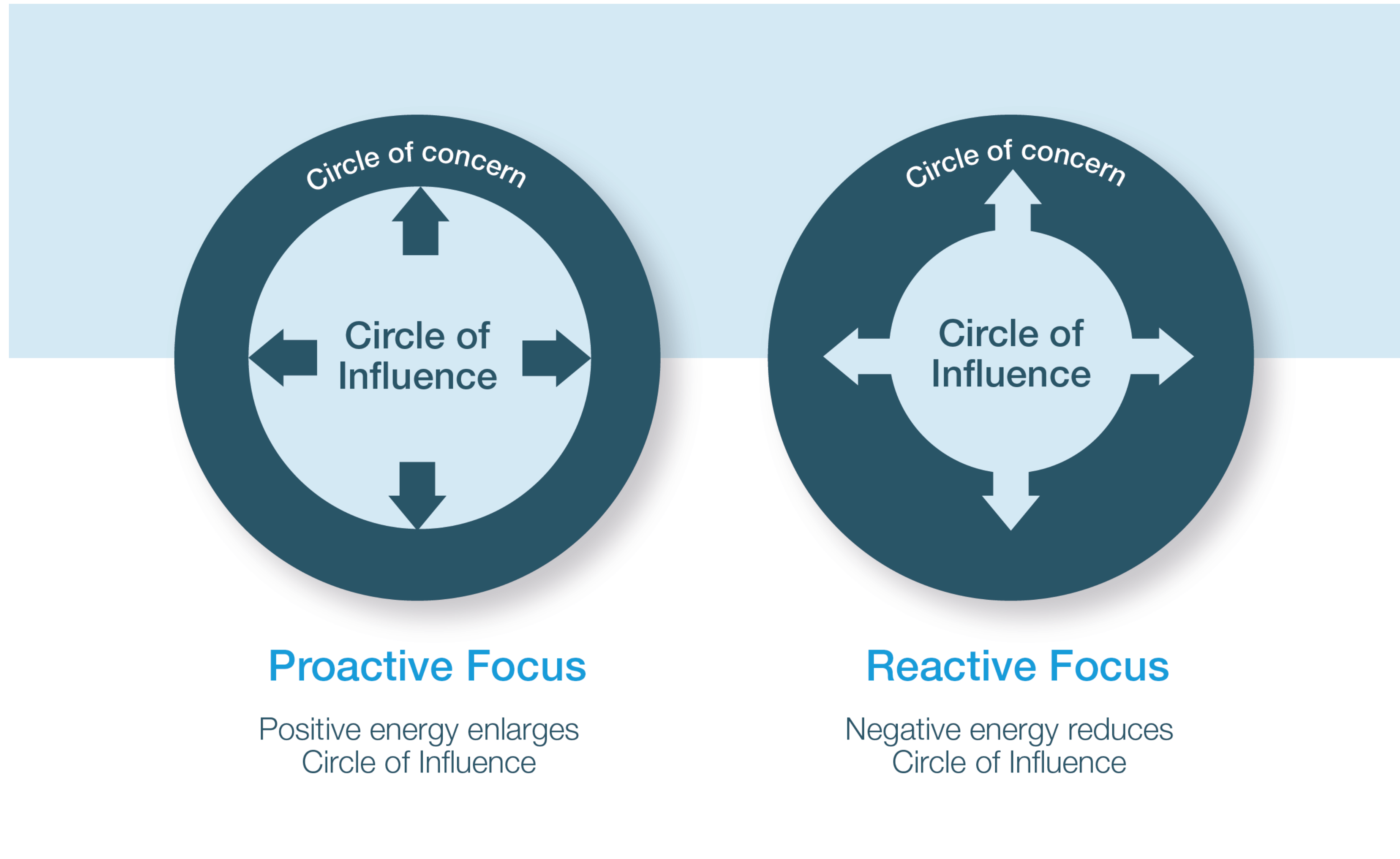
Use scripted statements and set response expectations to maintain professionalism and avoid repeated bypassing.

Protecting Headteacher Wellbeing

Reflect on ways to reduce stress from external pressures and build trust without losing authority.

What are the common threads?

Steven Covey (Circles of Control)







Hampshire
County Council

Education Personnel
Services

The Power of You:

Zero Tolerance

January 2026

Amanda Stevens, Head of Education People Services

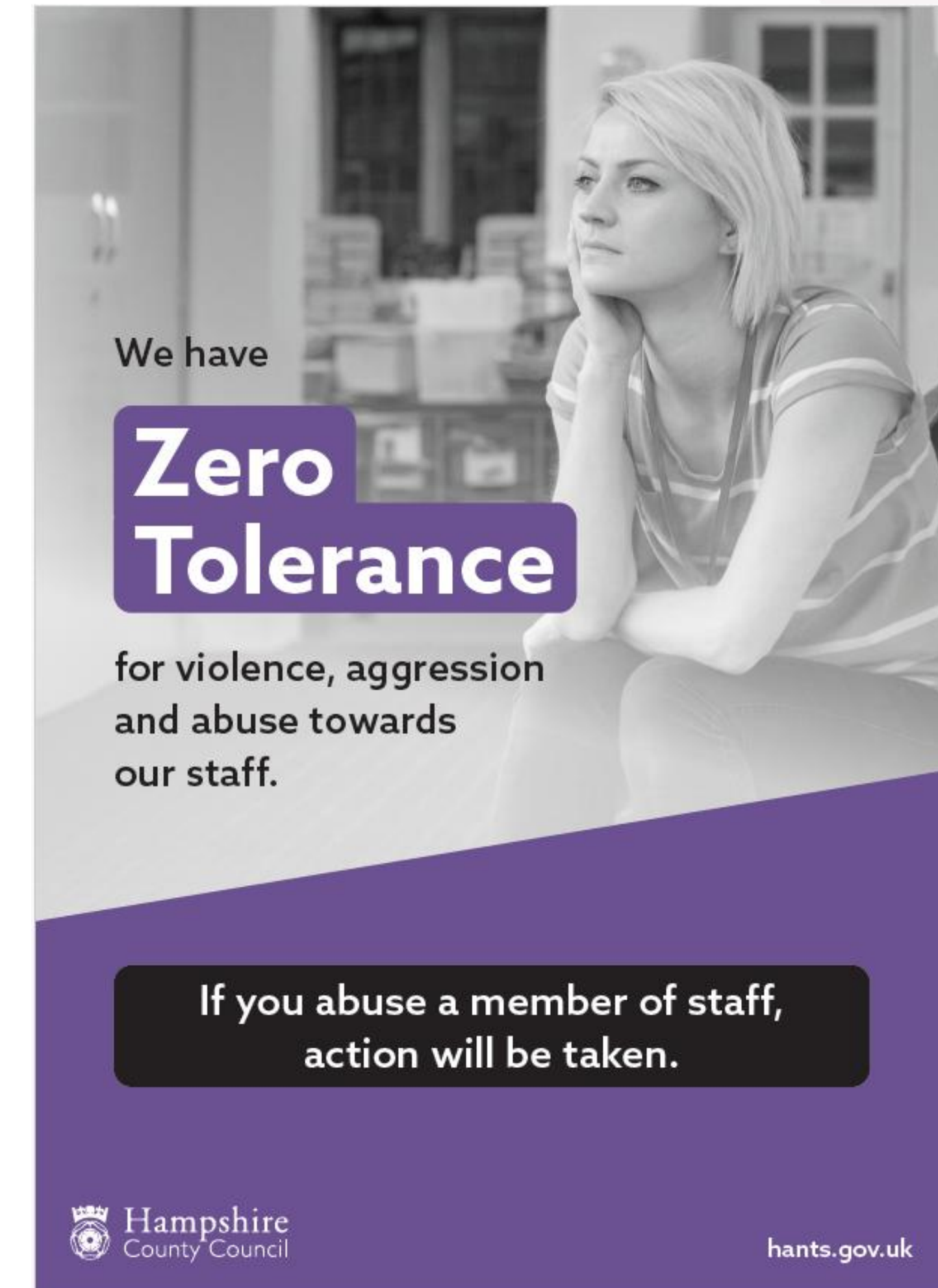
The Model Zero Tolerance Policy

Why are we introducing this Model Policy

- To support you and your governors to ensure a safe, respectful and supportive environment for you and your staff
- To be clear that you have a strict approach to violence, bullying, harassment, abuse and discrimination of your staff
- To support you to address parent and customers where they:
 - use aggressive or abusive behaviour
 - have unreasonable demands
 - have unreasonable levels of contact
 - unreasonably use the complaints process for repeated matters

Who does the policy apply to

- Parents
- Suppliers
- Contractors
- Local Authority staff
- Customers of the school's facilities (e.g. where they hire)



Purpose of the Model Zero Tolerance Policy

This model policy and the associated resources will support you to:

- Clarify expectations – be clear with all members of your school community as to the standards you expect of them
- Build staff confidence – so they feel that they can respond to incidents and feel secure that you will enforce action where required
- Aid community understanding – improve awareness of standards and the importance of maintaining a safe environment

This policy is needed to:

- Address challenges of rising concerns around how some parents and customers engage with the school
- Support staff wellbeing concerns
- Support you to fulfil health and safety and employment laws and duties
- Supports you to mitigate risk in relation to physical aggression, verbal abuse and online harassment
- Make clear the action you will take where individuals are not acting in accordance with a respectful culture in how they present a concern or complaint to the school



Part of a wider policy and guidance framework

This model policy sits alongside a number of other policy areas to help you and your governors to develop and maintain a safe and respectful culture, including:

- The Model Schools Communication Policy
- The Dignity at Work Policy
- The Violence and Aggression at Work Procedure
- Your Accident and Incident Reporting Procedure
- Your Acceptable Use of IT and Social Media Policies
- Your staff grievance or resolving workplace issues procedures
- Other HR procedures (conduct, appraisal and capability) to address staff to staff incidents of bullying, harassment issues arising from poor staff awareness, knowledge, skills or conduct

This policy framework involves contributions from various sold services including:

- Hampshire Legal Services
- Health and Safety
- Education People Services

A policy and guidance map is available within the Zero Tolerance resources



The key components of the policy and associated guidance

- Provides a set of suggested principles and expectations that the school will have of parents and customers
- Unacceptable behaviours and actions are defined and examples provided
- Provides a clear and transparent process of how you will deal with unacceptable behaviours and actions and associated resources, such as posters and guidance for staff, to reinforce the policy intent
- Proportionate responses – focus is on harmful behaviour; escalating through warnings before implementing restrictions, ensuring decisions are proportionate

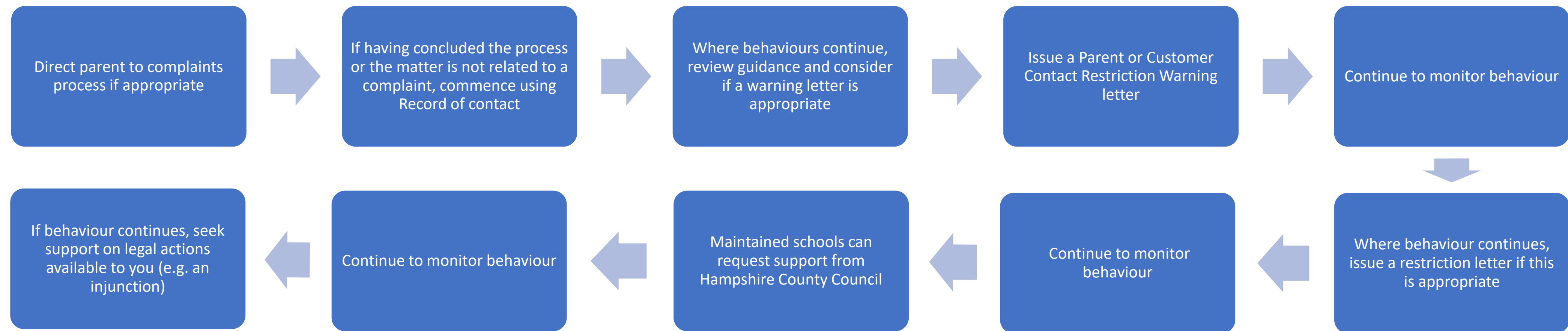


The key components of the policy and associated guidance

- Makes clear that where staff feel it necessary, they can implement an immediate safety response to ensure that immediate action is taken to protect all involved where there is a specific incident
- Provides advice on capturing issues (may be incidents, or specific communications) so that the pattern of behaviour can be evidenced
- Provides a clear pathway to escalate where behaviour continues with template warning letters and template letters to impose restrictions on a parent or customer
- Provides examples of the types of restrictions that could be put in place
- For maintained schools, provides a route to escalate to the Local Authority to seek support where restrictions have been put in place and behaviour continues. Academy Trusts may wish to consider a similar approach for their schools.



Dealing with an issue under the Zero Tolerance Policy



What resources are available to support you

For your websites (require localisation):

- Model Zero Tolerance statement
- Model Zero Tolerance Policy

Guidance for managers:

- How to Guide
- Preventative and Reactive Measures Flowchart
- Record of Parent and Customer Contact
- Template Parent or Customer Contact Restriction Warning Letters
- Template Parent or Customer Contact Restriction Imposition Letters
- Escalation Form (for maintained schools to escalate to Hampshire County Council)
- Guidance on dealing with stalking and harassment of staff by parents or customers



Zero tolerance

[Find out more](#)

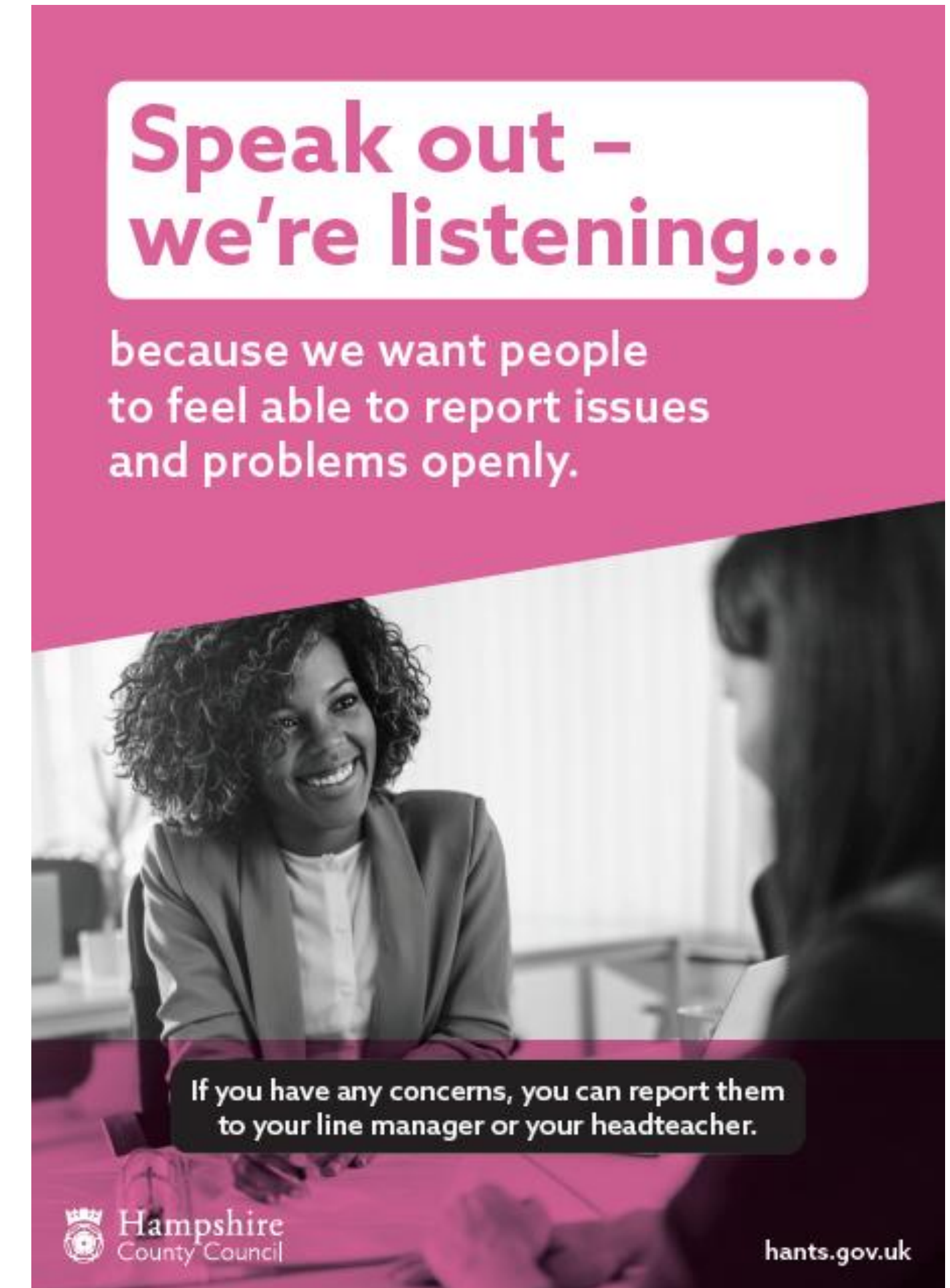
What resources are available to support you

Guidance for staff:

- A quick reference guide for staff
- Guidance for staff on simple ways to 'call it out'

Other resources:

- Posters for visitor / reception areas
- Posters for staff areas
- Suggested wording for school telephone systems



What action should you take?

- Review the model policy and associated resources
- Share them with your governing body and discuss how this might fit within your existing framework of policies
- Consider if there are other policies that need adopting or adapting as part of this approach – is your School Communication Policy fit for purpose, do you want to consider adopting the Dignity at Work Policy

Zero tolerance

[Home](#) [Courses](#) [The Power of You](#) [Zero tolerance](#)



Model documents for school websites



Guidance for school leaders



Guidance to share with staff



Other

Model documents for school websites

These documents are to be localised by the school and are for use on the school's website and sharing with the whole school community customers:

 [Zero Tolerance Statement](#)

 [Policy on Unacceptable Actions by Parents and Customers - Schools](#)

Guidance for school leaders

These resources are to support you to prevent matters arising and support governors and senior leaders in the application of the Zero Tolerance

 [Preventative measures and reactive measures flowchart](#)

Summary

This model policy has been developed to:

- support you to be clear to your whole school community about expectations
- encourage your staff to raise concerns so that these matters can be captured and logged
- empower the school community to uphold and promote a respectful environment
- provide a clear pathway for dealing with those whose unacceptable behaviours and actions continue

Hazel Anderson-Turner- planning session

To close

- Thank you for prioritising yourselves
- Committed to supporting you

Hampshire's current work programme:

Zero tolerance policy and resources launching today

Stress risk assessment:
Whole staff
Ofsted
Headteacher
Individual cases

Development of a new section within the Manual of People Practice - Managing Culture and Climate

Developing guidance for schools on communications following a significant event or crisis


The Power of You - workshops

Development of the HIAS Leadership Moodle site for Headteacher Professional Resilience – sharing of quality assured resources

Reviewing governor training materials and engagement to ensure advice to governors in relation to Headteacher professional resilience is clear

Developing a specific Governor Training session on Headteacher Professional Resilience

The Power of You: professional resilience and wellbeing of school leaders




The Power of You

[Home](#) [Courses](#) [The Power of You](#)


Supporting the professional resilience and wellbeing of school leaders

[Go](#) [?](#)




Workplace culture and expectations

[Find out more](#)






Hampshire support

[Find out more](#)



Conference support and resources

[Find out more](#)





The Power of You: Professional resilience for leaders

January 2026
Jean Thorpe, County Education Manager (Secondary)

**Jan 2026
Conference 3**



The new science of resilience: Psychological flexibility for School Leaders

HIAS

7 February 25

**Feb and Oct 2025
Conference 2**



Investing in School Leaders Conference: The Power of You

1 March 2024

**Mar 2024
Conference 1**



Complaints and safeguarding concerns



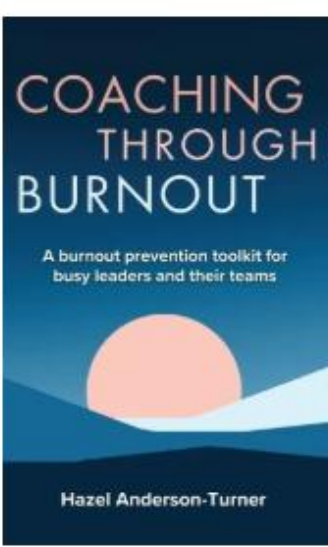
External complaint routes



The Teacher Regulation Agency - TRA



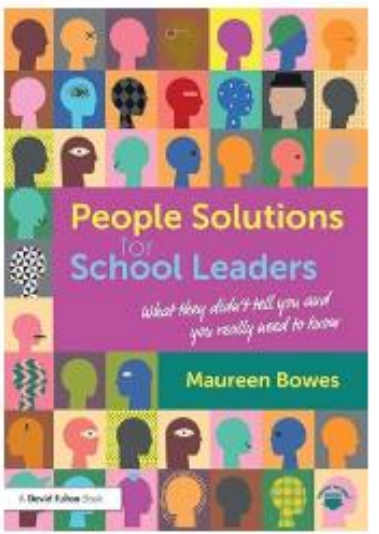
Practical guidance for managing and handling complaints



COACHING THROUGH BURNOUT

A burnout prevention toolkit for busy leaders and their teams


Hazel Anderson-Turner



People Solutions for School Leaders

What they didn't tell you and you really need to know

Maureen Bowes



Zero tolerance

[Find out more](#)

Practical guidance for managing and handling complaints

All leaders will have their own way of managing the volume of communication they receive but there are a number of strategies and practical steps that can support the effective management of complaints, and adverse communication.

- Be clear about your complaints' policy and your governing body's involvement in its management
- Ensure that agreed timeframes within any policy are adhered to
- Consider whether a dedicated email account would be useful for parental communication in order to manage leaders' accessibility
- Clarify with both support staff and middle and senior leaders your expectations of their management of complaints and parental communication; consider whether staff record all of their communication, are responses followed up by email, are hard copies kept of discussions and agreements, of telephone calls? We have many examples where
- Do you have a policy for managing duplicate and/or serial and consistent complaints, or those which are unreasonable?

[Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures 2020 - GOV.UK](#)

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator defines the characteristics of a 'frivolous' or 'vexatious' complaint as

- complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious
- insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason
- insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner
- complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance
- demands for redress that lack any serious purpose or value"

Schools should not refuse to accept further correspondence or complaints from an individual they have had repeat or excessive contact with as any application of a the notion of 'serial or persistent' should be against the subject of complaint itself rather than the complainant.

We suggest that you have a policy for managing duplicate serial complaints

[When to Consider Stopping Responses](#)



Hampshire County Council

Legal Services

Making SARs Manageable

19th March 2025
Emma Licciardi – School Legal Support




Hampshire County Council


Legal Services

School Legal Support


19th March 2025
Emma Licciardi




Model documents for school websites



Guidance for school leaders



Guidance to share with staff



Other resources

Shared work – provides strength

Colleague support has infinite value-
sense of not being alone

Your contributions please:

- examples of your documentation, approaches, what has worked well...
- collation of



hias.publications@hants.gov.uk