

Staff Dignity and Respect Policy Manager's Guidance

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Quick Guide

Please see below a summary of a manager's responsibilities under the Staff Dignity and Respect Policy:

1. **Promote Dignity and Respect:** Lead by example, promoting a team culture free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination.
2. **Cultivate Inclusivity:** Encourage diversity of thought and an inclusive environment that welcomes new ideas and perspectives.
3. **Active Behaviour Management:** Address and prevent unacceptable behaviours promptly, fostering respect and professionalism.
4. **Provide Timely Feedback:** Offer clear, consistent, and constructive feedback regularly, addressing minor issues before they escalate.
5. **Manage Fairly and Mindfully:** Use authority responsibly to address performance and behavioural issues and reflect critically on the use of managerial power, ensuring decisions and feedback are fair and do not harm others.
6. **Support Freedom of Expression:** Balance free speech with the need to maintain a respectful and harassment-free environment.
7. **Consider Online Conduct:** Guide online behaviour to prevent breaches of university policy or relationship damage.
8. **Handle Disclosures Sensitive:** Use a trauma informed approach for more serious disclosures and escalate to HR to inform next steps.
9. **Assist with Conflict Resolution:** Support team members during conflicts using informal and formal resolution mechanisms and ensure access to university support services.
10. **Encourage Reporting and Active Bystander Behaviours:** support employees to report unacceptable behaviour if they experience or witness it and encourage the use of active bystander behaviours.
11. **Maintain Confidentiality:** Uphold privacy and confidentiality in handling reports and grievances, ensuring fairness and respect in all proceedings.

The following sections expand on these responsibilities in more detail.

Action	Supporting Information
Familiarise yourself with the Policy	This guidance must be read in conjunction with the Staff Dignity and Respect Policy .
Promoting a culture of dignity and respect	As a manager at the University of Edinburgh (UoE), it is your responsibility to create and maintain a culture of dignity and respect within your team(s). Lead by example, encouraging all team members to engage respectfully and considerately with others, regardless of who they are, or if they have differing views or opinions. 'Dignity' and 'respect' are defined in the Staff Dignity and Respect Policy. 'Dignity' means all your interactions are free from bullying, harassment, discrimination, and victimisation (defined collectively as Unacceptable Behaviours). You can show 'Respect' by expressing ideas and opinions thoughtfully and politely, and treating everyone professionally, even during disagreements. The Behaviours Charter can help guide discussions on appropriate behaviours that reflect UoE values. All staff should be encouraged to: • Be open to different ways of thinking and new ideas • Value and exchange different knowledge and skills • Challenge bullying and harassment • Welcome and support colleagues and students Staff should <u>not</u> be encouraged to: • Accept any instances of bullying and harassment • Exclude others from activities, particularly those who could benefit from them • Disregard the views and ideas of others that aren't similar to their own As a manager or leader at the UoE, you have a particular responsibility to promote accessibility and inclusivity by: • Promoting a culture where diversity of thought is encouraged by actively supporting new ideas, approaches and ways of working and where staff and students feel able to ask for help and support • Proactively working with others to share knowledge and skills for the benefit of the University as a whole • Taking action to prevent and/or put an end to any bullying, harassment or discriminatory behaviour that you witness or is brought to your attention • Welcoming and supporting colleagues, teams, and students You will not be demonstrating dignity and respect when you: • Tolerate or ignore any instances of bullying and harassment or discriminatory behaviour • Exclude others from activities that could benefit them or focus your efforts to benefit the few

	• Disregard the views and ideas of others that aren't similar to your own and discourage people from sharing their views • Work in isolation and enable your team(s) to work in silos When setting objectives during annual review, it's useful to refer to the Behaviours Charter. This helps to make sure that goals are aligned to the University's values and behaviours. The charter can also be used to identify and reward positive behaviours. Further guidance about how to promote a respectful culture within your team can be accessed here.
Providing regular and consistent feedback on behaviours	As a manager, you have a responsibility to foster a culture of dignity and respect among your team members. This involves promoting respectful interactions and providing clear, consistent, and constructive feedback on behaviour. If a team member's behaviour doesn't meet expected standards, address this promptly. Early intervention is key, especially for minor issues that the individual may not realise could cause offence or upset. Don't wait until annual reviews to give feedback on behaviour issues, as this can catch employees off guard and might not resolve the issues quickly or effectively. Instead, you should address issues promptly by using the practical approaches of either 'calling in' or 'calling out', depending on what is most appropriate in the situation. This way, you can deal with problems before they get bigger and help keep a positive work environment. The terms 'calling in' and 'calling out' are explained below. You can find further guidance here. Calling In: Using reflective conversation with a team member to address minor behavioural issues. For example, talking to an employee about their behaviour in a one-to-one meeting. This is the most appropriate when the comment or behaviour is non-malicious or clumsy, and your intention is to educate with empathy to create a shared understanding. Example of Calling In: Taking an employee aside in a private and confidential space to make them aware that they are accidentally misgendering a non-binary colleague. This may be unintentional and due to lack of awareness or inattentiveness. A private, respectful conversation can help the person correct their behaviour without public embarrassment, especially if they're open to learning. Calling Out: Directly intervening when there is a need for an immediate response to highlight unacceptable behaviour. Not intervening could lead others to believe that the unacceptable behaviour is being tolerated and could create further harm. Example of Calling Out: During a meeting, a colleague makes a racially insensitive joke. You decide there is a need to speak out and challenge the behaviour during the meeting to signal that the joke is unacceptable.

	You say, <i>“That comment was inappropriate and offensive, and it goes against our Staff Dignity and Respect Policy. We need to be respectful of everyone here.”</i> To support you in managing these discussions sensitively and effectively, consider using the resources in the Conversations Hub, which offer guidance and tools for handling such conversations appropriately.
Distinguishing between reasonable management and bullying behaviours	Bullying is defined as, ‘unwanted behaviour from a person or group that is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting, or behaviour that abuses or misuses power to undermine, humiliate, or cause physical or emotional harm to someone.’ This is different from the legitimate exercise of managerial responsibilities, provided these are carried out in a respectful, fair and appropriate manner. Firm but fair management of performance, conduct or behaviour will not amount to bullying. For example, it would be a legitimate exercise of management responsibility to manage an employee’s performance and put them on a performance improvement plan when they are underperforming. This is regardless of whether the employee agrees that their performance needs to be managed. However, it would not be reasonable for a manager to repeatedly criticise an employee without justification or set unrealistic deadlines or heavy workloads as a form of punishment when there is no business need to. This would likely be an abuse of management power and could be an example of bullying behaviour. To prevent reasonable management from being perceived as bullying, clear and open communication is essential. For example, if you are monitoring an employee's absences, explaining the reasons for this and setting clear expectations upfront can help mitigate any feelings of being unfairly targeted. In cases where there might be misunderstandings about your management approach, you can take the initiative to explain the reasoning for your decisions clearly. This approach can help resolve issues informally and maintain a positive working environment. In addition to explaining the reasons for your decisions, you can also offer support to employees and consider whether there are opportunities to improve the way you work as a team. For example, you may need to adapt your communication style for individual employees or change the expectations or approach to team tasks. You can ask for assistance from the HR Advisory Service via the HR Helpline if you need support to do this.
Identifying and preventing abuses of power (including in personal relationships)	Unacceptable Behaviours can occur in the context of abuse of power if an employee, ‘uses their position of power, trust, or authority in an abusive or unacceptable way.’ For example, if a senior manager uses their senior position to bully a more junior employee. Whilst having a senior position at the UoE may lead to increased power, this should never be abused in a way that could lead to bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation.

	Signs of abuses of power can include: • Preferential or less favourable treatment of some employees compared to others without a legitimate business reason to • Not following established UoE policy or procedures without good reason • Conflicts of interest that are not disclosed or managed appropriately As a line manager, it's crucial to reflect on your decisions concerning team members. Ensure that you are not misusing your authority. If credible feedback indicates your leadership methods may be inappropriate, take it seriously and adjust your actions to ensure fairness and impartiality, and to avoid the risk of Unacceptable Behaviour occurring. Abuses of power can also arise within personal relationships between staff and students, or between staff members. The University's Personal Relationships Policy defines a personal relationship, and the disclosure process allows the University to manage real or perceived conflicts of interest that arise from personal relationships. The Personal Relationships Policy states that staff should not have professional or pastoral responsibility for a student with whom they have a personal relationship. If a relationship does emerge between a staff and student where there is professional or pastoral responsibility, then a disclosure of the personal relationship is required. A staff member in a personal relationship with another member of staff, with whom they have a line management and/or supervisory connection, must not be involved in any aspect of the direct or indirect recruitment, selection, review, recognition, promotion or other decision-making management activity or process involving the other member of staff. A disclosure is required in such cases, as detailed in the Personal Relationship Policy. You should ensure that all your team members are aware of the Personal Relationships Policy, and disclose under it accordingly. If employees have a complaint or issue to raise regarding abuse of power in a personal relationship which has resulted in Unacceptable Behaviour, they should raise this under the Staff Dignity and Respect Policy. However, the responsibility to disclose any relevant personal relationships falls under the Personal Relationships Policy.
Navigating the boundary between freedom of expression and harassment	Context: Academic freedom and freedom of expression are vital components of an open and democratic society, and are fundamental to our core purpose as a UoE. The UoE upholds the right to lawful academic freedom and freedom of expression within a framework that respects others' rights, in alignment with our Commitment to Freedom of Expression.

Academic Freedom: This primarily safeguards the rights of staff involved in teaching, learning, or research activities, including students employed in these capacities. The UoE permits staff to pursue, develop, and share ideas or findings freely, without fear of censorship or disciplinary action, adhering to the principles of scholarly inquiry. Under the [Conditions of Service](#), academic colleagues have freedom within the law to hold and express opinions without the risk of losing their position or associated benefits.

Freedom of Expression: This concept extends to all members of our UoE community, including professional services staff. It protects the rights of individuals to express opinions, either in writing or verbally.

Distinction from Harassment: It is crucial to be able to navigate the boundary between freedom of expression and harassment, as defined in our [Staff Dignity and Respect Policy](#). Harassment involves unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates another's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. Distinguishing between these concepts can be complex, as some situations may exhibit elements of both. The table provided below serves as a guide for managers to navigate these nuances. However, it should be noted that it is illustrative, and the actual application will necessarily vary depending on the specifics of each case.

More likely to be academic freedom and/or freedom of expression	More likely to be harassment
Statements or ideas that allow for alternative viewpoints	Direct attacks on, criticism of, or insults to specific individuals
Language that is respectful and aligns with the definition of "Respect" in the Staff Dignity and Respect Policy: being considerate, professional, and treating everyone decently, even during disagreement	Disrespectful, discriminatory, or slur-based language
Viewpoints expressed in academic contexts and supported by the scholarship of the individual presenting them	Repeated and/or inappropriate repetition of potentially offensive views outside academic contexts, creating an offensive environment

Maintaining Balance: Striking the right balance between our duties on upholding freedom of expression and maintaining a harassment-free environment can be challenging. Each situation will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. The following guiding principles can help maintain this balance:

	1. Respect for Individuals: Always maintain a baseline of respect for each individual involved in a discussion. Debate should challenge ideas, and not personally attack individuals. 2. Encourage Diversity: Promote and protect the expression of diverse viewpoints, understanding that exposure to differing perspectives is a fundamental aspect of higher education. Remember that an individual's perspective will be shaped by their personal history (and possible trauma), their background and characteristics and their sense of safety and belonging at the UoE – and in higher education and the UK more generally. We should be mindful not to label someone's response as an "over-reaction". You can refer to the Discussing Controversial Topics Framework to help you have discussions about academic freedom and freedom of expression within the context of equality, diversity and inclusion. 3. Maintain a Respectful Environment: The Staff Dignity and Respect Policy acknowledges that some might find ideas or viewpoints expressed by others offensive. This is permitted under the Policy, so long as the manner in which the ideas or viewpoints are expressed does not cross the line into harassment. A respectful environment aligns with the definition of 'Respect' in the Staff Dignity and Respect Policy, which involves being considerate and professional, and treating everyone decently, even during disagreements. 4. Context Matters: Consider the context (i.e., the time, place and manner) in which statements are made. In general, it would not be expected that course materials, discussions, or the views of speakers that students come across as part of their learning experience at UoE would breach the Staff Dignity and Respect Policy, even if students find those views shocking, disturbing or offensive. You can find out more about the key principles for learning and teaching here. However, what might be appropriate in a classroom setting may not be appropriate in another workplace context. For example, interrupting a meeting on a different subject to share controversial or contentious views. 5. Unlawful Expression not Protected: Speech that incites violence or criminal conduct, or otherwise breaches the law (e.g., support for proscribed terrorist organisations) is unlawful. It is not for the UoE to determine whether or not speech is lawful – that is a matter for the Police and the courts. The UoE's focus is whether alleged behaviour has breached our policies.
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	Practical Steps to Resolve Issues: When dealing with concerns related to freedom of expression and potential harassment, you can hold private conversations with both the employee who has voiced concerns and the employee alleged to have caused offence. This is to understand their perspectives of what happened and explore potential routes forward, such as an apology, adjustments in workplace interactions, or possibly a mediated session. If feasible, aim to address issues informally before considering formal escalation, as this approach often leads to the most satisfactory outcome for all involved. Further guidance on informal resolution is available here. Further Resources: For further information on the interaction between the Staff Dignity and Respect Policy and the principles of academic freedom and freedom of expression, you can find guidance here. You can also find additional resources on the UoE's Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression webpages.
Considering whether online conduct is acceptable	Unacceptable behaviour can take place online as well as in person. This includes bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation through email, messaging platforms, social media, recordings, file sharing, or other digital tools, whether through UoE systems or personal accounts where this affects members of the University community. It also includes the creation, sharing or misuse of AI-generated or AI-assisted content. This policy should be read alongside the University's Policy on Employee Use of Social Media and the University Computing Acceptable Use Policy. Online behaviour that occurs outside of professional contexts, using personal devices or social media accounts, is generally not considered a breach of policy unless it adversely affects the UoE. Private communications that neither involve UoE staff nor students typically do not breach policy to ensure that staff members' privacy remains respected. However, if such communications affect members of the University community (e.g., jeopardise relationships with staff or students), this may be in breach of policy.
Reporting Unacceptable Behaviour	Unacceptable Behaviours that can be reported under the Staff Dignity and Respect Policy are not limited to behaviour that takes place during work hours or the workplace (e.g., during meetings, events and gatherings). Unacceptable Behaviour can also occur outside working hours or off campus if it is related to work (e.g., during business trips or work-related events). Unacceptable behaviour that takes place off campus and/or outside the workplace can also be covered by the policy so long as it has an impact on work or members of the University community. For example, if colleagues in the same team bump into each other in the street outside of work, and one makes a discriminatory comment towards the other. Employees can report Unacceptable Behaviour committed by fellow employees, students, or third parties on campus (e.g., contractors or agency workers).

	Unacceptable Behaviour can usually only be experienced by the person who the behaviour was targeted at. For example, bullying can only be experienced by the employee it was targeted towards. However, harassment can affect others who are not the direct targets of the behaviour. For example, if an employee displays explicit content on their computer in an office, it can create a degrading, hostile, or intimidating environment for others in the room, regardless of whether anyone was an intended target. It would constitute harassment for other employees in the room exposed to the explicit content.
Informal assistance to resolve issues	You may be approached by an employee who has experienced Unacceptable Behaviour who is looking for support to informally resolve the issues they are experiencing. All employees are encouraged to attempt to resolve issues informally first before making a formal complaint. You may be approached because the employee is uncomfortable addressing the issue alone, or they have already tried discussing it directly with the offending party without success. Situations which may benefit from informal resolution include: • A misstep that seems to be caused by a lack of awareness or thoughtlessness rather than an intention to harm. • The issue involves interpersonal misunderstandings or communication breakdowns. Informal resolution can help clarify intentions and rebuild relationships. • Both parties show a willingness to engage in dialogue and learn from the situation. This openness often leads to more constructive and less confrontational outcomes. • The behaviour in question is a one-time occurrence rather than part of a repeated pattern. Isolated incidents often stem from momentary lapses in judgment or understanding. • The context of the situation suggests that a more formal intervention might lead to unnecessary tension or resistance. Sometimes, formal processes can escalate feelings of defensiveness or animosity. • The impact of the misstep, while negative, is relatively minor and unlikely to have long-term effects. Situations with limited repercussions are often more amenable to informal resolution. • An informal approach could help to foster education and understanding, which is likely to resolve the issue without further escalation. • The parties involved express a preference for resolving the matter privately. Respecting such preferences can often lead to faster and more satisfactory resolutions. Not all situations are suitable for informal resolution. In cases of severe misconduct, such as sexual assault, it is not appropriate to pursue informal methods first.

	Informal methods could include speaking to each staff member involved separately to understand what occurred and clarify any misunderstandings. Guidance on how to hold meetings with the staff member raising the issue and the accused employee can be found here. Alternatively, you could facilitate a joint meeting where both parties can share their perspectives. This may encourage open dialogue and help to clear up any issues. Sometimes, an employee may not want you to speak to the person who caused the offence. They might simply want to inform you of the behaviour so that you can provide support if you witness any Unacceptable Behaviour occurring, or they may want you to be aware in case the situation escalates. Your approach to informal resolution should primarily be led by how the reporting employee would like the issues resolved. You can also refer to the Disciplinary Policy for detail on when it is appropriate to resolve issues informally via day-to-day management or not. If you are unsure about the next steps or if the situation might benefit from external mediation services, please contact the HR Advisory Service via the HR Helpline for guidance. If you identify any minor behavioural issues when you are resolving informal issues, it may be appropriate to refer an employee to complete relevant training or refresher training, even when no formal complaint has been raised about them. This training could include the Staff EDI Training, including training on Preventing Sexual Harassment which is required learning for all colleagues.
Support for employees	When helping employees to resolve issues they are experiencing, you can signpost employees to UoE support services. Experiencing Unacceptable Behaviour can be upsetting and distressing, so it is important that employees can access support to have the opportunity to discuss their experiences and explore solutions with someone they trust. The University offers a confidential Employee Assistance Programme, which is available to all employees. You can also refer staff to the Staff Health and Wellbeing Hub which contains wellbeing information, resources, and services available, including crisis support.
Report + Support	Report + Support is an online reporting tool that can be used by employees who experience bullying, harassment or discrimination. Employees can choose to make a report either anonymously, or by providing their contact details. The reporting platform is also available to employees who witness Unacceptable Behaviour (you can find more information about witnesses here). If an employee chooses to make a 'named' report and provides their contact details, a member of HR will get in touch with them to offer support and provide guidance on their options going forward. Report + Support is entirely optional and does not result in a formal complaint.

	If an employee chooses to make an anonymous report, then the UoE will not be able to take direct action to respond to this. This is because the anonymous nature of the allegations means that a fair investigation cannot be effectively conducted, as the accused employee will not be able to respond to the allegations raised about them. However, in rare circumstances when reports raise very serious concerns about staff and/or student safety, then an environmental investigation could be conducted to assess risk and protect the safety of others. For example, this could occur if several very similar anonymous reports are raised about the same member of staff accusing them of serious Unacceptable Behaviour. It is possible that you could be contacted by HR to assist in conducting an environmental investigation. An environmental investigation focuses on the wider working environment rather than on investigating the conduct of a specific individual. It will often involve speaking to staff and/or students in the local area where concerns have been raised and identifying targeted support and interventions to reduce risk. An environmental investigation does not imply wrongdoing on anyone's behalf. For example, it is possible that an environmental investigation could uncover that malicious complaints are being fictitiously raised against an employee, which could in itself amount to Unacceptable Behaviour. Therefore, it is important to follow HR's guidance and handle environmental investigations confidentially and sensitively so that no wrongdoing is implied.
Handling sensitive disclosures	Employees may approach you in the first instance to disclose experiences such as sexual harassment, or other distressing incidents of bullying or harassment. How you respond in the moment matters greatly. Research has shown that the response of the first person who hears a disclosure can significantly influence how safe and supported employees feel, and whether they decide to engage with any next steps. Some practical steps that you can take to respond to the disclosure sensitively include: 1. Listen and thank the employee for telling you. Helpful phrases include 'I am so sorry you have had this experience', 'Thank you for trusting me with this information', and 'I am really glad that you felt able to speak to me'. 2. Prioritise psychological safety. This means allowing the employee to speak at their own pace and not pressing them for unnecessary details. It is not your role to get a full record of what has happened. Avoid making any judgements, reactions or assumptions. 3. Be clear about confidentiality. This includes reassuring the employee that you will handle the information sensitively, but that you will need to share the information they have told you with HR and you will keep the employee informed about what is going to happen next.

	4. Ask what support they need. You could ask open questions like, ‘what would feel most helpful for you in this moment?’. Support might include adjustments to working arrangements and time away from the situation. You can also refer to the support section of this guidance for further information. 5. Do not promise outcomes. It is important not to promise specific outcomes (e.g., someone will be dismissed) or complete confidentiality. However, you can tell the employee that they will be supported through next steps. 6. Record the disclosure sensitively. Make a factual note of what the employee shared with you. Avoid making any assumptions or adding your interpretation of what happened. You must share this information with HR and keep the record confidential. 7. Follow-Up. Check in with the employee after the initial disclosure. Offering support can help build trust with an employee. It is important that you prioritise your own health, safety and wellbeing when responding to sensitive disclosures. It is recognised that hearing about distressing experiences can be emotionally challenging and that support from HR may be required. It may also be appropriate for you to access support services. If a grievance is raised, there is advice available for investigating officers on complaints about serious allegations involving traumatic events here.
Providing a safe environment	If you become aware of serious Unacceptable Behaviour which raises urgent concerns about staff and student safety, you should contact HR Case Management Team via the HR Helpline for advice at the earliest opportunity to decide what action is required. It may be that an investigation is initiated under the Disciplinary Policy, even if no formal complaint has been raised, or the employee would prefer to resolve issues informally. Although it will usually be appropriate to respect the wishes of the reporting employee and take their lead on how they would like the issues they are experiencing to be resolved, this may not be appropriate in cases involving significant risk to staff and students. For example, in the circumstances of sexual assault. Once you have determined with HR what action is required, you should speak to the reporting employee to inform them of what action is being taken and why. You should offer support for the employee and ensure they are aware of any measures in place to protect them whilst an investigation is ongoing (such as moving the accused employee to a different work location).
Formal complaint is raised	If the Unacceptable Behaviour is serious or has not stopped after you have supported an employee to resolve issues informally, then the employee should be advised to make a formal complaint.

	Formal complaints about another employee should be reported under the Grievance Policy. It is important to be aware that the Grievance Policy states that attempts should be made to resolve issues informally first (where appropriate) before proceeding to raising a grievance. Formal complaints raised about students should be taken forward under the Code of Student Conduct. The Code of Student Conduct includes guidance on how to report allegations of student misconduct. Formal complaints about third parties (such as agency workers or contractors) should be raised under the Grievance Policy. UoE processes may need to be adapted when handling complaints about third parties. For example, the outcome of an investigation could be to start a supplier or contractor's disciplinary process. The outcome of complaints relating to third parties could include banning a third party from UoE campuses.
Managing team dynamics where a grievance involves multiple team members	Where a grievance involves multiple members of a team, the HR Advisory Team via the HR Helpline can support managers to consider not only the issues raised by the grievance, but also whether any interim steps are needed to manage team dynamics, reduce risk, and maintain a safe and respectful working environment while matters are being explored. Depending on the circumstances, this may include temporary changes to team set-up, desk configuration, reporting lines, duties, or working arrangements. In some cases, more formal measures may need to be considered under the relevant policy, including suspension where appropriate. HR should help ensure that any such steps are proportionate, reasonable, and consistent with UoE policy. If there is uncertainty about the dynamics within the team, HR can encourage managers to spend time actively observing and engaging with team members in their day-to-day working environment to better understand working relationships, behaviours, and any differences between formal and informal interactions. It is advisable for managers to maintain confidentiality and to avoid taking steps that could be perceived as prejudging the outcome of any grievance or investigation.
Outcome of formal complaints	One of the outcomes of raising a formal grievance is that the disciplinary process could be initiated for an employee accused of Unacceptable Behaviour. The grievance investigation would be used as part of the disciplinary process, instead of a separate disciplinary investigation needing to be undertaken. You should refer to the Disciplinary Policy for further information on the disciplinary process and possible outcomes. The employee who raised the grievance will not be told what disciplinary sanction has been issued, but they may need to be told that an employee has moved to another role or another location. The employee who raised the grievance may also be told what steps will be taken by

	the UoE to prevent the Unacceptable Behaviour they experienced happening again.
Reporting incidents to the Police	The Staff Dignity and Respect Policy directs employees to report to the Police if they experience behaviour that could be a criminal offence or an immediate threat to safety. The decision of whether to inform the Police should be made by the employee who experienced the Unacceptable Behaviour, unless the UoE considers that there is immediate risk of harm to any staff members or students. Without the employee who experienced the Unacceptable Behaviour's cooperation, the Police may be unable to take any action. Therefore, in consultation with the HR Advisory Service via the HR Helpline, it is usually better to support an employee to make a report to the Police themselves, rather than making a report on an employee's behalf.
Witnesses to Unacceptable Behaviour	As a line manager, it's essential that you encourage employees who witness Unacceptable Behaviour to identify and challenge this if they feel safe and able to do so. You can do this by: 1. Encouraging Active Bystander Behaviours: Motivate those who witness unacceptable behaviour to intervene if they judge it safe and appropriate to do so. Direct them to resources on how to be an active bystander. 2. Stressing the Importance of Witness Reporting: It is vital that witnesses report any Unacceptable Behaviour they observe. They should feel encouraged to report directly to you, their line manager. Alternatively, employees can contact HR or use the online Report + Support tool. 3. Clarifying the Handling of Witness Reports: You can explain to employees that complaints made by witnesses will normally be dealt with outside the normal grievance process. This means that witnesses will not receive a copy of the grievance report or be informed about the grievance outcome.
Malicious complaints	It is recognised that most complaints made under the Staff Dignity and Respect Policy will be made honestly and in good faith. You can reassure employees that they will never be subject to disciplinary action simply because their complaint is not upheld. However, disciplinary action can be taken against employees who are found to have brought complaints based on false allegations, that are deliberately misleading or made with the intention to cause harm or disruption. Such a complaint may be made to damage someone's reputation, or to slow down or frustrate another procedure (e.g., an ongoing disciplinary procedure). Whether a complaint is malicious will be considered on a case-by-case basis under the Grievance Policy. You should contact the HR Casework

	Management Team via the HR Helpline if you think that an employee has made a malicious complaint.
Confidentiality	If a team member raises an informal or formal complaint about Unacceptable Behaviour, it is crucial to maintain confidentiality. This includes safeguarding the identities of both the complaining and the accused employees. Regular reminders about the need for confidentiality should be given, especially during discussions about next steps with the concerned parties. This practice not only protects the person raising the concern from potential retaliation or victimisation but also preserves the privacy of the accused to ensure that a fair process can be followed. When it comes to disclosing concerns to senior management or HR, sharing information securely and on a strict need-to-know basis is generally permissible to ensure health and safety or to seek support. However, casual or unnecessary sharing could constitute a data breach.
Data protection and Subject Access Request requirements	Information relating to dignity and respect should be held in line with the University's Retention Schedule. This includes any email correspondence, letters, and Microsoft Teams messages about dignity and respect issues. Remember that an employee may make a subject access request to see data about them which will include any emails between you and HR and anyone else you correspond with about the individual. Therefore, you must be prepared that any of your correspondence may be seen by the employee raising an issue, or an employee accused of Unacceptable Behaviour.