Behaviour Policy | Version 2.0

This policy covers behaviour that might affect our staff or our work.

Policy Statement

We are committed to being a fair, consistent and accessible association for everyone who engages with us, including NAJ members, non-members, students and the general public. We believe that everyone who contacts us has the right to be heard, understood and respected. We believe that our staff have the same rights, and we must provide a safe working environment for our staff. We must also ensure the efficient and effective operation of our association, so that we can provide a good service to everyone who is engaging with us.

We may decide to restrict access to our service where we consider someone's actions or behaviour are likely to have a negative effect on our staff or our work.

This policy sets out the kinds of actions and behaviour that may have a negative effect, and what we will do in these circumstances. This policy applies to everyone who interacts or communicates with us, including NAJ members, non-members, students and the general public.

We recognise that some people may have difficulties in expressing themselves or communicating clearly, especially when anxious or upset. We also understand that some people may find it difficult to identify what impact their behaviour might have on other people. This policy does not prevent robust or critical feedback where it is expressed respectfully and appropriately.

We will have due regard to our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will consider reasonable adjustments where appropriate, balanced against our duty to protect staff and others from harm.

Examples of actions or behaviour which may have a negative effect on our staff or our work

1. Aggressive, offensive or abusive actions or behaviour

All our staff have the right not to be subjected to aggressive, offensive or abusive actions, language or behaviour, regardless of the circumstances.

This means any actions or behaviour that could cause staff to feel intimidated, threatened or offended. These include, but are not limited to: threats, physical violence, personal verbal abuse, derogatory remarks, and rudeness, whether made to the member of staff directly or elsewhere, including via email, social media and online forums. Deliberately provocative or inflammatory statements and unsubstantiated allegations can also amount to abusive actions or behaviour.

Violence is not restricted to acts of aggression that may result in physical harm. It also includes behaviour or language, whether oral or written, that may cause staff to feel afraid, threatened or abused.

2. Unreasonable demands or persistence

If someone makes unreasonable demands on us or our staff, or is unreasonably persistent, that may have an impact on our ability to do the work of our association.

Examples of unreasonable demands may include: requesting responses within an unreasonable timescale; insisting on speaking to or corresponding with a particular member of staff, frequent phone calls, emails, or letters; repeatedly changing the substance of the complaint or raising unrelated concerns; or attending our offices without an agreed appointment.

Examples of unreasonable persistence include: continual refusal to accept that a decision has been made in relation to an enquiry; insisting that we answer questions when we have done so or explained why we will not; persistent refusal to accept explanations relating to what we can or can't do; sending emails to multiple members of staff; or repeatedly trying to raise a case through our internal processes, without recourse to our formal complaints procedure.

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3. Vexatious behaviour

NAJ sometimes receive correspondence which can be deemed ‘vexatious’ or ‘repetitive’. In deciding whether correspondence is vexatious we will in each case take into account its context and history. A definition of ‘vexatious’ is activity that “is likely to cause distress or irritation, literally to vex a person to whom it is directed”.

When determining whether correspondence is vexatious, we will take the following factors into account:

- the writer requests information which has already been provided
- the nature and extent of the correspondence suggests an obsessive approach to disclosure
- the tone adopted in correspondence is confrontational and/or haranguing and demonstrates that the purpose is to argue rather than to obtain information or resolution
- the correspondence could reasonably be expected to have a negative effect on the health and well-being of our staff
- the correspondence appears to be intended simply to re-open issues which have been disputed several times before, and is, in effect, the pursuit of a complaint by alternative means
- the frequency and volume of correspondence places an undue administrative burden on us
- the correspondence repeatedly raises issues that have already been addressed
- the writer subtly changes the issues raised such that it is difficult to understand the remedy or resolution that they are seeking

Our approach

When we consider that a person's actions or behaviour are likely to have a negative effect, because they are either aggressive, offensive or abusive; unreasonably demanding or persistent; or vexatious; we will tell them why and we will give them the opportunity to modify their actions or behaviour. If the actions or behaviour continue, we will take steps to prevent or minimise the negative effects. Wherever possible, we will continue to engage with the person in question in relation to their legitimate association business. We will try to ensure that any action we take is the minimum required to protect our staff and to ensure that they can work effectively.

By Telephone

Our staff may either place a caller on hold or end the telephone call if the caller is aggressive, offensive or abusive, or is making unreasonable demands. Staff are accountable for their actions and are required to log all instances of when calls have been terminated, on our CRM system, noting the reason(s) for ending the call.

By Email or other Written Communication

Abusive or offensive written communication will be reviewed and investigated by a senior manager. A full written response will be provided, outlining details of any sanctions applied, along with a clear rationale.

Sanctions

In normal circumstances we will take a graduated approach to addressing behaviours that impact negatively upon our staff at work. This might include:

- Informal warning
- Formal warning
- Temporary restriction of service
- Suspension / removal (membership, course access)
- External escalation (police / legal)

The following list includes some of the sanctions that we might apply:

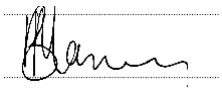
- Require that contact is with a specified member of staff only;
- Not accept any further telephone calls from the person - we will keep at least one other form of contact.
- Require the person to communicate with us through a generic and moderated email address
- Read and file future correspondence but acknowledge or respond to it only if the person is raising new information or making a new enquiry.
- Remove a student from a course or initiate disciplinary proceedings against a member business
- Report the matter to the Police or take legal action. In such cases, we may not give the person prior warning of taking that action.

Wherever practicable, individuals will be informed in writing of any restrictions placed on contact with NAJ, the reasons for those restrictions, and how long they will remain in place.

We will record any incidents which lead us to take action under this policy, and what action we have taken to address the issue. Any records created under this policy will be held securely and processed in line with NAJ's Data Protection Policy and UK GDPR requirements.

Anyone who is unhappy with a decision we have made under this policy may submit a complaint using the NAJ Complaints Procedure.

This policy has been approved and authorised by:

Name and Position:	Ben Massey, Chief Executive
Signature:	
Date of Review:	April 2026 (Version 2.0)
Date of Next Review:	April 2027