

ANTI-BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT POLICY

2025 - 2026



Version Number: 3

Issue date: June 2023

Review Date: December 2025

Next Review Date: December 2026

Our Mission Statement

Aim to deliver an engaging, positive learning experience every time.

Our Values

Our values encompass the achievement of all of our learners. Our values are HONESTY, INTEGRITY, SUPPORT, ETHICAL BUSINESS AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL. We support PREVENT, SAFEGUARDING, BRITISH VALUES, EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION and this policy is at the heart of and supports these core values in aiming to safeguard staff and learners.

Our Vision

To be the provider of choice for apprentices and clients, creating bespoke education and training that maximizes opportunity and investment, both for now and in the future.

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1 - Introduction and Overview

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our learners & staff, so they can learn and work in a relaxed and secure atmosphere

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our centre. If bullying does occur, all learners' and staff should be able to tell us and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell staff, colleagues or senior management team.

Related policies which should be considered in relation to this document:

- Staff behaviour policy
- Learner behaviour policy
- Appeals procedure
- Equality and diversity policy

2 - Rationale and Scope

We have a zero tolerance against bullying and/or harassment.

Bullying or harassment will not be tolerated and will be regarded as a serious offence and an infringement of the company's Equal Opportunities Policy.

3 - Roles and responsibilities

Our SMT (senior management team) take overall responsibility for the provision of all policies within the centre. The directors, Mark Webber and Peter Carey, take overall responsibility for this policy, its application and sharing of appropriate information. Kirsty Ryan, Operations Manager, has responsibility for IAG within the centre, including support for Matrix Awards visits and inspections.

4 - How this Policy will be Communicated

- Our SMT will review policies and update as required
- Our policy will be made available on our website if applicable
- Our policy documents will form part of the induction for all staff to the centre
- When suitable, policies will be uploaded to OneFile resources for access by all appropriate users
- Training for all staff will be implemented where required, with training matrix and CPD's updated accordingly
- We may email policy updates to staff as required or use OneFile system announcements
- Staff should also review the employee handbook in relation to staff behaviour.

5 - Complaints

Any complaints in relation to this policy or relating to this policy or conflicts of interest should be made to the SMT or the Directors, who can be contacted via our Head Office on 08452235020 or email info@apprenticeship-centre.co.uk. Kirsty Ryan can be contacted on the same number or email Kirsty@apprenticeship-centre.co.uk

6 – What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying can be described as unwanted behaviour from a person or group that is either:

- offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting
- an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, or causes physical or emotional harm to someone.

Bullying results in pain and/or distress to the victim.

The bullying might:

- be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident
- happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or calls
- happen at work or in other work-related situations
- not always be obvious or noticed by others

Examples of bullying at work could include:

- someone has spread a malicious rumour about you
- name calling, spreading rumors, teasing, sarcasm
- written abuse, including graffiti, computer imaging and the display of offensive material
- being treated unfairly or being excluded
- Mobile threats by text messaging and / or calls
- Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities
- your boss keeps giving you a heavier workload than everyone else
- someone keeps putting you down in meetings
- someone holding back information or deliberately "losing" information
- someone has put humiliating, offensive or threatening comments or photos on social media
- someone at the same or more junior level as you keeps undermining your authority

Bullying is not:

- Being held accountable for your performance or behaviour
- Constructive feedback
- Conflict or difference of opinions

Upward bullying

Upward bullying is when a colleague bullies a more senior colleague or manager. It can be from one colleague or a group of colleagues. Examples of upward bullying can include:

- showing continued disrespect
- refusing to complete tasks
- spreading rumours
- doing things to make you seem unskilled or unable to do your job properly

It can be difficult if you're in a senior role to realise you're experiencing bullying behaviour from your colleagues, however a senior position does not make you immune to the impact and effects of bullying and we would take any allegations just as seriously as any other.

7 – What is Harassment?

Harassment is when bullying or unwanted behaviour is about or because of any of the following protected characteristics under discrimination law (Equality Act 2010):

- Sex
- Disability
- Age
- Race and ethnic or national origin
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Religion or religious belief
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Marital Status

It includes unwanted conduct that is sexual in nature and treating someone badly because they either rejected it or because they went along with it.

Harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 and equality legislation in the UK.

If someone's behaviour is unwanted and causes offence, even if it wasn't done on purpose, it may be harassment. The unwanted behaviour doesn't have to be aimed at you for you to be offended by it. If it creates an intimidating or offensive environment for you or anyone else, then it could be harassment.

Examples of harassment at work could include:

- Unwelcome staring, touching, kissing and other physical abuse
- Verbal abuse, racial or embarrassing sexual comments, persistent offensive jokes, regular sexual innuendo, questioning about sexual activities, compromising invitations and unnecessary comments about appearance, dress or jokes about a persons' sexual orientation
- Sexually suggestive jokes, comments or innuendo, offensive gestures or whistling
- Unnecessary touching
- Demands or requests for sexual contact (whether or not it is implied that work or study may be affected in some way)
- Outing a colleague as trans or non-binary without their permission
- Repeatedly using the wrong pronouns or name for someone who is trans or non-binary, despite having the correct information
- Ridicule or assumptions based on racial stereotypes
- Spreading rumours or gossip about someone's sexual orientation or gender
- Making jokes or offensive remarks about someone's disability
- Excluding someone because of their political opinion or religious group
- Homophobia because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality

Harassment can include:

- A serious one-off incident
- Repeated behaviour
- Spoken or written words, imagery, graffiti, gestures, mimicry, jokes, pranks or physical behaviour that affects the person

It's still against the law even if the person being harassed does not ask for it to stop.

8 – What are your rights?

Our centre has an Equality and Diversity Policy.

- You have the right to fair treatment and respect from learners and members of the teaching and non-teaching staff.
- You have the right to discuss any problems and complaints with whoever you choose
- You have the right to absolute confidentiality

9 – Guidelines

Employer: Has a legal duty to protect employees' health and safety by taking reasonable steps to prevent and address bullying and harassment.

Employee: Is expected to behave in a way that supports a tolerant working environment and to challenge/report incidents if they experience or witness them.

If you think you are being harassed in any way, please don't ignore it. Reject it clearly by letting the other person know that you don't like it. You don't want the behaviour to continue, so ask them to stop. Do it in whatever way is easiest – in a private letter or face to face, using whatever response you think will be effective, polite and/or firm. It's always better to try to sort things out informally if possible. Explaining to the person responsible how it makes you feel and asking them to stop may get things resolved. They might not realise the impact of their words or actions or have meant to offend you.

But if you don't feel able to speak to the person, talk to your manager about the problems you're having. If it's appropriate, your manager may speak to them confidentially to say that their behaviour is inappropriate and needs to change. Wherever possible your manager will aim to resolve things quickly and informally without the need to use a formal process. Dealing with things informally is often much less stressful and quicker for everyone involved than a formal process

If you don't feel you can speak to your manager, or your complaint is about them, you can speak informally to your manager's line manager. There may be other people you feel comfortable speaking to, such as another manager, or your trade union if you're a member - or you can make a formal complaint.

Remember that anger, guilt and apprehension about possible repercussions if you complain are common reactions to this type of situation.

Keep a record of events and all relevant papers and visitors, including details like dates, times, locations, people present, and what was said or done. Evidence such as emails should also be kept.

A suite of information is also available in the Health and Wellbeing resources on OneFile.

10 – Who Should You Contact?

We know it's not an easy thing to do to speak up about these things, so we'll investigate this as quickly as possible. If we find evidence, we'll take appropriate action against those involved.

If you don't feel able to sort things out informally, you can make a formal complaint to your tutor, line manager or SMT on 08452235020 or email info@apprenticeship-centre.co.uk. Making a formal complaint should usually be a last resort. Further information surrounding reporting and procedures can be found within our complaints policy.

You can also discuss the situation with our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Julie Gardner - safeguarding@apprenticeship-centre.co.uk 07534 852484

11 – What Action will be Taken?

We will:

Meet with and support any individual who is being victimised and

- Take any action through the appropriate disciplinary procedure against anyone whose behaviour is unacceptable. In serious cases this may include suspension or exclusion
- Deal with any situation quickly and in confidence
- Record all incidents to monitor annually
- Meet with the perpetrator
- Where possible work with bullies to help them change their behaviour and attitudes