

THE WHEELS PROJECT LTD

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Brislington
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Registered Charity No: 1081236

BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT AT WORK POLICY AND PROCEDURES (APPLICABLE TO BOTH STAFF AND LEARNERS)

1. A Statement that Bullying and Harassment will be Treated as Disciplinary Offences

Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated and will be treated as a disciplinary offence with procedures as set out in learners and staff members contracts.

2. Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

- Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone by word or behaviour (particularly on the ground of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief)
- Copying memos that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know
- Ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail
- Exclusion or victimisation
- Unfair treatment
- Overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position
- Unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close, the display of offensive materials
- Making threats or comments about job security without foundation
- Deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism
- Preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities
- Physical violence – this was discussed, and it was agreed that any such incident will lead to instant dismissal if it is ascertained that the intention was to cause physical harm to another person. The incident may have taken place either on or off the premises and must have been proven. Regarding intervention in incidents by staff members, it was agreed that individuals may intervene at their discretion and use reasonable force. Any physical assault will be immediately reported to the police.

3. Steps to Prevent Bullying and Harassment

We will introduce the following ground rules:

- Politeness
- Respect

It was agreed that:

There will be a system in place that enables those experiencing being bullied whilst on one of our programmes to report these in confidence to key members of staff. The outcomes of these reports will lead to a series of informal warnings outlined below which may lead to a series of Formal Warnings.

- 3 Informal Warnings will result in 1 Formal Warning.
- 3 Formal Warnings will result in dismissal from the Project

If anybody observes any incidents developing, all necessary steps should be taken to stop them escalating.

It may be appropriate, in some instances, to give a 'shot across the bows', in the form of an informal warning unless the offence is very serious. When an informal warning is issued to a learner this will be recorded on his/her timesheet (in an abbreviated form, i.e., 'IW' with the date, time and initials of the staff member issuing it.) This will then be brought to the staff's attention at the next Learners' Staff Meeting and discussed whereupon, if agreed, it can become a Formal Warning. There will be a right of appeal.

When an incident occurs, the following procedures will apply:

- The abuser will be challenged on a one-to-one basis, i.e., at the earliest opportunity when it does not compromise the safety of the group
- There will be a discussion in private between the abused and the supervisor. There will follow a discussion between the abuser and the supervising officer
- The incident and any subsequent discussions will be evidenced by a written report from the supervising officer
- If an incident is serious the perpetrator will be asked to leave the session, may be asked to return for the next session or suspended. A report from the aggrieved party and the abuser will be necessary
- In the event of suspension, the perpetrator will have the chance to appeal in writing or request a meeting within 7 days to the General Manager

3 STEP WARNING

- A Formal Warning will be issued to the abuser(s)
- 3 Formal warnings will result in dismissal from the Project
- If the circumstances of the incident are sufficiently serious and proved e.g., physical assault or excessive verbal abuse, the abuser(s) will be dismissed.

4. Responsibilities of Management

- Victimisation should be reported early and acted upon immediately
- Disciplinary stages to be gone through
- A tracker book of bullying in which all details will be entered under the headings of 'venue', 'type' and 'date', is to be kept and brought to the group meetings at the earliest opportunity.

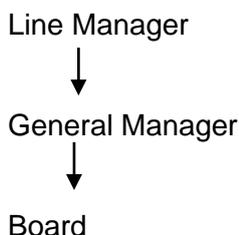
5. Confidentiality

Confidentiality was agreed to be of the utmost importance to avoid leading to an escalation of problems.

6. Grievance Procedure

The Grievance Procedure, which is already in place, will be followed. This is contained within the contracts of both staff and learners.

The line of progression for grievances is:



The Board will have to take the final decision if all else fails.

If somebody is dismissed and they successfully appeal, they will have the option to be reinstated without prejudice.

7. Investigation Procedure

Somebody independent of the incident should investigate it. This should be the most senior person present at the Project and all parties should be investigated including witnesses.

8. Counselling and Support

- It was agreed that a suitable counselling service should be identified through the General Manager or an appointed person.

An initial brief consultation between supervisor and student should take place to establish what is required for the aggrieved party. Then an appropriate counsellor/therapist can be identified. This can be done through their existing GP or Key Worker.

- The learner's Key worker will be involved in identifying support and suitable guidance.
- Students will be allowed time off for counselling if required.

9. Bullying Mentor

The Projects Bullying Prevention Officer is currently the General Manager, his Buddy is the Deputy Project manager.

The Buddy will issue a Well Being questionnaire which the students will complete on the last session of the first and subsequent term if they are attending programmes lasting longer than 1 term. Students will go into the interview room with the Buddy and be able to complete the form in private and discuss any issues they are having. They will put their first name on the form for identification purposes.

Students will be asked to complete a questionnaire, and any incidents of bullying will be treated in confidence by the staff.

This will be done without delay if it comes to our attention that bullying is taking place and include the aggrieved party in the first instance.

Students complete questions on whether they are being bullied and if so, who by, where and under what circumstances. There is a space to write comments and their feelings about the bullying. There will be space for any actions that have been taken to be recorded. These questionnaires will be kept in a secure cabinet, with access restricted to staff only.

This information will be collated and fed back by the Buddy at the end of term programme review and will include any action taken.

The next step is how to deal with this information. It was agreed by all staff that:

- 1) Informal Warning: Buddy will approach the bully and arrange a brief interview. During the interview Buddy will say they have been identified as someone who maybe bullying someone else and will try and establish whether they can confirm what was described and whether they took part in it.
- 2) Informal Warning: If there are still problems, Buddy will then sit the bully and the bullied down together for a mediation session to discuss how it has made the person being bullied feel and to stop the bullying continuing. *(Any actions that are taken, and their outcome, will be recorded on the back of the sheet.)*
- 3) Informal Warning: If the bullying continues then the bully's behaviour will be monitored and recorded, and Buddy will speak to them again after an agreed period.
- 4) Formal Warning: If the behaviour does not change the Bully will be issued with a Formal Warning.

If the bully picks on different people, then they can be issued with more than one formal warning. If the behaviour shows no sign of stopping the bully will be asked to leave the premises and suspended from the course pending an inquiry.

10. Incidents involving ex-students or people not from The Wheels Project

If someone comes in and causes problems to the detriment of the project and its staff or students, then they will not be allowed back on the premises. If ex-students return to the project and their behaviour is viewed to be harassing to other students or staff in some way then the first step will be for the General Manager, or Buddy in his absence, to challenge them about it. If they do not change their behaviour, then the second step will be to ban them from the premises.

Staff will record any visits or incidents with the dates and the action taken. If the person, then comes back after they have been told not to the General Manager or Buddy will call the police.

11. Training

Wheels has a commitment to keep abreast of legislative development and supports staff attending appropriate training courses.

12. Quality Assurance

The Wheels Project Ltd is trying to address and eradicate any bullying issues and actions of bullying that are identified to be taking place at the project. If staff see any bullying taking place, they will complete an incident form and ensure action is taken.

Incidents of bullying and the action taken will be monitored by the General Manager, and the information will be summarised in the annual report. This policy will be reviewed every 12 months.