

Bullying and Harassment Policy

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What is this policy about?

People are at the heart of Supporting Education Group. It's our aim to create an environment and employee experience, which inspires and encourages our people to do their best work. We spend a significant portion of our lives at work, and we believe it's really important to make this as enjoyable as possible.

We're really passionate about promoting a culture of openness and inclusivity. We don't accept behaviour or attitudes that discriminates against anyone, or coerce, intimidate, bully, or harass others, or threaten them with verbal or physical violence.

We want you to feel able to discuss concerns (grievances) that you have, regardless of who and what the concerns are about, and that they will be treated sensitively and taken seriously.

You'll not be subject to any detrimental or less favourable treatment as a result of raising concerns. We ideally want them to be raised as soon as possible and dealt with quickly and informally. Sometimes an informal route isn't possible, and a formal approach is needed. If this is the case, we'll investigate concerns in a sensitive, full and fair way.

This policy is non contractual and may be changed in the future.

Who does it apply to?

This policy applies to all employees and workers across SEG and all third parties acting on behalf of our business including secondees, advisors, agency workers, contractors and other companies. It applies to all processes relating to employment and training and to any dealings with clients.

What do I need to know or do?

Unacceptable behaviour

We don't accept behaviour or attitudes that discriminate against anyone, or coerce, intimidate, bully, or harass others, or threaten them with verbal or physical violence, including sexual harassment.

Harassment and bullying are behaviours that generally make someone feel intimidated or offended. The behaviour could be unwanted physical contact or inappropriate conduct.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, hostile, degrading behaviour towards an individual or particular group involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation. For example and not limited to, changes in responsibilities of the individual to their detriment without reasonable justification, overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision, deliberately preventing an individual's progression at work.

It's against the law to discriminate against anyone because of a protected characteristic; age, sex, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin) religion or belief or sexual orientation. Individuals as well as organisations can be liable for unlawful discrimination, which can take different forms:

- Direct discrimination - treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than others. This is also applicable in cases where individuals are treated unfairly because it is believed that they possess a certain protected characteristic (perceptive discrimination). Equally, individuals should not be discriminated against because they associate with someone who has protected characteristics (associative discrimination)

- Indirect discrimination - putting rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone, but that put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage
- Harassment - unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that violates someone's dignity or creates an offensive environment for them. It's important to understand that what may be acceptable to one person may be quite unacceptable to another. Someone may be harassed even if they were not the intended 'target', for example they may be harassed by racist jokes if the jokes create an offensive environment. Harassment may be an isolated event, or it may be a persistent series of events. It could be for example and not limited to:
 - physical (unwanted touching, stalking, threat of or actual assault / violence)
 - verbal (abusive language, gossip or slander, insulting, threatening or ridiculing comments)
 - non-verbal (offensive images or materials, isolation or deliberate exclusion, non-cooperation)
- Victimization - treating someone unfairly because they have complained about discrimination or harassment. This also applies when someone has given evidence or acted as a witness for someone who has made a complaint.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. It also covers treating someone less favourably because they have submitted to, or refused to submit to, unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or in relation to gender reassignment or sex.

Sexual harassment in the workplace, could unfortunately, happen to anyone by anyone, including colleagues, customers, suppliers or any other third party. Sexual harassment could occur in person or by digital means, including social media sites or channels. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- sexual comments or jokes, which may be referred to as "banter"

- displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photos
- suggestive looks, staring or leering
- propositions and sexual advances
- making promises in return for sexual favours
- sexual gestures
- intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life or a person discussing their own sex life
- sexual posts or contact in online communications, including on social media
- spreading sexual rumours about a person
- sending sexually explicit emails, text messages or messages via other social media
- unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging or kissing
- treating someone differently, or excluding them, because they have raised concerns or supported someone that has

Raising concerns – employees

If you feel you have been subjected to unacceptable behaviour including sexual harassment or discrimination in the workplace by colleagues, customers, suppliers or any other third party, you should report your concerns to your manager, another manager or leader, or to the People Hub.

If you witness sexual harassment happening to someone else, you should support the individual to raise their concerns, or you do it on their behalf, so appropriate action can be taken to address it. Concerns should be reported to your manager, another manager or leader, or to the People Hub. Witnesses should speak out to stop further events occurring but not take any other intervening preventative action that may put themselves or the other individual at further harm.

We've set out the steps of how to raise concerns and how we will handle and manage these in our Grievance Policy. Concerns will be taken seriously and not be ignored. You'll not be subject to any detrimental or less favourable treatment as a result of raising concerns. We ideally want them to be raised as soon as possible and dealt with quickly and informally.

Sometimes an informal route isn't possible, and a formal approach is needed. If this is the case, we'll investigate concerns in a sensitive, full and fair way. Any manager or leader who has concerns raised to them must immediately let the People Hub know, so support and advice can be provided.

Raising concerns – third parties

If you are a third party and have been subjected to or witness unacceptable behaviour including sexual harassment or discrimination in the workplace by an employee of our group, you should report your concerns to your employer by their policies. Your employer should tell us of your concerns, so appropriate action can be taken to address it.

Action following concerns

If we find that someone that works for us behaves in a way that is unacceptable to others and against our purpose and values, it will be viewed as a serious matter and dealt with under our Improvement and Disciplinary Policy. This includes concerns that are raised internally, but also if an external source raises concerns with us.

If the person works for a third party, then we will inform the management of that business of the concerns raised and expect them to manage this seriously in line with their policies. In addition, we may take further action of reviewing the person's or businesses assignment or contract with us.

Support available

We'll always try and deal with concerns (grievances) as quickly as possible and we encourage you to do the same. We understand that raising or being part of a grievance may be a difficult experience, no matter how well it's carried out. If you have any concerns speak to your manager or another manager.

We also have our Employee Assistance Programme, which gives you free and confidential advice and support.

We understand that raising sexual harassment concerns will be an emotional time for most people. Please speak to your manager if you feel you need time away, your manager will agree with you how your time off will be managed in line with our policies such as holiday and sickness.

Reasonable adjustments will be made for disabled employees. Any employee who experiences difficulty for any reason should seek assistance from the People Hub.

Where can I find more information?

- Employee Assistance Programmes
- Grievance Policy
- Improvement and Disciplinary Policy
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Holiday Policy
- Sickness Policy

If you have any questions about this policy, please ask your manager or the People Hub at peoplehub@supportingeducation.com

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