

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Policy Statement

1.1 Shockout is committed to the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, creed or religious belief, ethnic or national origins, age and disability or any other relevant reason.

1.2 Shockout is committed to creating a safe, positive and inclusive working and learning environments for all students, where students can study without fear of victimisation.

1.3 Shockout believes that all students have the right to be protected from bullying and abusive behaviour. Shockout is also dedicated to providing an environment that will enable students to fulfil their personal potential and in which the dignity of all individuals is respected.

1.4 The ongoing and long-term aim of the policy is to reduce the number of students who experience bullying through increasing awareness of this behaviour, its causes and consequences for the Shockout community and to help all to find and put into practice a series of solutions. If a complaint is brought to the attention of Shockout staff, it will be investigated promptly and appropriate action taken.

1.5 This policy also aims to ensure that individual cases of bullying will be dealt with consistently and in a constructive and fair manner. Shockout recognises that any form of harassment or bullying of students is entirely inappropriate and can seriously undermine relationships. At a personal level it can cause extreme distress and anxiety and can affect health and the continuation of studies. In some cases it is unlawful and a criminal offence.

2. Shockout is committed to:

- Ensuring that all students are treated with dignity by promoting a culture where harassment or bullying is neither condoned nor tolerated where it is found to exist.
- Providing a climate where students have the confidence to report incidences of harassment or bullying without fear of further victimisation.
- Ensuring that any complaints of harassment and bullying are investigated quickly, effectively and sensitively.
- Ensuring that all students are aware that incidents of harassment and bullying as well as malicious claims are regarded seriously, can amount to gross misconduct and consequently can be grounds for disciplinary action, including expulsion.

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students receiving education or training on our premises, any partnership providers and work placements.

3. Procedures For Dealing with Bullying

3.1 Definition of Bullying:

- Repetition of behaviour which systematically undermines a person over a period.
- An imbalance of power between the person in receipt of the bullying and the bully(s).
- Bullying is when one or more people physically, emotionally or psychologically hurt or cause harm to a person who is in a weaker position and so less able to defend themselves. Bullying usually happens over a period and consists of a series of incidents.

3.2 Different types of bullying include:

- Physical - may include being attacked, hitting, kicking punching and other forms of unwanted physical contact
- Verbal - may include name-calling, verbal threats, being teased, or spreading rumours.
- Emotional/psychological - may include excluding from a group, humiliation.
- Racist - racial harassment is based on race, nationality or national origin. It includes racist jokes, insults, display of racially offensive material and abusive language.
- Sexual - sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature affecting the recipient's dignity. It may include physical contact, invasion of body space, suggestive remarks, unwanted comments on dress and appearance, jokes of a sexual nature or display of sexually offensive material.
- Homophobic - harassment may be against individuals or groups of people who are or are thought to be lesbian, gay or bisexual. Examples include offensive jokes, ridicule, anti-gay comments and stereotyping, verbal abuse, threats, derogatory comments or intrusive questioning about a person's domestic circumstances. Innuendo, gossip or failure to accept partners in appropriate circumstances may also constitute harassment.
- On grounds of disability or disfigurement - harassment may be because a person has a physical or sensory impairment, learning difficulty or disfigurement. It includes offensive or patronising language, action or behaviour, jokes, or inappropriate comments and questions that cause offence to the individual concerned.
- Electronic – by receiving inappropriate, abusive or threatening text messages, emails or postings on the internet, websites and on social networking sites such as Facebook. 'Cyberbullying' can take place at any time and can intrude into spaces that have previously been regarded as safe and personal.

- Being forced to hand over money, mobiles or other possessions.

All the types of behaviour listed above are unacceptable and will not be tolerated at SA.

4. Responsibilities

All staff and students have a responsibility to stamp out harassment and bullying. Staff should not behave in any way that could be seen as threatening or cause offence to students. Students must take responsibility for their own behaviour both on and off-site.

Both staff and students have the responsibility to take appropriate action when they witness an incident.

5. Procedures

When bullying is reported, it must be taken seriously. Staff should work with the learner who is being bullied, to help them feel safe and find responses to bullying that are effective. Staff will also work with the bully to change the bullying behaviour.

When appropriate, staff will work with outside agencies and/or parents/carer of any learner who is being bullied to support and encourage in finding solutions to the bullying.

Step 1

If students experience behaviour that upsets them or causes offence, they should be advised to make this clear at an early stage to the person concerned. This will give the person the opportunity to recognise the effect of his or her behaviour and to change it. Where possible, they should tell the person involved that the behaviour is upsetting and is unwanted and that it must stop. This may be done face to face or in writing and may involve a third party as mediator eg. another student.

Students are advised to keep a written record of incidents, including time, date, place, and a full description of what happened, the names of individuals concerned and witnesses to the incidents.

Where the above steps have failed, students may wish to refer the matter to the Student Support Team or staff member they feel comfortable speaking with. It may be possible for him or her to speak informally to the other person. If the issue can be dealt with quickly and informally by raising awareness of offence or hurt caused, this is always desirable.

However, where this is not the case, and alleged bullying is brought to the attention of staff, they must take action. All incidents of bullying should be treated in confidence and with sensitivity. Care should be taken during any investigation to

protect the interests of both the complainant and the person against whom the complaint is made and to establish the nature of the problem.

Step 2

The first procedure is to document the meeting with the student who alleges being bullied, logging incidents and actions accurately.

Student Support Team is responsible for advising Senior Management of the details of the alleged bullying. They will then work alongside the person they have spoken to, to meet with both parties, establish the facts as far as is possible, and advise students accused of bullying that their behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing offence.

It is advisable, where possible, to bring the two parties together to agree future standards of behaviour and conduct and to establish the consequences of harassment. It may be appropriate for either party to be accompanied if they so wish. However, there are occasions when bringing the two parties together may cause a greater degree of distress. If this is the case, Senior Management should speak to both parties separately in the first instance with a view to seeking a solution and/or mutual understanding of the problem.

Recipients of bullying should remember that sometimes distress is caused inadvertently, and the person responsible may be unaware of the effect of his or her behaviour. In such cases the person who feels harassed or bullied should seek support in addressing the problem, but disciplinary action against the perpetrator may not necessarily be appropriate.

Following an investigation, disciplinary action against perpetrators may be appropriate if their behaviour is believed to have been intended to cause distress, or if inappropriate or offensive behaviour persists, following formal advice that it must cease. If it is felt disciplinary action is appropriate the process will continue under the Shockout Disciplinary Procedure.

Step 3

Excluding students is a last resort. However, if serious victimisation, abuse and intimidation, or physical bullying against any other person is reported, those students carrying out the bullying will have to be suspended from the Shockout during further investigations.

If solutions have no effect, if the bullying does not cease, or if the bullying is so severe it will have a harmful effect on the rest of the Shockout community for the suspended learner to be allowed to return to Shockout, permanent exclusion may be the only option. In this eventuality, senior staff will make this decision, after an impartial review of the case chaired by the principal.

All students who are excluded have the right of appeal against the decision, should write in the first instance to a member of the student support team,

It is the Student Support Teams' responsibility to monitor and review the ongoing relationship, and report back to Senior Management on a regular basis. It is recommended that an extra individual tutorial is scheduled for both parties within a month of the final resolution meeting to formally check and record progress.

6. Further Support

Students will be referred to the following websites and other resources during their tutorial sessions as a matter of course throughout the academic year.

Examples of these are:

- www.beatbullying.org
- www.bullying.co.uk
- www.childline.org.uk
- www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- www.barnados.org.uk
- www.mentalhealth.org.uk
- www.famailylives.org.uk
- Family Lives (formerly Parentline Plus) 0808 800 2222 (free helpline)

This policy has been written with reference to and guidance from
www.beatbullying.org

Related Policies

Disciplinary