

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Anti Bullying Policy

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Purpose of this document

To ensure that all trustees, staff and volunteers working for Aspired Futures (AF) are aware that any form of bullying will categorically not be tolerated and to explain the procedure that takes if anyone felt subjected to bullying or harassment.

Details of Policy

AF is committed to ensuring that all members of staff are treated with dignity and respect. Where an employee feels that they have been subjected to harassment and bullying, they should draw such matters to the attention of their line manager.

AF takes all allegations of bullying and harassment with the upmost seriousness and where the allegations are proven to be true, the employee at fault will be subject to our disciplinary process.

Harassment and bullying is a misconduct offence, however where it is sufficiently serious, this will be categorised as gross misconduct which may lead to your dismissal. Each case will be considered on its own facts.

Harassment

- Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This can also involve matters such as offensive jokes through to conduct of a sexual nature (i.e. unwanted sexual advances) and need only be a single incident. Harassment need not be on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. As such, unwanted conduct directed at an individual because of their weight would also be caught by the policy.
- It does not matter if you did not intend to cause offence, although this may be relevant as to the severity of the matter. What matters is the effect it has on the recipient of the unwanted treatment.

Bullying

- Bullying is categorised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can leave an employee feeling vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened.

Raising a Complaint – Informal procedure

- Initially, it may be possible for you to raise this issue informally with the person responsible for the unwanted behaviour. Sometimes that person maybe unaware that their behaviour is causing offence to you (i.e. rude jokes) and may genuinely be upset to learn they have caused offence. Where you are able to do so, you should explain to the employee that their behaviour is not welcomed and makes you uncomfortable and could they avoid such behaviour in the future. Make a note of any conversation you have with the person involved.

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- If you are unable to deal with this issue informally, you can raise a formal complaint in writing with your line manager. Your complaint should set out the full details of the unwanted conduct and include dates, times, locations, and the names of any witnesses to the unacceptable behaviour.
- We will treat all complaints made with the strictest confidence and will look to investigate the issue in a prompt and timely manner.

Raising a Complaint - Formal Investigation procedure

- We will undertake an investigation into the allegations and all investigations will be thorough, impartial and objective. In order to discuss the outcome of your investigation, we will invite you to a meeting within 7 days of receiving your complaint. You have the right to be accompanied to this meeting by either a fellow colleague or a Trade Union Representative.
- Where your complaint relates to a fellow colleague, we will consider whether suspension on full pay or alterations to the employee's working arrangements, pending the outcome of the investigations, is necessary.
- At the conclusion of our investigation, the investigating officer will submit their report to a senior manager who will consider the matter further.
- A further meeting will be scheduled with you within 7 days of receipt of this report so that we can discuss the outcome of the investigation and any proposed action. Again, you have the right to be accompanied by a fellow colleague or a Trade Union Representative.
- Action that may be taken
- Where the senior manager considers that an offence has occurred, the manager will take prompt action to resolve the issue.
- Where the harasser or bully is a fellow employee, we will look to deal with the potential misconduct or gross misconduct offence under our disciplinary procedure. However the outcome of the disciplinary process is a matter for AF to determine. The aggrieved cannot dictate what action is to be taken.
- AF may explore, in certain cases, the feasibility of mediation between the harasser and the aggrieved. This may be accompanied by additional training for the harasser, either internally or externally. All staff are encouraged to consider engaging in mediation where it is offered as a solution, although we do recognise that mediation will not always be appropriate.
- Where the unwanted behaviour has stemmed from a third party, we will look to clarify the behaviour expected of their representatives or in very serious cases, ban them from our premises and/or terminate the contract with them.
- Any employee who deliberately provides false information or acts in bad faith as part of the investigation process, will be subject to action under the Disciplinary procedure.

Right to Appeal

- If you are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation, you may appeal in writing to a director within 7 days. In submitting your appeal, you should state the full grounds upon which your appeal is based.
- AF will schedule an appeal meeting with you within 7 days of receiving your letter and the appeal will be dealt with by an impartial manager who has not previously been involved with the investigation.
- Again, you will be entitled to be accompanied to this meeting by a fellow employee or a Trade Union Representative.
- Following this meeting, AF will confirm its decision to you in writing within 7 days of the appeal hearing after which you will have no further right of appeal.