Policy name: Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Bullying Policy		**Effective from**	06/11/2026
Last reviewed	**Nov 2025**		
Reviewed by	**Niki Michael, Zivile Kairyte**	**Next review**	**05/11/2029**

Harassment and Bullying

Definition of Harassment
Harassment is unwanted conduct, related to a relevant characteristic set out in the Equality Act 2010 that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. The protected characteristics are race, religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, and age.

Harassment may take many forms. It can range from extreme forms such as violence to less obvious actions such as persistently ignoring someone. The following, though not an exhaustive list, may constitute harassment:

• physical contact ranging from touching to serious assault;
• verbal and written harassment, including via email or letters, through jokes, teasing or banter, offensive language, gossip or slander;
• sharing inappropriate images or videos;
• using racist slang, phrases or nicknames;
• isolation, non-cooperation, or exclusion from social activities;
• intrusion by pestering, spying, or following etc.

Employees may also be subject to harassment from third parties such as clients, customers, suppliers, or the general public etc. where interaction with those third parties is a part of their role.

Definition of Bullying
Bullying is repeated inappropriate, offensive behaviour, which is often an abuse of power or position. It can be direct or indirect, either verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work.

The following examples may constitute bullying:

• threats, abuse, teasing, gossip or practical jokes;
• humiliation and ridicule either in private, at meetings or in front of customers/clients;
• name calling, banter, insults, or devaluing with reference to age or physical appearance;
• setting impossible deadlines;
• imposing excessive workloads;
• making unjustified criticisms;
• excessive monitoring;
• removing responsibilities;
• allocating menial or pointless tasks;
• withholding information;
• refusing requests for leave, holiday or training.

It should be noted that it is the impact of the behaviour which is relevant and not the motive or intent behind it.

Employees' Responsibilities
All employees have a responsibility to help create and maintain a working environment that respects the dignity of employees. You should be aware of the serious and genuine problems which harassment and bullying can cause, and ensure that your behaviour is beyond question and could not be considered in any way to be harassment or bullying. No one should practise orencourage such behaviour and should make it clear to all concerned that you find it unacceptable. You should also support colleagues if they are experiencing harassment or bullying and are considering making a complaint. You should alert a Manager or Supervisor to any incidents to enable the Charity to deal with the matter.

Managerial Responsibility
Managers and supervisors have a responsibility to ensure that harassment or bullying does not occur in work areas for which they are responsible. They are committed to the elimination of bullying and harassment and must be vigilant in preventing acts wherever possible. Managers and supervisors also have a particular duty to set a proper example by treating everyone with dignity and respect and ensure that their behaviour is beyond question. Managers also have a responsibility to explain the Charity's policy to their staff and take steps to promote it positively. They will be responsive and supportive to any member of staff who makes a complaint, provide full and clear advice on the procedure to be adopted, maintain confidentiality in all cases and ensure that there are no further problems or any victimisation after a complaint has been raised or resolved.

The Charity will provide training to ensure that all managers, supervisors and other staff are fully aware of this policy and the procedures for dealing with harassment and bullying.

Procedure for Dealing with Alleged Harassment or Bullying
Complaints can be made both formally and informally. Whichever route you decide to take, and the decision will always be yours, you will be offered guidance and assistance at every stage to help you resolve the problem as soon as possible and to stop the harassment. If you are comfortable doing so you should, in the first instance, ask the person responsible to stop

the behaviour, explaining that you feel uncomfortable in the way they are acting towards you. Speaking directly to the person at an early stage will often be sufficient to stop the behaviour.
If you feel unable to do this, you may be able to ask your Manager or a colleague to do this on your behalf. If you decide to make a formal complaint you should do so through the grievance procedure as soon as possible after the incident has occurred. All complaints will be handled in a timely and confidential manner. You will be guaranteed a fair and impartial hearing and the matter will be investigated thoroughly. If the investigation reveals that your complaint is valid, prompt attention and action will be taken, designed to stop the behaviour immediately and prevent its recurrence. In such circumstances, if relocation proves necessary, every effort will be made to
relocate the harasser or bully rather than you as the victim, however, the Charity will endeavour to relocate you if this is your preference.

You will be protected from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation. Retaliating against an employee for complaining about harassment or bullying is a disciplinary offence.

Whilst this procedure is designed to assist genuine victims of harassment or bullying, you should be aware that if you raise complaints which are proven to be deliberately vexatious, you may become subject to proceedings under the disciplinary procedure.

Procedure for Dealing with Alleged Harassment or Bullying from a Third Party
Any form of harassment towards you from third parties during your dealings with them will not be tolerated by the Charity.

We appreciate that a decision to report harassment from a third party may be difficult, particularly if the third party is a valuable client or customer or has a long-standing business relationship with the Charity. However, we encourage you to report any instance of harassment from a third party so that the Charity can take appropriate action.

You should follow the procedure set out above if you experience harassment from a third party, after which a meeting with you will be arranged and an investigation undertaken.

Our action, where a complaint is substantiated, will depend on the circumstances of the case and may include:

• speaking with the harasser and warning them that any future occurrence of harassment will result in the Charity withdrawing provision of its services to the harasser;
• contacting the business for whom the harasser works and making a complaint against them. We will explicitly ask for this conduct to stop and we may require that the harasser is removed from our account;
• refusing to continue to provide our services to the harasser;
• reassigning the provision of the Charity's services to harasser to another employee.

Sexual Harassment

Introduction
All members of staff are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect in our place of work. This means freedom from sexual harassment, feeling safe and supported, and having access to redress if such behaviour does arise.
Sexual harassment takes many forms but whatever form it takes, it is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 as amended. We will not tolerate it.
The law requires employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their workers. We take action to prevent sexual harassment from occurring and have clear reporting procedures for our staff to make a complaint about sexual harassment. If you have been sexually harassed, or you have witnessed sexual harassment, we encourage you to tell us so that we can deal with the matter swiftly.
The CEO has overall responsibility for the operation of this policy but may delegate elements of implementation or decision making to The Senior Management team. Our managers will maintain an open door policy. All of our staff have a responsibility to behave in line with the requirements of this policy. Instances of sexual harassment or victimisation may lead to disciplinary action including termination of employment.
This policy is reviewed regularly to ensure it remains up to date and in order to monitor its effectiveness. Any changes required will be implemented and communicated to our workforce.

Scope
We deplore all forms of sexual harassment and seek to ensure that the working environment is safe and supportive to all those who work for us. This includes employees, workers, agency workers, volunteers and contractors in all areas of our Charity.

Definitions
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 that is related to gender reassignment or sex.
Sexual harassment may be committed by a fellow worker, an agent of an organisation, or a third party. It does not need to occur in person. It can occur via digital means including social media sites or channels e.g. Whatsapp. Someone may be sexually harassed even if they were not the target of the behaviour. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:
a) sexual comments or jokes, which may be referred to as ‘banter’
b) displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photos
c) suggestive looks, staring or leering
d) propositions and sexual advances
e) making promises in return for sexual favours
f) sexual gestures
g) intrusive questions about a person’s private or sex life or a person discussing their own sex life
h) sexual posts or contact in online communications including on social media

i) spreading sexual rumours about a person
j) sending sexually explicit emails, text messages or messages via other social media
k) unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging or kissing

Victimisation is subjecting someone to detriment because they have done, are suspected of doing, or intend to do an act which is protected under discrimination and harassment laws. It is not necessary for the person to have done the protected act in order for detrimental treatment to be considered as victimisation.
The protected acts are:
a) making a claim or complaint under the Equality Act 2010 (for example, for discrimination or harassment)
b) helping someone else to make a claim by giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the Equality Act 2010
c) making an allegation that someone has breached the Equality Act 2010, or
d) doing anything else in connection with the Equality Act 2010
Examples of victimisation may include:
a) Failing to consider someone for promotion because they have previously made a sexual harassment complaint
b) Dismissing someone because they accompanied a colleague to a meeting about a sexual harassment complaint
c) Excluding someone from work meetings because they gave evidence as a witness for another employee as part of an employment tribunal claim about harassment.

Circumstances Which Are Covered
This policy covers behaviour which occurs in the following situations:
a) a work situation
b) a situation occurring outside of the normal workplace or normal working hours which is related to work, for example, a working lunch, a business trip such as a fundraising event or social functions
c) outside of a work situation but involving a colleague or other person connected to the Charity, including on social media
d) against anyone outside of a work situation where the incident is relevant to your suitability to carry out the role.

Third-party sexual harassment occurs when one of our workforce is subjected to sexual harassment by someone who is not part of our workforce but who is encountered in connection with work. This includes our customers, suppliers, members of the public, families, clients, service users, patients, friends and family of colleagues,
Third-party sexual harassment of our workforce is unlawful and will not be tolerated. The law requires employers to take steps to prevent sexual harassment by third parties.
The law does not provide a mechanism for individuals to bring a claim of third-party harassment alone. However, failure for an employer to take reasonable steps to prevent third-party sexual harassment may result in legal liability in other types of claim.
In order to prevent third-party sexual harassment from occurring, we will:
• Inform all new families of our Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Bullying policy via the welcome pack
• Link the Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Bullying policy to our external website

If you have been subjected to third-party sexual harassment, you are encouraged to report this as soon as possible to the CEO Alternatively, you can report instances of third-party sexual harassment by emailing HR@playskill.org.
Should a customer sexually harass a member of our workforce, we will warn the client or customer about their behaviour/ban the customer/share information relating to the incident with our other relevant organisations. Any criminal acts will be reported to the police.
We will not tolerate sexual harassment by any member of our workforce against a third party. Instances of sexual harassment of this kind may lead to disciplinary action including termination of employment.
We provide signage at all of our work spaces clearly stating that harassment and bullying will not be tolerated and any behaviour of this nature will result in the perpetrator being asked to leave.

What To Do If You Are Subject To Sexual Harassment Or Victimisation
We are committed to ensuring that there is no sexual harassment, third party sexual harassment or victimisation in our workplace. Allegations of sexual harassment and victimisation will be treated as a disciplinary matter, although every situation will be considered on an individual basis and in accordance with the principles of our disciplinary procedures, a copy of which is available from HR.
Staff subjected to any form of sexual harassment will be offered direct support from their line manager, HR and directed to our Employee Assistance Programme. If time off as a result of the harassment is requested this will be considered on a case by case basis with full HR support. Extended time off must be approved by the CEO with all considerations for the well being of the staff member taking priority.

Informal complaint
We recognise that complaints of sexual harassment or victimisation can be of a sensitive or intimate nature and that it may not be appropriate for you to raise the issue through our normal grievance procedure. In these circumstances you are encouraged to raise such issues with a senior colleague of your choice (whether or not that person has a direct supervisory responsibility for you) as a confidential helper. This person cannot be the same person who will be responsible for investigating the matter if it becomes a formal complaint.
If you experience sexual harassment and you feel comfortable to do so, you should make it clear to the harasser on an informal basis that their behaviour is unwelcome and ask the harasser to stop. If you feel unable to do this verbally then you should hand a written request to the harasser, and your confidential helper can assist you in this.
In addition, you may also choose to raise concerns during your regular communication with your manager, for example, in a 1-2-1 meeting. Your manager will listen to you and take your concerns seriously if you do this, but may encourage you to follow the reporting procedures set out below.

Formal complaint
Where the informal approach fails or if the sexual harassment or victimisation is more serious, you should bring the matter to the attention of your line manager as a formal written complaint and again your confidential helper can assist you in this. Alternatively, you can report instances by emailing HR@playskill.org.

If possible, you should keep notes of what happened so that the written complaint can include:
a) the name of the alleged harasser;
b) the nature of the alleged harassment;
c) the dates and times when the alleged harassment occurred;
d) the names of any witnesses; and
e) any action already taken by you to stop the alleged harassment.

On receipt of a formal complaint, we will take action to separate you from the alleged harasser to enable an uninterrupted investigation to take place. This may involve a temporary transfer of the alleged harasser to another work area or suspension with contractual pay until the matter has been resolved.
The person dealing with the complaint will invite you to attend a meeting, at a reasonable time and location, to discuss the matter and carry out a thorough investigation. The meeting will normally be held within 10 working days of receipt of your complaint. You have the right to be accompanied at such a meeting by your confidential helper or another work colleague of your choice and you must take all reasonable steps to attend. Those involved in the investigation will be expected to act in confidence and any breach of confidence may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.
On conclusion of the investigation, which will normally be within ten working days of the meeting with you, the decision of the investigator, detailing the findings, will be sent in writing to you.
You have the right to appeal against the findings of the investigator. If you wish to appeal you must inform your line manager (or CEO) within ten working days. You will then be invited to a further meeting. As far as reasonably practicable, the Charity will be represented by a more Senior Manager than attended the first meeting (unless the most Senior Manager attended that meeting).
Following the appeal meeting, you will be informed of the final decision, normally within ten working days, which will be confirmed in writing.
Regardless of the outcome of the procedure, we are committed to providing the support you may need. This may involve mediation between you and the other party or some other measure to manage the ongoing working relationship. You will not be victimised for having brought a complaint.

What To Do If You Witness Sexual Harassment Or Victimisation
If you witness sexual harassment or victimisation, you are encouraged to take action appropriate action to address it. You should not take any action that may put you at risk of sexual harassment or other harm. If you feel able, you should intervene to prevent the matter continuing. If you are not able to do this, your action may include offering support to the person who has been sexually harassed and encouraging them to report the incident or reporting the incident yourself.
If reporting the incident, you should bring the matter to the attention of the CEO in writing. Alternatively, you can report instances of sexual harassment by emailing HR@playskill.org Your concerns will be handled by HR who will sensitively talk to the person subject to sexual harassment to determine how they want the matter to be handled. If you wish to remain anonymous please email your complaint to HR@playskill.org stating this.
Staff subjected to any form of sexual harassment will be offered direct support from their line manager, HR and directed to our Employee Assistance Programme. If time off as a result

of the harassment is requested this will be considered on a case by case basis with full HR support. Extended time off must be approved by the CEO with all considerations for the well being of the staff member taking priority.

Disciplinary Action

If the decision is that the allegation of sexual harassment or victimisation is well founded, the harasser/victimiser will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with our disciplinary procedure up to and including summary dismissal. An employee who receives a formal warning or who is dismissed for sexual harassment/victimisation may appeal by using our disciplinary appeal procedure.

When deciding on the level of disciplinary sanction to be applied, we will take into consideration any aggravating factors affecting the case. One example of aggravating factors is an abuse of power over a more junior colleague.

If, due to the investigation, it is concluded that your complaint is both untrue and has been brought with malicious intent, disciplinary action will be taken against you.

Training

We provide training to all our staff on sexual harassment to ensure there is a clear understanding of, amongst other things, what sexual harassment is and how it may occur, how to handle difficult public situations, that any poor behaviour will not be tolerated, expected levels of behaviour, how they can report any incidents of having been sexually harassed or having witnessed it and that acts of third party harassment will be dealt with under our code of conduct for service users and could potentially result in a family losing their Playskill space.

We ensure that all levels of management are trained on implementing this policy including preventing and managing third party sexual harassment in the workplace, and the procedure to follow if an allegation is reported.

We will regularly review the effectiveness of our training. We provide refresher training as appropriate.

We regularly evaluate our work environments and specific roles (lone workers) that face higher risk of third-party exposure.

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through our annual staff survey and staff training.

We will take active steps to try to prevent third-party harassment of staff. Action will include: warning notices to customers/third parties; information in terms and conditions; providing regular training for managers and staff to raise awareness of rights related to sexual harassment and of this policy; provide specific training for managers to support them in dealing with complaints; take steps to minimise occasions where staff work alone; where possible ensure that lone workers have additional support; carry out a risk assessment when planning events attended by clients/customers and/or suppliers.

If any third-party harassment of staff occurs, we will take steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again. Action may include warning the harasser about their behaviour, banning them from our premises and reporting any criminal acts to the police.

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