



Bullying and Harassment Policy

Land of Joy wishes to ensure everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

This policy applies to all trustees, visitors, volunteers, on and off the premises, including those involved with LoJ in any capacity such as attending retreats or contributing service from a distance or online.

Bullying can be described as offensive, intimidating, or insulting behaviour towards another, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

The legal definition of harassment also requires the behaviour to have 'the purpose or effect of violating people's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.'

It may be related to age, gender, race, disability, religion, belief, sexuality, nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident. Bullying or harassment may be by an individual against an individual or involve groups of people. It may be obvious, or it may be insidious. It may be face to face or in written communications, electronic (e)mail, phone. It may take place in private or in public. Whatever form it takes, it is unwarranted and unwelcome to the individual.

Examples of bullying/harassing behaviour could include:

- spreading malicious rumours
- insulting someone by word or behaviour (particularly on the grounds of race, sex, age, 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 such as overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position
- unwelcome sexual advances - touching, standing too close, the display of offensive materials etc.

Bullying needs to be distinguished from constructive and fair criticism and feedback, such as setting goals and priorities and introducing changes in procedures and roles. Interpersonal disagreements and conflicts, including the occasional raised voice, are not necessarily bullying. Behaviour that is considered bullying by one person may be considered firm management by another, so it is important to explore the intentions as well as the impact of someone's actions.

Procedures

Complaints of bullying and/or harassment, will be dealt with fairly, confidentially, and sensitively using the general format set out in the grievance policy (if an internal matter only) or the complaints policy and procedures.

If an individual wishes to raise a bullying harassment concern, they should approach the director in the first instance. If that feels inappropriate or that is who the concern is about, the chair of the Board of Trustees can be approached or the Safeguarding Lead or Designated Person.

In most cases if appropriate, the matter will be dealt with informally; sometimes people are not aware that their behaviour is unwelcome, and an informal discussion can lead to greater understanding and an agreement that the behaviour will cease. It may be that the individual will choose to do this themselves, or they may need support from a manager, a colleague or similar person.

If this way forward is not appropriate, either because it was tried and was unable to resolve the issues going forward, or if the matter was deemed very serious, then a complaint should be put in writing and passed to LoJ representative/s as described above. This will then lead to a more formal process and investigation following the grievance procedure or complaints policy depending on which is relevant.

The investigation must be seen to be objective and unbiased. Decisions can then be made as to what action needs to be taken. In cases which appear to involve serious misconduct, and there is reason to separate the parties, a short period of suspension of the alleged bully/harasser may need to be considered while the case is being investigated. The person making the complaint will not be asked to step back from their role or activities or leave unless they ask for such a move.

Someone who believes they are experiencing bullying or harassment needs to feel safe to come forward. If after further exploration, the matter is considered to be unfounded, the complainant will not face any criticism or further consequences unless the complaint is assessed as malicious or vexatious.

Land of Joy response to incidents of bullying and harassment aims to take into account the needs of the person being bullied as well as the needs of the person displaying bullying behaviour, and also alongside others within the organisation.

We will review the policy and learn from any incidents at regular intervals. We recognise that bullying is closely related to how we respect and recognise the value of diversity. We will be proactive about seeking opportunities to learn about and celebrate difference, to welcome diversity in our team and everyone in contact with Land of Joy.

Reviewed and agreed 7th November 2023