



## Bullying Policy & Procedure

Procedure No: 3-6200

Issue date: 15.9.14

Issue No: 3

Page: 1 of 2

**Purpose:** To ensure that staff, educators, clients and Learners are treated with respect and dignity, and to uphold the right of every individual to experience safety and freedom from violence, abuse or any form of intimidation.

**Responsible Person:** Chief Operations Officer

### Policy:

EQUALS International is wholly committed to providing an environment that is free from bullying. As an organisation which is underpinned by the spiritual values of unity, diversity and equality, we believe that staff, Learners and clients are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity. We believe that it is the right of every individual to experience safety and freedom from violence, abuse or any form of intimidation, whether overt or covert. Individuals must also demonstrate an awareness about the impact of their behavior on others. It is a fundamental obligation of all staff and Learners to behave respectfully and appropriately at EQUALS.

EQUALS considers that bullying is inappropriate and unacceptable behavior. Staff or Learners that are found to have either committed or condoned such behavior may be subject to disciplinary action.

It is important to accept the following in relation to bullying:

- it is often hidden and not easily observable
- reduction of the problem relies on information getting to those who are most able to act. Silence on the part of victims, staff, Learners and other individuals only contributes to the problem.
- education and awareness are key elements in the process.
- the policy needs to be well publicised so that everyone in the EQUALS community is familiar with it and can be involved in its implementation.
- there is need for on-going review of strategies and frequent education.
- no one strategy works; effective reduction of bullying comes from a multi-faceted approach.
- punishment for bullying behaviour is not generally an effective measure.
- bullying is a pattern of behaviour by one person towards another which is designed to hurt, injure, embarrass, upset or cause to discomfort to that person.

### Individual Responsibilities

Staff, educators, clients and Learners have a responsibility to ensure that their actions do not negatively affect another person's learning, career, health or well-being and are consistent with the EQUALS values and principles and the Learner Code of Conduct. This includes not condoning bullying by failing to take action, such as raising the matter with the bully or with a member of the management team.

An individual found to have bullied another person or to have condoned bullying may be subject to disciplinary action.

### Procedure

Bullying is a concern for the entire EQUALS community and consequently all Learners, staff, educators and clients have a role to play in eliminating it from our Institution.

1. If an individual is found to have bullied another individual EQUALS will detail the relevant information in individual file records. Those involved may also be requested to complete an incident report.
2. The individual found to have bullied another individual will receive counseling from EQUALS and continuation of learning with EQUALS International Pty Ltd will be at the total discretion of EQUALS.
3. Consultation with the victim will occur. Typically a meeting with the people involved will be convened to consult about the incident/s and to develop a shared understanding of the emotional and physical impact of the incident/s.



# Bullying Policy & Procedure

Procedure No: 3-6200

Issue date: 15.9.14

Issue No: 3

Page: 2 of 2

## Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as the repeated less favourable treatment of a person by another or others in the workplace which may be considered unreasonable and inappropriate in workplace practice. It includes behaviour that could be expected to intimidate, offend, degrade, humiliate undermine or threaten.

Bullying is physical or psychological behaviour or conduct where strength (including strength of personality) and/or a position of power is misused by a person in a position of authority or by a person who perceives that they are in a position of power or authority.

Bullying is normally associated with an ongoing systematic pattern of behaviour. An isolated incident of behaviour is not considered bullying, but may of course lead to action being taken against the perpetrator based on that single incident. A bully is equally likely to be male or female.

Bullying may be overt or covert.

### *Overt Bullying*

Examples of overt bullying may include:

- abusive behaviour towards another person such as threatening gestures or actual violence
- aggressive or abusive or offensive language, including threats or shouting
- demeaning remarks
- constant unreasonable and unconstructive criticism

### *Covert Bullying*

Examples of covert bullying may include:

- deliberate exclusion, isolation or alienation of an individual from normal interaction, such as intentionally excluding the person from activities
- unreasonably ignoring the person
- undermining another person, including encouraging others to "gang up" on the person
- deliberately withholding information that a person needs to exercise her or his role or entitlements within the organisation

Providing guidance, conducting performance counselling, invoking unsatisfactory performance procedures or misconduct procedures does not in itself constitute bullying. Supervisors and managers are expected to offer constructive advice and comment as part of their role in a way that does not demean or humiliate.

## Effects of bullying

Bullying in the Institution can result in absenteeism, compromised learning, Learner withdrawal, reduced productivity and motivation, and loss of experienced and skilled staff through resignation. Bullying may also have significant social and health costs for individuals, including loss of confidence, increased anxiety, depression, loss of sleep, headaches and increased blood pressure. Bullying can also affect others in the workplace in a similar way, even when they are only witnesses to the bullying and are not subject to the bullying themselves.

In addition to productivity and turnover issues, bullying has a seriously negative effect on the Institute through both management time in dealing with the problem and potential legal implications.

*Source: Adapted from the University of New South Wales [Accessed 28.4.11, <http://www.hr.unsw.edu.au/employee/gen/wkhmpol.html>]*

## Documents:

- F 791 Learner Code of Conduct
- F 002 Learner Handbook
- F 039 Incident Report