

Policy Guideline 4 – Bullying

Introduction

U3A Waverley Inc. (hereafter **U3A Waverley**) regards the dignity and autonomy of all people as a core value of the organisation. Bullying behaviour is based on the misuse of power in human relationships and negates the dignity and autonomy of its victims.

U3A Waverley is committed to eliminating, as far as possible, all forms of bullying in its operating environment and relationships through a culture of openness, support and accountability.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline **U3A Waverley's** position on bullying and to document the process for responding to a report of bullying.

Policy

This policy deals with repeated unreasonable behaviour that constitutes bullying.

“Unreasonable behaviour” is that which is offensive, humiliating, intimidating, degrading or threatening. It includes, but is not limited to

- Verbal abuse
- Excluding or isolating another person(s)
- Humiliation through sarcasm or belittling someone's opinions
- Constant criticism or insults
- Displaying written or pictorial material which may degrade or offend.

Bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person or group of people. It includes behaviour that could be expected to intimidate, offend, degrade, humiliate, undermine or threaten.

Bullying can occur between two or more members and/or tutors.

Bullying that directly inflicts physical pain or harm amounts to assault and will not be dealt with under this policy.

There will be occasions of difference of opinion, conflicts and problems. Only when the treatment of another person is repeated and unreasonable, offensive or harmful does bullying exist.

Formerly accepted behaviour may be found to be bullying when it continues after a request from the complainant to stop, or when it becomes intimidating, offensive or humiliating.

U3A Waverley has a duty of care to provide an environment free of intimidation and accepts and acts on this duty of care. Allegations of bullying that are reported to the Committee of Management will be investigated promptly, thoroughly and fairly.

Complaints will be treated in confidence and where confidentiality cannot be guaranteed this will be clearly indicated to the complainant.

All parties will be treated with respect.

The person against whom the allegation is made has the right to natural justice; that is the right to know what is alleged against them, the right to reply and the right for any decision to be made by an impartial decision-maker.

Procedures

A person who believes that they are the subject of bullying should take firm, positive and prompt action. Where appropriate, the perceived bully/bullies should be made aware that the subject behaviour is offensive, unwelcome and unacceptable and that it should stop immediately.

Where the behaviour continues or the person who feels bullied feels unable to speak directly to the perceived bully, he/she should report the matter in writing to **U3A Waverley Secretary** who will notify the President immediately.

The President or delegate will provide support to the complainant and ascertain the nature of the complaint and the wishes of the complainant. The complainant may adopt to have the matter dealt with by formal investigation or by less formal means.

Some forms of severe bullying, for example, physical attack or obscene phone calls, may constitute criminal conduct. While **U3A Waverley** is committed to treat complaints about bullying at an organisational level as far as possible, it would be inappropriate to hear complaints as to conduct which is potentially criminal. Such complaints should be handled by the criminal justice system and the complainant will be referred to the police. It is not the obligation or duty of **U3A Waverley** to report such matters on behalf of the complainant.

Responsibilities

U3A Waverley Committee of Management is responsible for developing, implementing, reviewing and publishing this policy.

It is the responsibility of **U3A Waverley's** Committee of Management to ensure that

- They understand and are committed to the right of all members and tutors to attend activities and venues without fear of being bullied in any way
- All reasonable steps are taken to eliminate bullying
- All members and tutors are made aware of their obligations and responsibilities to foster an environment that is free of bullying
- They foster an environment that discourages bullying and set an example by their own conduct
- All complaints are treated promptly, seriously and confidentially
- They take corrective action when they become aware of any offensive action
- Guidance and education is provided subsequent to decisions relating to bullying
- Ongoing support and guidance is provided in relation to the prevention of bullying.

It is the responsibility of all members and tutors to ensure that

- They understand and are committed to the rights and entitlements of all members and tutors to attend U3A premises and activities without fear of bullying
- They help foster an environment that discourages bullying.

U3A Waverley's Secretary is responsible for

- Receiving and responding to enquiries about this policy
- Receiving complaints about bullying and for bringing a complaint to the immediate attention of the President.

U3A Waverley's President, or his/her delegate, is responsible for interviewing and supporting a complaint.

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by the Committee of Management of **U3A Waverley** per the minutes of meeting held 10th December 2015.

Related Policies

U3A Waverley Sexual Harassment Policy

U3A Waverley Code of Conduct

U3A Waverley Discrimination Policy

