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Learner Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

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This document is issued and controlled by the Director of Performance and Development and can only be modified after proposed modifications have been accepted by the Company Directors.
The latest version will be maintained on the company S:Drive under Policies and Procedures

Scope

The Policy applies to all learners within Learning Curve Group and should be read in conjunction with The Student Discipline Procedure and Safeguarding Policy.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate LCG's determination to ensure that all learners can enjoy a learning programme free from bullying of any kind – physical or emotional – via direct or distant (cyberbullying) interface.

Comment

LCG will promote anti-bullying and harassment behaviour and an awareness of the seriousness with which bullying will be viewed, through:

- The Curriculum delivery
- Pastoral support
- Policy statements within appropriate student literature
- Staff development

Within each of these areas lies an understanding that every individual has a responsibility to prevent bullying, and responsibility for the implementation of our approach lies with everyone. Learners and parents should be aware of the procedures for complaints; details can be found in the provided handbooks.

Any allegation of bullying will be fully investigated and dealt with appropriately to ensure there is no recurrence. When a person is suspected of bullying, every effort will be made to establish the facts, and appropriate action will be taken to ensure there is no recurrence. The victim and bully will be offered support in the form of counselling if required.

Learning Curve regards bullying and harassment behaviour as a serious offence and will apply disciplinary procedures where appropriate.

Policy Statement

The following principles underpin this policy and are in accord with LCG's Vision and Values:

- Learning Curve Group values all of its learners equally, regardless of age, ability, race, gender, religion or sexual orientation. All victims of bullying will be treated in a supportive manner.
- Learning Curve Group recognises the detrimental effects on learners who may be subjected to bullying and will work efficiently to eradicate its occurrence.
- Learners within Learning Curve Group are entitled to enjoy a secure, happy and friendly environment in which they can learn effectively. LCG will do its utmost to establish and sustain such an environment.
- All bullying is unacceptable, regardless of its form or which excuses are given to justify it.
- Behaviour that would normally be reported to the police by a member of the public outside, e.g. assault or threat of violence, will also be reported if it takes place within LCG or when learners are under company supervision off the premises.

Aims of the Policy

- To prevent bullying of any form: physical, verbal, cyber, mental or used for gain in mate hate crimes
- To ensure that everyone is aware that bullying will not be tolerated
- To comply with all relevant Human Rights legislation
- To ensure that everyone understands that they have a responsibility for the safety and well-being of others

Objectives

- To provide and encourage a safe, listening environment in which learners feel free to discuss their concerns regarding bullying behaviour
- To raise everyone's awareness of bullying during induction and ongoing thereafter
- To identify and provide appropriate training for all staff in relation to identifying and preventing bullying
- To review annually the policy and procedures relating to bullying
- To monitor procedures and their effectiveness in preventing bullying
- To fully investigate any incidents of bullying and provide summary reports to senior management team
- To take positive actions to deal with bullying behaviour, including bullying behaviour used in mate hate crimes
- To provide appropriate training and support for victims of bullying and those involved in bullying behaviour, inclusive of mate hate crimes

Responsibilities

The individual responsibilities of our learners:

- Report all incidents of bullying to any member of staff without delay
- Act in a respectful and supportive manner to other learners, including reporting any suspected incidents which a victim may be afraid to report
- Refrain at all times from any behaviour which would contribute to the bullying of fellow learners
- Adhere to and promote the principles and practice of this policy.

The role of parents/guardians, providers, sponsors, employers and other stakeholders:

- Stressing to learners the importance of sociable behaviour
- Reporting any concerns they may have, concerning either victims or perpetrators of bullying.

The individual responsibilities of staff:

- To embrace a whole company approach that celebrates individuals and provides support for all learners
- To be familiar with LCG's anti-bullying policy through attending training events which the company will provide on a regular basis
- To recognise that the responsibility for dealing with bullying incidents rests with staff, managers and the Board
- To respond to queries and concerns from parent/guardians, providers, sponsors, employers and other stakeholders, positively and without delay
- To keep written records of incidents on the incident report forms available on the shared drive and to pass copies on to their line manager and to the designated anti-bullying lead, within the agreed timescale.

Implementation

Learning Curve Group will establish, maintain and regularly review:

- The use of pastoral time and other elements of the curriculum to raise learners' awareness of bullying issues and to develop learners' assertiveness in order that they may feel better able to deal with bullying situations
- The encouragement of staff to be proactive in combatting bullying to serve as a good role model for learners
- The reminding of learners and staff that Learning Curve Group is an organisation in which reports of bullying will be heard and dealt with
- The response rates to any bullying and the effectiveness of resolution
- The sanctions against bullies
- Support mechanisms for victims of bullying
- The recording of all bullying incidents in a centrally held log

- The monitoring of victims and bullies and the provision of special arrangements for any learners considered to be at risk, including guidance, counselling and information on other sources of support
- Factors which may influence the risk of bullying behaviour e.g. the company environment, supervision arrangements, company routine and procedures, security, staff guidelines and IT Policies etc.
- Communication of the policy to all staff, learners, providers, parents and other stakeholders
- Provide training to all staff to enable everyone to play an active role in combatting bullying
- The company ethos and protocols for dealing with bullying will be part of the induction process for all staff and learners
- The communication of anti-bullying information, a helpline and contact details for reporting incidents through different media throughout the company
- Proven incidents of bullying and breaches of the policy by learners will be dealt with within the Student Disciplinary Procedure, as well as supportive actions covered by the Anti-Bullying Procedure.
- The policy and practices in light of experience, legislation or changing circumstances etc.

Supporting documents and procedures

1.6 Staff Disciplinary Procedure

2.2.6 Student Discipline Procedure

2.10 Safeguarding Policy

4.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

GENERAL GUIDANCE

The Nature of Bullying

Bullying may be defined as the repeated intentional abuse of power by an individual or group with the intent and motivation to cause distress to another individual or group. It may be physical, sexual, verbal or psychological in nature. It may occur frequently or infrequently, regularly or irregularly, but it should be taken seriously even if it has only occurred on one occasion.

It may also take the form of harassment and could include verbal and written harassment, displays of obscene messages, graffiti or inappropriate use of social network sites.

Bullying is not a phenomenon which occurs solely between young people. The above definition can also be seen to characterise some adult/adult, adult/child and child/adult relationships.

In more serious instances where adults abuse their power over a young person, or a young person does this to another young person, bullying may be viewed as child abuse and should be seen within this content.

Not all aggressive behaviour is bullying. Behaviour that appears to be bullying may be exhibited by some young people – especially very young children – without the intention or awareness that it causes distress.

Some individuals may feel they are being bullied, even when there is no intention from others to cause them distress. Such perceptions of bullying should be taken seriously, and action should be taken to address this.

“Mate crime” is defined as the exploitation, abuse or theft from any vulnerable person by those they consider to be their friends. Those who commit such abuse or theft are known as ‘fake friends’. It is regarded as a form of disability hate crime or age hate crime, but can also resemble cases of domestic abuse, bullying or violence. Hate incidents, whether or not they are crimes, are a form of anti-social behaviour, but the distinct nature and seriousness of these incidents is recognised in this policy.

Why is it important to do something about bullying?

Bullying is always damaging to those involved. The victim, the bully and those who witness or even know about the bullying are affected.

Victims

Victims may spend their life in fear. They often feel isolated from their peers and may believe that it is something about themselves which has led the bully to pick on them.

The victim's life may be characterised by unhappiness, a sense of desolation and desperation, and exclusion from normal social experiences. Those feelings can permeate all aspects of the victim's life and may lead to a strong desire to escape the situation by running away from home, truanting from school, training, absences from work, and in some cases, self-harming or taking their own life.

The victims of bullying may have reduced self-esteem and self-worth and their performance in school, training, work and other areas often deteriorates.

Research evidence has shown that victims of bullying may be more likely to experience mental health problems and also that they are more likely to become bullies themselves.

Bullying Behaviour

Bullying is not a natural behaviour pattern and should not be seen as such.

People who often bully are likely to experience difficult and unhappy relationships with their peers and frequently need help to overcome these difficulties.

People who bully are unlikely to stop while they can continue unchallenged.

Cyberbullying

Bullying also occurs by misuse of technologies, e.g. emails, text messages and internet social network sites. Such occurrences must be tackled with equal importance to physical bullying.

Others

Bullying behaviour does not just affect the victim and perpetrator. Those who witness or know of bullying may live in fear that it will be their turn next.

Bullying promotes poor models of behaviour and may encourage others to imitate these models. People who have been bullied in one setting may well become bullies in another.

Evidence has shown that bullying is a major concern for parents and young people of all ages.

Organisations

Organisations that encourage or even tolerate bullying are less effective. Where values and culture of the organisation are dominated by fear and subordination, individuals are less efficient, morale is lower, and absenteeism is more frequent.