

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY for THE MENTAL SHIFT C.I.C.

Anti-bullying policy

All representatives of The Mental Shift C.I.C. understand that for all our participants to truly flourish they need to learn and work in a safe, caring and supportive environment. To this end bullying of any kind will not be tolerated – this includes any kind of intimidation, emotional, verbal, sexual harassment or physical abuse. The policy applies to all participants irrespective of gender, ethnic origin or religious persuasion.

There is no legal definition of bullying. However, it's usually defined as behaviour that is:

- Repeated
- Intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- Often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

Bullying takes many forms and can include:

- Physical assault
- Teasing
- Making threats
- Name calling
- Cyberbullying - bullying via mobile phone or online (for example email, social networks and instant messenger)

Bullying does not mean “falling out” with friends or a one-off episode (which the company will support participants to resolve through restorative approaches); it is repetitive and habitual .

The Anti-Bullying policy applies to all participants and representatives who work at our company and may extend beyond the service providers site; this includes trips and the use of social media networks. The policy therefore applies at all times when staff ‘duty of care’ responsibilities applies.

The representatives of TMS wish all parents and guardians to know that they expect the company to have a caring and supportive atmosphere in which participants can feel happy and secure and able to work to the best of their ability.

Bullying will not be tolerated – but we rely on being made aware of incidents – we cannot help if we do not know. If we are aware of bullying we will act.

Central to the definition of bullying is the motivation of the perpetrator(s), which will primarily be to exert power over another in order to cause distress. They can only operate behind a wall of fear and therefore can easily escape detection if bullying incidents are not reported. Therefore, we must create a ‘telling’ company, arising out of a listening and safe environment. We have a number of processes in the company for reporting things to us as staff.

Intrinsic to all this, is educating our pupils about bullying. Young people often say 'It was just a joke', not knowing or realising the impact that their behaviour has on another participant. It is essential that we provide an environment where participants feel safe to "tell" if they are aware of bullying. Should any bullying be taking place then pupils are always encouraged to tell an appropriate person at school.

The DSL or Program Director must be informed and an investigation conducted into the alleged incident. Incidents of bullying witnessed by staff should be dealt with immediately and the incident reported to the relevant person. If the bullying has a racist, homophobic or hate crime nature the company will follow Local Authority guidelines and Hate Crime Incident reporting forms will be completed and submitted to the Local Authority.

Parents/carers are encouraged to report bullying and in the first instance should do this via the Project Director.

All members of our community are given equal opportunities in line with the Disability Equality Scheme (DES).

Participants are entitled to expect:

- That they should be able to learn and work in a caring, supportive environment, where there is challenge but where bullying is not tolerated.
- That there is a wide range of support available to them if they become victims of bullying. This may include Safeguarding Mentors, restorative justice meetings, signed behaviour agreements and counselling. All incidents of bullying are unique and must be dealt with as such.
- That their views will be listened to as a way forward when there has been an incident of bullying
- That when bullying has taken place and the situation has been resolved there will be no recurrence
- That they will know what action is to be taken and, if appropriate, that their parents may be informed

TMS and the Governing Body expect that:

- All members of our community are alert for the signs of bullying
- The issue of bullying will be discussed openly and regularly
- Close links will be developed and strengthened with our external agencies which might help reduce bullying behaviour
- Members of our community are committed to taking effective and appropriate action in dealing with bullying
- Appropriate mechanisms are in place to support victims and investigate incidents

- Appropriate counselling, training and support systems are in place to re-educate the perpetrators

Guidance for Participants

We expect all our participants to:

- Always show respect to others and be aware of the pain that some words or actions can have on others
- Talk to an adult in the company or Safeguarding Mentor if they are being bullied or know someone who is.

Guidance for Parents

If you think your child is being bullied:

- Please contact the company immediately and speak to the Program Director
- Ask your child directly if they are being bullied
- Take bullying seriously
- Please do not agree to keep bullying secret

If we know – we can help

Policy Review

Last reviewed	By who	Next review
K Leighton	Feb 2023	Feb 2024