

SEND the Help CIC

Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy & Procedure

Policy Title: Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy & Procedure

Organisation: SEND the Help CIC

Last Reviewed: 23/09/25

Review Cycle: Annually (or sooner if legal updates / serious incident)

Next Review Due: 23/09/26

Approved by: Directors, SEND the Help CIC

1. Purpose

To ensure that everybody associated with SEND the Help CIC—practitioners, volunteers, young people, parents/carers, partners—is treated with dignity and respect, free from harassment or bullying. We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive environment where no one feels intimidated, marginalised, or unsafe because of another's conduct.

2. Scope

This policy applies to: - All SEND the Help CIC staff, practitioners, volunteers, partners - All young people engaged with our services - All interactions in our physical premises, during outreach or community work, online, or at partner sites

3. Legal & Regulatory Framework

We are guided by: - Equality Act 2010 – including protection for protected characteristics (disability, age, race, gender etc.) - Protection from Harassment Act 1997 - Relevant employment, volunteer, safeguarding, and data protection legislation - SEND Code of Practice – ensuring reasonable adjustments, inclusive environments, and sensitivity to vulnerability

4. Definitions

- Harassment: Any unwanted behaviour (verbal, non-verbal, or physical) which causes offence, humiliation, creates a hostile environment, or is related to any protected characteristic (or not). - Bullying: Repeated or persistent unwanted behaviour where power is imbalanced. Can be verbal, physical, psychological, or via digital media. - Victim: The person experiencing bullying or harassment. - Perpetrator: The person or people conducting bullying or harassment.

5. Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

These can include but are not limited to: - Unwelcome physical contact or invasions of personal space - Offensive verbal comments, jokes or insults (e.g., related to appearance, disability, SEND, race, etc.) - Spreading rumours, exclusion, or isolating someone socially - Inappropriate or offensive online or digital communications - Non-consensual sharing or display of images/material that are upsetting - Harassing behaviour indirectly, e.g. making someone feel uncomfortable by ignoring or excluding them

6. Responsibilities

- Directors / Leadership Team: Ensure this policy is implemented, reviewed, and that responsibilities and training are in place. - Designated Lead (e.g., Safeguarding Lead): Oversight of investigations, ensuring confidentiality, supporting victims, monitoring patterns. - Staff / Volunteers: Observe policy at all times, act as models of respectful behaviour, report incidents, support victims. - Parents / Carers & Young People: Understand and support the policy, report incidents, engage in restorative/mediation processes as needed.

7. Procedures for Addressing Harassment / Bullying

Informal Steps: - If comfortable, the victim should communicate directly with the person concerned, explaining that the behaviour is unwelcome. - If that is not possible or does not resolve the issue, speak to a named lead / supervisor confidentially. - The lead/supervisor will offer advice, attempt mediation, and support the restoration of positive relationships. Formal Procedure: - A written complaint must be submitted, including details of the behaviour, names, dates, witnesses, and what steps have already been taken. - The designated lead will initiate a formal investigation, ensuring neutrality, fairness, confidentiality, and timeliness. - A meeting may be offered within a reasonable period (often 5 working days) to hear both sides. Investigation & Outcome: - The investigation must explore evidence, interview witnesses, and document findings. - If bullying/harassment is found, proportionate action will be taken (from apologies and mediation to dismissal of volunteers or practitioners, depending on severity). - Follow up to ensure the victim feels safe and supported. Appeals: - If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal in writing to a senior leader or board member within a defined time (often within 5 working days). - The appeal will be reviewed by someone who was not involved in the original decision.

8. Confidentiality & Record-Keeping

- All reports and investigations will be handled sensitively and with discretion. - Only those who need to know will be involved in investigations. - Records of complaints, findings, and actions will be kept securely in accordance with GDPR and data protection policy. - Patterns or repeated incidents will inform policy reviews or training needs.

9. Monitoring & Review

- Leadership will review incident logs, feedback, and outcomes termly to spot trends, evaluate the effectiveness of responses, and ensure adherence to policy. - Feedback will be sought from young people, staff, and volunteers to understand if policy is working in practice. - Policy to be reviewed annually or sooner if changes in law / serious issues arise.

10. Related Policies

This policy should be considered alongside: - Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy - SEND Policy - Complaints Policy - Data Protection & GDPR Policy - Health & Safety Policy