

ANTI HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

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Harassment, whether racial or sexual in nature, can interfere with an individual's work performance and create a hostile working environment. Harassment may also occur between learners outside working hours. AVCT recognises the problems that racial and sexual harassment can have upon health, confidence and morale. All learners have a responsibility to comply with this policy and ensure that its terms are put into effect.

Identify Sexual or Racial Harassment

Conduct based on an individual's sex or race, which is unwanted, unreasonable and offensive to the recipient. Everyone reacts differently and what may not be offensive to one person may be offensive to another. Harassment may even be unintentional on the part of the harasser. In particular, sexual attention becomes sexual harassment if it persists once it has been made clear that it is regarded by the recipient as offensive or unwelcome, although one incident alone may constitute sexual harassment if it is sufficiently serious. Conduct based on an individual's sex or race, which creates an intimidating, hostile or humiliating work environment for the recipient. Where a person's refusal to submit to sexual or racial harassment influences a decision which affects that person's access to or continuation of employment, promotion, vocational training or any other decision affecting their employment. Victimisation of, or retaliation against a learner who has complained in good faith of sexual or racial harassment.

Responsibility of Managers and Supervisors

Staff in supervisory or management positions must ensure that as far as they are able, they are responsible for learner's welfare, if they become aware of any harassment taking place they should be supportive to learners who complain of harassment. Where it is not sufficient and the harassment continues or where it is difficult or inappropriate for the victim to raise the issue with the harasser, the learner should contact his/her manager. If the learner does not wish to make a formal complaint the supervisor, as appropriate, may, if felt necessary deal with the matter on an informal and confidential basis by speaking to the assessor on the victim's behalf. Where a formal complaint is made the supervisor will arrange for the complaint to be dealt with promptly and fully investigated, confidentiality will be preserved.

Following completion of the investigation, if appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. The disciplinary sanction will depend on the particular facts of each case. Serious incidents can constitute gross misconduct for which a learner may be summarily dismissed. In appropriate cases, AVCT may transfer the harasser or the complainant to the CEO of VNC, which may result in a change of responsibility and/or loss of status. During any investigation AVCT may suspend the alleged harasser or temporarily re deploy them. The procedure set out "What to do if you are subject to harassment" does not give any contractual or other legal rights to learners.

BULLYING POLICY

AVCT is dedicated to the training and development of their staff and young people on a wide range of training programmes. It is our aim to ensure that all staff and learners are offered

fair and reasonable access to employment and training without the burden of being bullied by others.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying may be seen as any form of harassment that may cause a person distress or discomfort, the following list of examples is not exhaustive but must be considered:-

- Name calling
- Blanking out
- Cyber Bullying
- Physical attack
- Sexual innuendos
- Sexual harassment

WHAT CAN WE DO TO PREVENT BULLYING ACTIVITY? We need to stay alert and look for signs of bullying at all times, when we feel that individuals are either dealing, or on the receiving end of bullying, we need to act promptly.

WHERE WE FEEL THAT AN INDIVIDUAL IS BEING BULLIED IT IS IMPORTANT:-

- To take the person to one side and enquire with caution if they are feeling harassed
- To act with confidentiality and not make it obvious to others in the group
- To let the injured party know clearly that you are working to help them with their difficulties
- To enlist the help of colleagues
- To enlist the help of personal advisors (with prior permission of the injured party)
- Not to ignore occurrences or signs of harassment of bullying

WHEN IT IS NECESSARY TO CHALLENGE A POTENTIAL OR SUSPECTED BULLY

- Act with caution
- Do not leave yourself open to reproach
- Do not put yourself in danger
- Enlist the help of a colleague to witness any interviews
- Document action taken and request that all parties present sign the report
- Do not make accusations
- Enlist the assistance of personal advisors (with prior permission of the person or persons involved)

ACTION Any persons who are responsible for causing other distress through acts of bullying or harassment will be advised of their unacceptable behaviour. Should their behaviour not be improved, further disciplinary action will be taken.