

Anti-Bullying and Harrassment Policy



Riding Establishment:

Overview

We are committed to maintaining a working environment that is free from harassment and bullying — one in which all staff are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect. For the purposes of this policy, ‘staff’ refers collectively to employees, apprentices, working pupils, officers, directors, consultants, contractors, volunteers, and casual workers.

This policy applies to incidents of harassment or bullying that occur both within the workplace and beyond it, including at competitions, work-related events or social functions.

Any member of staff who becomes aware of bullying or harassment should report it to their line manager.

Legal Compliance

This policy aligns with the Equality Act 2010, the Employment Rights Act 1996, and ACAS guidance on workplace conduct. It anticipates forthcoming duties under the Employment Rights Bill 2025, including:

- Employer liability for third-party harassment (from October 2026)
- Proactive duty to prevent sexual harassment
- Whistleblowing protections for disclosures of harassment (from April 2026)

What Is Bullying and Harassment?

Bullying and harassment refer to behaviours that cause someone to feel intimidated, offended, or degraded. Harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010. While bullying itself is not a legal offence, it is nonetheless unacceptable.

Harassment includes any unwanted physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct that violates a person’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. A single incident may be sufficient to constitute harassment. It also includes treating someone unfavourably because they have previously submitted to or rejected such behaviour.

Unlawful harassment may be sexual in nature or relate to a protected characteristic, such as age, sex, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation. Harassment is unacceptable regardless of whether it falls within these categories.

Where harassment is carried out by clients, contractors or other third parties, the organisation will take all reasonable steps to prevent recurrence. This may include

reviewing access, reporting to relevant bodies, and escalating concerns through safeguarding channels.

Bullying is defined as offensive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting behaviour that misuses power and causes someone to feel vulnerable, humiliated, or threatened. Power may stem from authority, personal influence, or the ability to coerce through fear or intimidation. Bullying may be physical, verbal, or non-verbal, and can include:

- Physical or psychological threats
- Excessive or intimidating supervision
- Inappropriate or derogatory remarks about performance

Bullying and harassment may occur:

- Face-to-face
- In writing
- By email or phone
- Via social media

Reasonable and constructive feedback, performance expectations, or lawful instructions given in the course of employment do not, in themselves, constitute bullying.

Zero Tolerance

Harassment and bullying will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Any staff member who harasses or bullies another staff member or client will be subject to disciplinary action. In serious cases, this may constitute gross misconduct and lead to dismissal or removal from duties in the case of volunteers.

We also do not tolerate harassment or bullying by clients or visitors. Where such behaviour occurs, individuals may be asked to leave.

Proactive Prevention Measures

We commit to proactive prevention through:

- Regular staff and volunteer training
- Clear reporting routes and visible support
- Integration with safeguarding and wellbeing frameworks

If You Are Being Harassed or Bullied

- **Informal Resolution.** If you feel able, consider raising the issue informally with the person responsible. Explain clearly that their behaviour is unwelcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this feels too difficult or embarrassing, speak to your line manager, who can offer confidential advice and support. If informal steps are not appropriate or have not resolved the issue, you may proceed to the formal process.

- **Formal Complaint.** To make a formal complaint, submit it in writing to your line manager. If the concern involves your line manager, refer it to your employer. Your complaint should include:
 - The name of the individual involved
 - A description of the behaviour
 - Dates, times, and locations
 - Names of any witnesses
 - Any steps already taken to address the issue

You may also raise concerns under the **Whistleblowing Policy**, particularly where the behaviour involves unlawful conduct or risks to welfare. Protection from detriment applies.

Formal Investigations

Complaints will be investigated promptly and confidentially. Only those directly involved will be informed. Investigations will be conducted by someone with no prior involvement in the matter and will be thorough, impartial and respectful of all parties.

You will be invited to a meeting, typically within one week of submitting your complaint, to share your account. You may be accompanied by a colleague or agreed representative, who must maintain confidentiality.

If the complaint involves an employee, we may consider suspension on full pay or temporary changes to working arrangements. The alleged individual will also be interviewed and given full details of the allegations, with the right to respond and be accompanied.

If the complaint involves a third party (e.g. client, contractor, visitor), we will take appropriate steps to protect those involved, balancing business needs and individual rights.

We will consider any request you make for changes to your own working arrangements during the investigation, such as adjusted duties or hours to reduce contact with the alleged individual.

Witnesses may be interviewed, and confidentiality will be emphasised throughout.

At the conclusion of the investigation, a report will be submitted to a nominated decision-maker. You will be invited to a meeting to discuss the outcome and any proposed actions. You may bring a colleague or representative. Where appropriate, the report and findings will be shared with both parties

Action Following the Investigation

If harassment or bullying is found to have occurred, prompt action will be taken.

Where the individual is an employee, the matter will be handled under the **Disciplinary Policy and Procedure**. If the individual is a third party, we will determine appropriate steps to address the issue.

Regardless of the outcome, we will consider how best to manage ongoing working relationships. This may include mediation, counselling, or adjustments to duties, location, or reporting lines.

Any staff member who knowingly provides false information or acts in bad faith during an investigation may face disciplinary action.

Appeals

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal in writing to the employer within seven days of receiving the decision. Your appeal should state your full grounds.

An appeal meeting will be held, usually within seven days of receipt. It will be chaired impartially by someone not previously involved, though they may invite others to attend. You may bring a colleague or representative.

The final decision will be confirmed in writing, typically within seven days of the appeal hearing. This concludes the process.

Protection and Support for Those Involved

Staff who raise concerns or participate in good faith must not face retaliation or victimisation. Any such behaviour will result in disciplinary action.

If you believe you have been treated unfairly, inform your line manager. If unresolved, escalate the matter through the Grievance Policy or this procedure.

Confidentiality and Record Keeping

Confidentiality is essential. Details of the complaint and investigation will only be shared on a need-to-know basis. Breaches may result in disciplinary action.

Records of complaints, outcomes, and related documents may be placed on personnel files