

# Bullying and Harassment Policy

## General Policy Statement

Quest Training is committed to providing a working environment free from bullying and harassment. We aim to ensure that all staff are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect.

This Policy is written with attention to the Worker Protection Act 2023 and the Equality Act 2010. Its intention is to prevent, or act on, any workplace bullying, harassment, or sexual harassment, which may occur at work or out of the workplace. This is including on work trips, or at work-related events, or social functions.

This Policy applies to all staff at all levels, including directors, employers, apprentices, agency and casual workers, and independent contractors.

## Aims

Our aim is to provide a working environment that respects the rights of every individual and where colleagues treat each other with the utmost respect. Any behaviour that undermines this aim is totally unacceptable.

Quest Training therefore deplores all forms of harassment and bullying, which will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

### **What is harassment?**

Harassment is any unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment. A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". Harassment also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.

It is unlawful under the Worker Protection Act 2023, and Equality Act 2010, to harass a person because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender or sexual orientation. It also includes conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment). Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Unwanted physical conduct including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing
- Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour
- Offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content or the display of offensive materials
- Unwanted jokes, banter, mocking, mimicking or belittling a person

### **What is bullying?**

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying can include the use of personal strength or the power to coerce through fear or intimidation, not necessarily from someone in a position of authority.

Bullying may be physical, verbal or non-verbal. It can include conduct that is not face-to-face, including via text message, email and social media.

Examples of bullying include:

- Physical or psychological threats
- Overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision
- Inappropriate derogatory remarks about a person or their performance
- Shouting at staff
- Persistently picking on people in front of others or in private
- Blocking promotion and training opportunities
- Regularly and deliberately ignoring or excluding staff from work activities or work-related social events
- Setting a person up to fail by overloading them with work or setting impossible deadlines
- Regularly making the same person the butt of jokes

Legitimate and reasonable criticism of a staff member's performance or behaviour, or reasonable management instructions, do not amount to bullying.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Senior Management/Line Managers

It is the responsibility of all Senior/Line Managers:

- To take the necessary action to prevent and deal with instances of bullying and harassment
- Provide and promote a work environment free from bullying and harassment
- Set positive examples by treating others with respect and setting standards by being a good role model
- Resolve incidents of bullying and harassment and correcting conduct or behaviour inconsistent with Quest's expected skills and behaviours
- Have undertaken relevant Equality and Diversity and Inclusion training
- Record on an employee's personal file, complaints of bullying and harassment, either where they are the victim or the alleged offender. This should include the action and the outcome of the complaint
- To offer support to their employees to enable the resolution of their complaints, both at the informal and formal stages of this Policy
- Review and update the Policy

### Employees

It is the responsibility of all employees:

- To be familiar with the contents of this Policy, and make sure behaviour is consistent with what we want to see
- To take personal responsibility for ensuring that they comply with the Policy, and the expectations of conduct and behaviour set out, and they treat every individual with dignity and respect
- To conduct themselves in a way which does not intimidate, cause offence, or embarrassment to others, and to be aware of behaviours which may cause offence, even if unintentional
- To conduct themselves in a way that adheres to Quest's expected Skills and Behaviours

- To help promote a working environment in which the dignity of employees is respected
- To discourage bullying, or harassment, by making it clear that they find such behaviour unacceptable and to report any concerns in accordance with this Policy

### **Breaches of this Policy**

Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated in our workplace, and all staff are required to treat each other, along with our apprentices and visitors, with dignity and respect. Breaches of this Policy will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure. Serious cases of bullying or harassment may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

Staff who make complaints, or who participate in good faith in any investigation, must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. However, making a false allegation deliberately, and in bad faith, will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure. Anyone found to have retaliated against, or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

### **If you believe you are being Harassed or Bullied**

If you believe you are being harassed or bullied, you may wish to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. Explain the situation and how it has made you feel. It can be helpful to describe the event so the other person is clear about your concerns. Use the opportunity to ask the person to change or stop their behaviour. Alternatively, you may speak to your line-manager, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally, or informally.

If you do not feel that informal steps are appropriate, or they have been unsuccessful, you should raise the matter formally under our Grievance Procedure. All complaints will be investigated by line managers using our Grievance Policy and Procedure.

If the line manager considers that there is sufficient evidence to suggest you have been harassed or bullied, we will consider the appropriate action to take. If the person accused is an employee, this may include invoking our Disciplinary Procedure. Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned.

### **Related Policies**

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Safeguarding Policy, Prevent Strategy
- Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Staff Recruitment and Training Policy
- Staff code of Conduct
- Quest Behaviour Framework

This Policy will be reviewed yearly as part of our Quality Assurance cycle.

I confirm that this Policy is authorised and approved by Abbie Fulks – Managing Director.



Signed:

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2025

Implementation Date: 29<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Date of next review – September 2026