Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy

Policy statement

British Exploring Society is committed to preventing and tackling all forms of bullying.
This is part of its commitment to the safeguarding of all children and vulnerable adults where those groups are affected and also encompasses a broader commitment to prevent bullying throughout British Exploring Society including for Employees, Trustees and our broader community.

British Exploring Society's purpose is the empowerment and personal development of young people. Through its programmes it helps young people to build their confidence, resilience and communication skills. We wish to enable young people to manage and cope with difficult situations they may be presented with, including issues related to bullying.

British Exploring Society will;

- Develop and uphold an anti-bullying culture where the harassment and bullying of adults, children and young people is not tolerated in any form.
- Challenge all types of harassment and bullying, including prejudice-based bullying and language to make sure it is stopped and those involved receive the support they need.
- Encourage diversity and creating a culture where difference is celebrated and respected.

British Exploring Society requires all its staff and volunteers to be receptive to the needs of children and vulnerable adults, to be vigilant to potential bullying issues and committed to upholding this policy in their interactions with all stakeholders.

Purpose

Every member of our community, including staff, young people, volunteers and trustees has the right to feel safe and happy. This policy is for and to help staff, volunteers and trustees. It outlines what British Exploring Society will do to identify, tackle and prevent all forms of bullying.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, young people, volunteers and trustees during their involvement in the activities of British Exploring Society. It is the responsibility of everyone to work together to prevent and tackle bullying.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our latest Sexual Harrasment Policy and the *SOP 'Recognising and Responding to Safeguarding Concerns', the SOP 'Shared Code', Photography & Filming Policy'* and our *Employee Handbook* where relevant.

Definition of harassment

Harassment is where a person is subject to uninvited conduct that — as an intended or unintended consequence — violates their dignity, in connection with a protected characteristic. Our Equity, Diversity and Opportunity Policy defines 'protected characteristic'. Harassment could be carried out by a colleague or by a third party such as a partner.

We define harassment as behaviour that creates a hostile, humiliating, degrading or similarly offensive environment in relation to a protected characteristic. Name calling, lewd comments, excluding colleagues, making insensitive jokes, and displaying pornographic material are all examples of harassment.

Physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct can all amount to harassment. So can things you say or do online, especially on social media.

This policy covers isolated or ongoing incidents of offensive behaviour. When someone treats another person less favourably because they either submit to such behaviour or refuse to do so, we also see that as harassment.

The impact on the victim is very important. A person's behaviour can amount to bullying or harassment even if they had no idea it would be perceived that way.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is offensive, hostile or oppressive behaviour. It can happen to anyone and anywhere and can include online and offline behaviour. It is usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt the subject both physically and emotionally.

Bullying can be defined as "behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally" (DfE "Preventing and Tacking Bullying", 2017)

Bullying behaviour can include:

- physical bullying: hitting, slapping, pushing or kicking someone
- verbal bullying: name calling, gossiping or saying nasty things to or about the subject, spreading hurtful or untruthful rumours
- non-verbal abuse: hand signs or text messages
- emotional: making threats, undermining someone, excluding someone from a friendship group or activity
- racial, homophobic, transphobic or sexist comments, taunts or gestures
- bullying someone because they have a disability

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Cyberbullying behaviour can include:

- sending offensive, upsetting or inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, social media sites and apps
- trolling – the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- excluding the subject from online games, activities or friendship groups

The Consequences of Harassment and Bullying

British Exploring Society recognises that harassment and bullying causes real distress and damage. It can affect a person's health, confidence, morale and development and the performance of staff, where relevant. At the extreme, it can cause significant harm. Everyone regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, has the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

Harassment and Bullying are not condoned or permitted. For employees it may be treated as misconduct which may ultimately warrant dismissal. For expedition members and programme it is an infraction of the Shared Code and may be met with disciplinary action including, in some cases, removal from an expedition/programme.

Preventing and responding to harassment and bullying

British Exploring Society will seek to prevent and respond to bullying by:

- Ensuring that all staff, volunteers and trustees see and understand this policy
- Ensuring all expedition members see and agree to conduct themselves according to the Shared Code
- Providing support and training for staff and volunteers on recognising and dealing with bullying, including racist, sexist, homophobic and sexual bullying. Being aware of and alert to unacceptable behaviour and taking appropriate action to stop it.
- Ensuring that any complaints in connection with this policy are dealt with promptly, seriously and confidentially
- Ensuring that our response to incidents of bullying considers:
    - the needs of the person being bullied
    - the needs of the person displaying bullying behaviour
    - needs of other participants, volunteers, staff or participating adults
- Monitoring incidents of bullying and reviewing the effectiveness of this policy annually including with our Safeguarding Trustee as part of our commitment to Safeguarding at Board level
- Including discussions and training about bullying and how to prevent it as part of all programme delivery with children and young adults. Sessions will include:
    - group members' responsibilities to look after one another and uphold the Shared Code
    - practising skills such as listening to each other, respecting individual space and working together as a group
    - respecting the fact that we are all different
    - dealing with problems in a positive, constructive way
    - openly discussing our differences and celebrating our diversity

All staff, volunteers and trustees will seek to prevent and respond to harassment and bullying by:

- Responding to harassment and bullying incidents in accordance with procedures set out in our Safeguarding Policy if there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child or young adult is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of being the target of bullying
- For those involved in programme delivery, by adhering to the Shared Code of Ethics which sets out how everyone involved in programme delivery is expected to behave and interact with others
- Working to create a culture where everyone, including children and young people, feels confident and safe to speak out about any incidents of bullying and to provide appropriate support and guidance to those involved
- Being alert to signs of distress which may indicate someone has been or is being bullied
- Escalating concerns about bullying that have been brought to you or concerns that you have been made aware of, to the appropriate safeguarding lead on expedition or at British Exploring Society's offices
- Escalating concerns about cyberbullying or bullying activity that you have witnessed or been made aware of online, to the appropriate safeguarding lead on expedition or at British Exploring Society's offices.

How we deal with harassment and bullying

Many issues may be able to be resolved informally and it's sometimes a good idea to speak with the person you feel is harassing or bullying you and explain that their behaviour is unwelcome, inappropriate, or upsets you. Surprisingly it can often be the case that people think of their behaviour as 'banter' and have no idea that it is upsetting or unacceptable and would not have behaved in such a way if they thought this would have made you feel upset.

Sometimes it is difficult to speak with the perpetrator directly and if you feel this is the case, you are encouraged to speak to a member of management directly who will assist you. If the issue is with your manager — or there's another reason you would prefer not to discuss it with them — you should speak to their line manager or another appropriate member of management.

It's not always possible to resolve issues informally. If you find yourself in that situation, you should follow our Grievance Policy.

Protecting confidentiality

We will treat your complaint in confidence, as far as is possible, and if we find that you have been the victim of harassment or bullying, we will take steps to stop it continuing or recurring.

We have a duty of care to all staff, and therefore in instances where a complaint of bullying or harassment is raised informally or in confidence, we may choose to investigate this anyway (especially if this is very serious conduct), to ensure such conduct is eradicated. We will however discuss this with you and factor in all circumstances.

If you make a harassment or bullying complaint and don't maintain proper confidentiality at any time during the process, or you are interviewed in connection with someone else's complaint and likewise fail to maintain confidentiality, you may face action under our Disciplinary Policy.

Where you raise a complaint, and this leads to disciplinary action against another member of staff, any subsequent disciplinary outcome will be confidential in itself and therefore it may not be appropriate in the circumstances to disclose the level of sanction or the content of such to you. We will however ensure that the sanction is appropriate for the circumstances.