



Bullying Policy

1. Purpose

This policy deals with repeated, unreasonable behaviour that constitutes bullying. There will be occasional differences of opinion, conflicts and problems. Only when the treatment of another person is repeated, unreasonable, offensive or harmful does bullying exist.

Glen Eira U3A is fully committed to eliminating, as far as is possible, all forms of bullying in its operating environment and relationships.

2. Scope

2.1 Definition of Unreasonable Behaviour

Bullying is covered under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) as a form of harassment. It is also considered an occupational health and safety issue under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004. Serious cases of bullying might also fall under the Crimes Act (Vic) 1958.

“Unreasonable behaviour” is behaviour that is offensive, humiliating, intimidating, degrading or threatening. It includes, but is not limited to:

- Verbal abuse
- Excluding or isolating another person/s
- Humiliation through sarcasm, or belittling someone’s opinions
- Constant criticism or insults
- Spreading misinformation or malicious rumours
- Displaying written or pictorial material which may degrade or offend
- Deliberately setting work routines or procedures to inconvenience certain persons
- Disproportionate assignment of unpleasant or meaningless work to certain persons.

2.2 Definition of Bullying Behaviour

“Bullying” is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person or group of persons. It includes behaviour that intimidates, offends, degrades, humiliates, undermines or threatens another person or persons.

It is considered to be bullying when behaviour continues after a request from the complainant for the behaviour to stop, or at the point it becomes intimidating, offensive or humiliating.

2.3 Complaints and Breach of Policy

A person who believes that he/she is the subject of bullying should take firm, positive and prompt action. Where appropriate, the perceived bully/bullies should be made aware that their behaviour is offensive, unwelcome and unacceptable, and that it needs to stop immediately.

Where the behaviour continues, or the person who feels bullied feels unable to speak directly to the perceived bully, they should report the matter to the Secretary who will notify the President immediately.

Glen Eira U3A has a duty of care to provide a safe environment and accepts and acts on its duty of care. Any allegations of bullying that are reported to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee will be investigated promptly, thoroughly, and fairly.

Complaints will be treated in confidence, and where confidentiality cannot be guaranteed this will be clearly indicated to the complainant.

All parties will be treated with respect.

2.4 Management of Complaint

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee member or delegate is responsible for interviewing and supporting a complainant and will provide support to the complainant and ascertain the nature of the complaint and the wishes of the complainant. The complainant may opt to have the matter dealt with by formal investigation or by less formal means.

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee member or delegate will:

- Take corrective action when they become aware of any offensive action
- Provide guidance and education, if recommended, on decisions relating to bullying
- Provide ongoing support and guidance in relation to the prevention of bullying.

The complaint will be handled in accordance with Glen Eira U3A's **Grievance and Dispute Resolution Policy**.

2.4 Limits of Responsibility

Some forms of severe bullying, for example, physical attack or obscene phone calls, may constitute criminal conduct.

Glen Eira U3A is committed to treating most complaints about bullying as far as possible. However, potentially criminal conduct is not suited to internal resolution and should be handled by the criminal justice system. Complainants will be advised of the option of police support or intervention. It is not the obligation or duty of Glen Eira U3A to report such matters to Victoria Police on behalf of the complainant.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

This policy applies equally to all members and volunteers including:

- Glen Eira U3A Management Committee (the Committee)
- All volunteers (honorary and member), tutors (honorary and member) and/or contractors who undertake activities and functions performed on behalf of Glen Eira U3A

It is the responsibility of all members and volunteers to ensure that:

- They understand and are committed to the rights and entitlements of all members and volunteers to attend Glen Eira U3A premises and activities without fear of bullying
- They help foster an environment that discourages bullying.

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee and Management Committee are responsible for:

- Developing, endorsing, implementing, publishing and reviewing this policy
- Reviewing and confirming any exemptions from this policy
- Investigating and resolving any serious issue or grievance about a breach of this policy within an acceptable time frame.
- Taking all reasonable steps to eliminate bullying
- Ensuring all members and volunteers are made aware of their obligations and responsibilities to foster a U3A environment that is free from bullying
- Fostering an environment that discourages bullying, and setting an example by their own conduct
- Treating all complaints promptly, seriously and confidentially
- Being aware of whether bullying is occurring, whether complaints are received or not, relying on such indices as:
 - sudden increases in absenteeism from courses or volunteering
 - sudden deterioration in participation
 - behavioural changes such as depression

The Secretary is responsible for:

- Receiving and responding to enquiries about this policy
- Receiving complaints about bullying and for bringing a complaint to the immediate attention of the President.

4. Revision History

Version	Date	Changes
V1.0	19 June 2017	Endorsed by Glen Eira U3A Management Committee
V2.0	11 May 2023	Endorsed by Glen Eira U3A Management Committee
V3.0	30 May 2024	Endorsed by Glen Eira U3A Management Committee