

POLICY ON BULLYING AND HARASSMENT OF SCOTTISH GYMNASTICS' EMPLOYEES

For: All members of Scottish Gymnastics, including Board of Directors, and Technical Panel members

Policy Statement

Scottish Gymnastics Association (SGA) has a continuing responsibility to maintain, as far as reasonably practical, the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees whilst at work within the office environment or outwith the office, during events, meetings or social occasions. In accordance with this, Scottish Gymnastics seeks to ensure that members of staff are treated with dignity and respect during the course of their duties. This includes providing a work place that is free from bullying and harassment by Board members, Panel members or other SGA members, representatives of local authorities and other associated organisations. Harassing or bullying behaviour outside working hours at social events or events connected to work and the workplace will not be tolerated. Legally, it is possible to define work related social functions as an extension of employment.

The following procedures are designed to inform members of staff as well as SGA members of the types of behaviour which the Association deems unacceptable and provide a recognised, structured means of resolving the problem should a member of staff be involved in bullying or harassment.

Definition of Bullying and Harassment

Bullying can be defined as:

Persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, which makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, undermines their self-confidence and may cause them to suffer stress.

Please note that bullying has many forms. In particular bullying can be constituted by verbal (eg telephone conversation) or written (e.g. email communication) means.

Examples of bullying behaviour, which Scottish Gymnastics considers to be unacceptable, are listed below. This list is not exhaustive.

- Shouting at a member of staff
- Persistent negative attacks on a member of staff's personal or professional performance
- Belittling or unprofessional criticism of a member of staff and more so if in front of others or copied to others via email.
- Spreading malicious rumours or allegations
- Threatening behaviour or attack, both verbal and physical
- Isolating staff by treating them as non-existent
- Undervaluing a member of staff, withholding significant information
- Any other action or omission that adversely impacts upon the employment of a member of staff

Harassment can be defined as:

Any behaviour or conduct, which is inappropriate or unsolicited, unwanted and unacceptable to the recipient making them feel upset, embarrassed, offended, isolated, threatened or humiliated. This may be one serious incident or a series of incidents.

Forms of harassment can range from the use of offensive language to extreme violence. In whatever form, it is unwanted, unwelcome and unpleasant. People can be subjected to harassment on a variety of grounds including:

- Race, ethnic origin, nationality or skin colour
- Gender or sexual orientation
- Religious, political or personal beliefs and convictions
- Physical characteristics
- Willingness to challenge harassment (may lead to victimisation)
- Disabilities, sensory impairments or learning difficulties
- Ex-offenders
- Age
- Real or suspected infection with AIDS/HIV and other diseases

It is important to note, that it is not the intention of the perpetrator but the behaviour or actions and their impact upon the recipient that constitutes harassment.

Examples of harassment include:

- Unwelcome physical contact, ranging from touching to serious assault
- Inappropriate jokes or gossip, offensive language, e-mails, text messages or messages on social networking sites, slander or sectarian songs (in verbal or written form)
- Display of offensive posters, emblems or graffiti; obscene gestures
- Isolation or non-cooperation
- Exclusion from social activities otherwise open to all in a work group
- Coercion for sexual favours or pressure to participate in political/religious groups
- Intrusion by pestering, spying, stalking

Consequences of Bullying and Harassment

Anyone can be a victim of bullying or harassment and it can occur at any level within the organisational hierarchy. Although the bully or harasser may hold a position of power or authority, bullying or harassment can also happen at peer group level or be instigated by subordinates or by members or partners. Bullying and harassment are not only unacceptable on moral grounds but may, if unchecked or badly handled, cause serious problems for both employers, members of staff and SGA members. Consequences may include:

For the individual:

- Loss of confidence and self-esteem
- Demotivation
- Poor work quality and reduced output
- Stress or anxiety related ill-health

- Stress and strain in personal or family life
- Resignation from work
- Potential tribunal or court cases

For the organisation:

- Increased absenteeism
- Increased employee turnover
- Decline in employees relations, loss of team spirit or possible industrial unrest
- Lack of motivation within the workforce
- Decline in productivity or profit
- Damage to the organisation's reputation as an employer
- Disciplinary proceedings
- Potential tribunal or court cases

Achieving high levels of performance from people at work is essential for an organisation to be successful and employees cannot contribute their best or work well when under fear of harassment, bullying or abuse. Scottish Gymnastics will not tolerate such behaviour and accordingly encourages an open and trusting culture where members of staff have the confidence to report bullying or harassment without fear of the consequences

Communication

The policy will be communicated in the following ways:

Scottish Gymnastics will communicate these procedures to all employees via team meetings, to board and panel members via email/ hard copy and members via the web. The policy will also be included in the staff and the Association's handbooks. New employees will be informed of the policy during formal induction training. Scottish Gymnastics will expect all members of staff to be responsible for their behaviour within the workplace and outwith, during events, meetings or social occasions and have knowledge of, and adhere to, this policy at all times.

Procedure

Managing a live situation:

A member of staff who is involved in a live situation where they feel they are being treated inappropriately should:

- Request that the abusive/threatening behavior ceases with immediate effect
- Request again and advise that communication will be terminated if this behavior continues
- Cease communication; by terminating a call, by advising the person that the meeting/discussion is at an end, by leaving the meeting or asking the person to leave

Reporting an incident:

Scottish Gymnastics acknowledges the sensitive nature of complaints involving bullying/ harassment and will follow up on incidents of abusive/ threatening behavior toward members of staff. Members of staff who wish to discuss such complaints in confidence should contact the CEO, or, if unavailable, the Head of Corporate and Member Services. Once abusive/ threatening behavior has been reported, the CEO will listen sympathetically to the staff members concerns, will clarify the Associations policy and advise on the course of action available. The

CEO/HOCMS will record the discussion; with all correspondence being held in a secure confidential file.

The member of staff (employee) should also put their concerns in writing while the matter remains fresh in their mind and this should include:

- The name of the harasser
- The nature of the harassment
- Dates and times when harassment occurred
- The names of any witnesses to the harassment
- Any action taken by the complainant to stop the harassment

Subsequent to the reporting of the incident, the CEO will determine whether an informal or formal approach is appropriate. However, it will be the responsibility of the CEO to discuss the action taken to date and what should be done in future should any other incidents occur. An incident notification will also be kept in a confidential file.

Informal Stage

Scottish Gymnastics recognises that it is preferable for all concerned if complaints of bullying or harassment are dealt with informally wherever possible. The member of staff being bullied/harassed should approach the alleged harasser advising them that his/her behavior is offensive, the reasons why, and the impact such behavior is having on them. They should be asked to stop using such behaviour forthwith.

In the event that the member of staff being bullied or harassed feels incapable of taking these steps, they can request the presence of their Line manager. If they feel that even this support is insufficient, they may request that their line manager contact the alleged bully/harasser on their behalf.

Note: The member of staff should record any informal action including dates, witnesses and relevant comments made by those involved. This should then be passed to the CEO or Head of Corporate & Member Services.

It may be that the perpetrator has been unaware of, or is insensitive to the impact of their behavior on the bullied/harassed member of staff and so hopefully this informal approach will put an end to the situation. The harasser may opt to apologise to the members of staff, or to confirm that they understand the impact of the behavior and agree to ensure it does not happen again.

However, if after this informal approach has been tried, the reaction from the harasser is not positive and supportive, or if the behavior continues, the member of staff affected, may decide, in conjunction with the CEO/Head of Corporate & Member Services, to progress with the formal procedure.

Formal Procedure

Scottish Gymnastics is aware that formal procedures will be necessary where the informal stage proves ineffective, or for more serious instances of bullying or harassment, or where a member of staff prefers to use the formal procedure.

Initially, complaints should be raised with the CEO. The complaint should include the information which is detailed in "Reporting an Incident" section of this policy. The member of staff may also wish to discuss the matter with his/her line manager.

Investigation

Upon receipt of a complaint, the CEO will be responsible for initiating an investigation as quickly as possible, usually within ***fourteen*** working days.

- The alleged bully or harasser will be informed in writing that an allegation has been made and the nature of the allegation.
- Where the alleged bullying or harassment is serious, (e.g. serious verbal intimidation or physical attack) the alleged bully or harasser may be suspended in accordance with the provisions of The Association's Disciplinary Code of Practice, pending an investigation.
- The member of staff, alleged bully or harasser and any witnesses will be interviewed to ascertain the facts.
- All matters relating to the Investigating process will be kept confidential. **Note:** A breach of confidentiality will be viewed seriously and will be dealt with in accordance with Association's Disciplinary Code of Practice.
- After taking into consideration all available information, the CEO along with the HOCMS will decide whether or not to proceed with disciplinary action.

Where it is concluded that the allegation of bullying or harassment is unjustified or that evidence is insufficient or inconclusive, the member of staff shall be informed in writing that no formal disciplinary action will be taken. All paperwork relating to the investigation will then be destroyed.

Disciplinary Hearing

Where the CEO deems a disciplinary hearing appropriate, the matter will proceed in accordance with the Associations Disciplinary Code of Practice.

Appeal Procedure

Any appeal will proceed in accordance with the Associations Disciplinary Code of Practice.

Monitoring

Responsibility for monitoring the application of this policy will rest with the CEO. This policy will be regularly monitored with amendments being made as appropriate. The policy will also be reviewed in the following circumstances:

- As a result of any changes in legislation
- As a result of any changes in governance of the sport
- Following a procedural review as a result of a significant case