Volunteer Harassment & Bullying: Template

*Information in this document is provided for guidance only.*

Intent

Here, we suggest you state the overall purpose of your organisation and how and why volunteers are involved. An example of an overarching purpose statement would be:

*At* ***[organisation name]*** *we expect the highest level of personal conduct from all staff, workers and volunteers, regardless of position.* ***[Organisation name]*** *is a friendly and open place to work and we achieve this through a balance of office culture and sense of humour. This culture must not interfere with upholding high levels of professionalism in all areas.*

Definitions

"Harassment" is unwelcome verbal or physical behaviour or conduct (including displaying visual material) which causes offence, humiliation or intimidation of another person in the workplace. It may or may not be intentional. It may involve behaviour through emails, social media, phone calls and texts. It includes sexual harassment, racial harassment and bullying.

"Sexual harassment" involves inappropriate sexual behaviour or displays in the workplace that cause fear, intimidation and detriment. It includes:

* a direct or indirect request to a volunteer for sexual contact or activity that contains:
* an implied or overt threat of detrimental treatment, or
* threat to current or future employment status, or
* a promise of preferential treatment behaviour that is unwelcome or offensive to a volunteer and
* is repeated or significant enough to have a detrimental effect on their volunteering, role performance or role satisfaction.

"Racial harassment" involves behaviour or use of language and visual displays that directly or indirectly express hostility against or brings a person into contempt or ridicule because of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, and it offends the person and it is so significant or repeated that it has a detrimental effect on their volunteering and role satisfaction.

"Bullying" is behaviour directed at a person or group in the workplace that can cause physical and psychological harm. It is unreasonable and usually repeated behaviour and includes victimising, humiliating, intimidating, or threatening a person.

Requirements

**Prevention**

Awareness about bullying and harassment and demeaning and degrading behaviour will be promoted in the workplace (e.g., visual materials, induction and training).

The signs, indicators and processes for dealing with bullying and harassment will be addressed as part of induction and health and safety meetings.

The risks of bullying and harassment will be reviewed and monitored and controls for risks implemented in accordance with our Health and Safety Policy.

**Informal options**

Bullying and harassment may be dealt with informally. The volunteer can choose to:

* raise the issue directly with the person whose behaviour they are concerned about
* ask a colleague to informally talk to the other person about their behaviour
* ask the person to participate in mediation.
* A record should be kept of informal discussions and the outcome.

**Formal complaint**

The volunteer (the "complainant") can choose to make a formal complaint in writing in their own capacity or through their representative (e.g. Volunteer Coordinator) to management.

On receipt of the complaint, all reasonable steps will be taken to protect the complainant from any bullying or harassment.

The complaint will be treated and dealt with as an allegation of misconduct with:

* the complainant’s views considered
* the complainant kept informed of the process (e.g., the outcome and process of investigation)
* disciplinary action taken on a finding of harassment or bullying.

**External options**

Complaints about sexual and racial harassment may be progressed externally if the volunteer prefers to not rely on internal processes. Options are below.

**Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission**

The Human Rights Commission provides a free and confidential mediation service. If mediation doesn’t resolve the dispute, the volunteer can take the dispute to the Director of the Office of Human Rights Proceedings, Human Rights Review Tribunal.

For more information contact the Human Rights Commission:

* Phone: 0800 4 YOUR RIGHTS (0800 496 877)
* Email: infoline@hrc.co.nz
* Visit the [Human Rights Commission website](https://tikatangata.org.nz/).

**New Zealand Police**

Police should be contacted if behaviour involves criminal activity (e.g., violence, threats).

**Bullying through cyber and digital technology**

If bullying occurs through digital channels in, or out, of the workplace, then the Harmful Digital Communications Act 2015 might apply. Harmful digital communication and cyberbullying includes:

* sending or publishing threatening or offensive material
* spreading damaging rumours
* sending or publishing sensitive personal information such as embarrassing photos and videos.

Digital communication includes any form of electronic message such as texts, photos, pictures, recordings etc. Cyberbullying complaints can be made to [Netsafe](https://netsafe.org.nz/).