

Bullying Policy

Introduction

1. Altona U3A Inc regards the dignity and autonomy of all people as a core value of the organisation. Bullying behaviour is based on the misuse of power in human relationships, and negates the dignity and autonomy of its victims.

2. As part of its duty of care to members and volunteers, Altona U3A Inc is fully committed to eliminating, as far as is possible, all forms of bullying in its operating environment and relationships, through a culture of openness, support, and accountability, and through education where necessary.

Purpose

3. The purpose of this document is to outline Altona U3A Inc's position on bullying, to assist members and volunteers to conduct their relationships without bullying and to indicate how to report issues of bullying should they occur.

Policy

4. This policy deals with repeated unreasonable behaviour that constitutes bullying.

5. '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.

6. Bullying can occur between two or more members and/or volunteers.

7. Formerly accepted behaviour may be found to be bullying when it continues after a request from the complainant for the behaviour to stop, or at the point it becomes intimidating, offensive or humiliating.

8. 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.

9. Where the behaviour continues, or the person who feels bullied feels unable to speak directly to the perceived bully, he / she should report the matter to Altona U3A Inc's Secretary who will notify the President immediately.

10. The complaint will be handled in accordance with Altona U3A Inc's *Grievance Policy*.

11. Bullying that directly inflicts physical pain or harm amounts to assault and will not be dealt with under this policy (refer to clause 14).

Responsibility

12. Altona U3A Inc's Committee of Management is responsible for developing, implementing, reviewing and publishing this policy.

13. Altona U3A Inc's President is responsible for ensuring that a bullying complaint is handled in accordance with Altona U3A Inc's Grievance Policy.

14. Some forms of severe bullying, for example, physical attack or obscene phone calls, may constitute criminal conduct. While Altona U3A Inc is committed to treat most complaints about bullying at an organisational level as far as is possible, 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 Altona U3A Inc to report such matters to Victoria Police on behalf of the complainant.

Complaints Procedure

15. A person who believes they are being treated unfairly as a result of bullying may report the matter to Altona U3A Inc.'s Secretary. The Secretary will inform the President immediately.

16. A report of bullying will be investigated promptly, confidentially and fairly, in accordance with the organisation's *Grievance Policy*.

17. A four-level complaints procedure is outlined in the *Grievance Policy* which is also available on the Altona U3A Inc. website.

Authorisation

18. This policy was adopted by the Committee of Management of Altona U3A Inc. and minuted as such, on 14 September 2020.

19. This policy will be published by the Committee of Management of Altona U3A Inc on its website within four weeks of the date of this authorisation.