

**ANTI BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY**

The Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy establishes guidelines and procedures to ensure a safe and respectful learning environment for all students, staff, and stakeholders. This policy applies to all members of the college community and sets expectations for behaviour, prevention, reporting, and resolution of bullying and harassment incidents.

**Definitions**

2.1. Bullying

Bullying refers to repeated, unwanted aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. It includes actions such as physical, verbal, or psychological intimidation, exclusion, coercion, or harassment.

2.2. Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying refers to bullying behavior that occurs through electronic devices, such as smartphones, computers, or social media platforms. It includes actions such as online harassment, spreading rumours, posting hurtful comments, or sharing offensive content.

**Signs and Symptoms**

3.1. Signs of Bullying and Harassment

The signs of bullying and harassment may vary among individuals, but some common indicators include:

* Emotional distress, such as sudden changes in mood, withdrawal, anxiety, or depression.
* Physical symptoms, such as unexplained injuries, changes in appetite or sleep patterns, or frequent illnesses.
* Academic decline, including a decrease in academic performance, disengagement, or absenteeism.
* Social isolation, difficulty making friends, or avoidance of certain areas or individuals.

 - Changes in behavior, such as aggression, irritability, excessive self-blame, or low self-esteem.

**3.2. Signs of Cyber Bullying**

In the case of cyber bullying, the following signs and symptoms may be observed:

* Unusual or excessive use of electronic devices, especially during odd hours.
* Emotional reactions to messages or notifications, including anger, sadness, or fear.
* Reluctance or refusal to use electronic devices, social media platforms, or online communication channels.
* Withdrawal from social activities, loss of interest in hobbies, or changes in behavior.

**Prevention of Bullying and Harassment**

Direct Skills group is committed to preventing bullying and harassment through the following strategies:

4.1. Education and Awareness

4.1.1. Providing regular training and educational programs for students, staff, and stakeholders on recognizing, preventing, and addressing bullying and harassment.

4.1.2. Promoting awareness of the college's anti-bullying and harassment policy through orientation sessions, information sessions, and inclusion in student handbooks and staff manuals.

4.1.3. Encouraging open discussions, workshops, and awareness campaigns on respect, empathy, and positive communication within the college community.

4.2. Creating a Positive Environment

4.2.1. Fostering a positive and inclusive culture that values diversity, promotes respect, and encourages empathy among all members of the college community.

4.2.2. Establishing clear behavioural expectations and guidelines for students and staff, emphasizing mutual respect, kindness, and tolerance.

4.2.3. Encouraging students and staff to report any incidents of bullying or harassment promptly and ensuring that they feel safe and supported when doing so.

**Reporting and Response**

5.1. **Reporting Incidents**

5.1.1. Encouraging individuals who experience or witness bullying or harassment to report incidents to a trusted staff member, teacher, colleague.

5.1.2. Providing multiple reporting options, such as in-person reporting, anonymous reporting channels, or online reporting systems, to ensure accessibility and confidentiality.

5.2. **Support and Confidentiality**

5.2.1. Ensuring that individuals who report incidents of bullying or harassment are treated with respect, empathy, and sensitivity, and that their confidentiality is maintained to the extent possible.

5.2.2. Providing appropriate support and resources, such as counselling services, peer support programs, or referrals to external organizations, to individuals affected by bullying or harassment.

5.3. **Investigation and Resolution**

5.3.1. Conducting a thorough and impartial investigation into reported incidents of bullying or harassment, ensuring the involvement of appropriate personnel.

5.3.2. Taking appropriate disciplinary action against individuals found responsible for engaging in bullying or harassment, in accordance with college policies, procedures, and legal requirements.

**Supportive Measures and Intervention**

6.1. Providing support and intervention measures for individuals involved in bullying or harassment incidents, including both the victim(s) and the perpetrator(s), with a focus on education, counselling, and behavior modification.

6.2. Implementing restorative justice practices, where appropriate, to help repair relationships and promote understanding and empathy among individuals involved.

**Review and Update**

7.1. This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its continued effectiveness, compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and best practices, and alignment with the college's overall commitment to a safe and respectful learning environment.

7.2. Any necessary updates or amendments to this policy will be made in consultation with the college management team and communicated to all members of the college community.