**4.10 Harassment Policy**

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**Policy Statement**

Little Apples of Bramley is committed to promoting a workplace environment where all employees are treated with dignity and respect. Harassment, bullying, and other forms of inappropriate behaviour are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Every employee has the right to work in an environment free from intimidation, hostility, and humiliation.

This policy outlines the company’s approach to preventing and addressing harassment and bullying in line with UK legislation, including the Equality Act 2010, Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

This policy applies to all employees, trustees, and volunteers, and covers harassment by staff and also by third parties such as parents and visitors.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

* Ensure all employees understand what constitutes harassment, bullying, and inappropriate behaviour.
* Provide guidance on how to report and address such behaviour.
* Foster a positive and respectful working environment.

**Definitions**

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 (e.g., age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, or marriage and civil partnership) that:

* Violates an individual’s dignity; or
* Creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

Examples include:

* Offensive or inappropriate remarks, jokes, or gestures.
* Sharing or displaying offensive material, including via email or social media.
* Unwanted physical contact or advances.

**Bullying**

Bullying is repeated behaviour that intends to hurt, intimidate, or undermine an individual.

This can include:

* Spreading malicious rumours.
* Excluding or isolating someone intentionally.
* Undermining a person’s work by unjust criticism or unreasonable demands.
* Threats, shouting, or other intimidating behaviour.

**Social Media**

As representatives of our pre-school, staff are expected to uphold the highest standards of conduct, both in the workplace and on social media. Any form of harassment, bullying, or discrimination online, including derogatory comments, inappropriate content, or behaviour that undermines the reputation of the pre-school or its community, is strictly prohibited. Staff are reminded that their social media activity, whether on personal or professional accounts, should reflect the values of respect, inclusivity, and professionalism at all times. Breaches of this policy will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action in accordance with our staff code of conduct and safeguarding policies.

**Responsibilities**

Employees

* Treat colleagues with dignity and respect at all times.
* Avoid any behaviour that could be perceived as harassment or bullying.
* Report any incidents of harassment or bullying promptly.

Managers

* Lead by example by fostering a culture of respect.
* Address inappropriate behaviour immediately and fairly.
* Support employees who raise concerns.

The Company

* Investigate all complaints promptly, thoroughly, and confidentially.
* Take appropriate action against anyone found to have violated this policy.

**Reporting and Complaints Procedure**

Informal Resolution

Employees are encouraged to resolve issues informally where possible. This may involve speaking directly to the individual whose behaviour is causing concern and explaining why the behaviour is inappropriate.

Formal Complaint

If informal resolution is not possible or appropriate, employees should:

* Submit a formal complaint in writing to their line manager or HR.
* Provide details of the incident(s), including dates, times, witnesses, and any supporting evidence.

**Investigation**

Upon receiving a complaint, the company will:

* Acknowledge receipt of the complaint.
* Appoint an impartial investigator.
* Conduct a thorough investigation, ensuring confidentiality.
* Provide regular updates to the complainant and the accused.

**Outcome**

Following the investigation, appropriate action will be taken, which may include:

* Mediation between the parties.
* Disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
* Additional training or support for employees.

**Confidentiality**

All complaints and investigations will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis to facilitate the investigation and resolution.

**Protection from Retaliation**

Employees who raise concerns in good faith will not face any form of retaliation. Any retaliation against individuals for reporting harassment or bullying will result in disciplinary action.

**Related Policies / Information**

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

* Sexual Harassment Policy
* Grievance Policy
* Staff conduct and the Community policy
* Disciplinary Policy
* Diversity and Equality Policy
* Staff Handbook

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| **This policy was adopted by Little Apples of Bramley** |
| **On 16/12/2024** |
| **Date to be reviewed** |
| **Signed on behalf of the management committee *J V Whatley*** |
| **Name of signatory J V Whatley** |
| **Role of signatory Manager** |