



Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy

Policy

Monkey Puzzle Day Nurseries is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive working environment for all staff. Every employee has the right to work without fear of harassment, bullying, victimisation or unwanted conduct of any kind. We take all concerns seriously and will act promptly to address inappropriate behaviour.

Harassment, bullying or victimisation can be unlawful and may also constitute gross misconduct. It will not be tolerated in any form — whether it occurs in the workplace, during work related events, on business travel, via digital communication, or in any situation connected to employment.

Employees who experience or witness harassment, bullying or victimisation are strongly encouraged to report it through this policy, the Sexual Harassment Policy, or the Whistleblowing Policy where the concern relates to sexual harassment or wider workplace risk.

This policy applies to all staff, regardless of role or seniority.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, casual workers, agency workers, apprentices, volunteers, interns, job applicants and former employees.

The standards and expectations set out in this policy apply in all areas of the business, including any external settings where staff carry out work activities. This is a non contractual policy and may be amended at any time.

Responsibility for the Policy

Day to day implementation is delegated to the Nursery Managers or your Line Manager. Questions about this policy should be directed to your Line Manager or the Nursery Manager. This policy will be reviewed annually.

Understanding Harassment

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of:

- violating someone's dignity, or
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

A single incident may constitute harassment.

Harassment can be connected to legally protected characteristics such as sex, race, disability, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or gender reassignment — but harassment does not have to relate to a protected characteristic to be unacceptable.

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Racist, sexist, homophobic or derogatory comments or jokes
- Offensive emails, online posts or messages
- Disclosing someone's sexual orientation or gender identity without consent
- Mocking or belittling someone's disability

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Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment involves unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. Examples include:

- Unwelcome touching or physical contact
- Sexual comments, suggestions or advances
- Sharing sexually explicit images or messages
- Sexualised “banter”, jokes or gestures

Disclosures relating to sexual harassment may constitute a protected whistleblowing disclosure, meaning employees who raise concerns are legally protected from detriment or dismissal.

Employees may raise sexual-harassment concerns through:

- this Anti-Harassment & Bullying Policy
- the Whistleblowing Policy (for wider workplace risk)
- the Grievance Procedure (where personally affected)

Understanding Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an employee suffers a detriment because they:

- made a complaint of harassment or bullying
- supported a colleague who raised a complaint
- acted as a witness in an investigation
- raised a protected disclosure under whistleblowing law

Examples include:

- Excluding someone for raising a concern
- Denying opportunities or training
- Negative treatment after supporting a colleague
- Dismissing or disciplining someone for reporting an incident

Victimisation is unlawful and will not be tolerated.

Third-Party Harassment

Third party harassment is when an employee is harassed by someone not employed by Monkey Puzzle, such as:

- parents/carers
- visitors
- suppliers
- contractors
- members of the public

All staff are encouraged to report any third-party harassment they experience or witness.

We will take reasonable steps to prevent reoccurrence, which may include:

- issuing warnings
- restricting access
- reporting to external agencies
- supporting staff with adjustments or protective measures

Harassment by staff towards third parties may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

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Understanding Bullying

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour that undermines, humiliates or injures the person being targeted.

Examples include:

- Overbearing supervision
- Inappropriate criticism
- Spreading rumours
- Deliberately excluding someone from activities

Reasonable and constructive feedback, performance management and instructions related to work duties do not constitute bullying.

Informal Steps if You Are Being Harassed or Bullied

Employees may consider:

- Speaking directly to the individual (if safe to do so)
- Asking them to stop and explaining the impact
- Seeking support from your Line Manager or a senior member of the team

If the behaviour continues, or informal steps are not appropriate or do not resolve the issue, formal steps should be taken.

If the concern relates to your Line Manager, you may speak directly to an Early Years Quality Manager.

Raising a Formal Complaint

Employees wishing to raise a formal complaint should do so in writing to their Line Manager or Senior member of the team.

The written complaint should include:

- details of the behaviour
- dates, times and locations
- names of those involved
- names of any witnesses
- any previous informal actions taken

Employees may also use the Grievance Procedure where appropriate.

Monkey Puzzle may proceed with an investigation even if the complainant does not wish to pursue it, if there is a safeguarding or organisational risk.

If You Witness Harassment or Victimization

All employees are encouraged to:

- Intervene safely where appropriate

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- Support the person affected
- Report the concern
- Cooperate in any investigation

Witnesses will be protected from victimisation.

Formal Investigation Process

We will:

- Investigate complaints promptly, sensitively and confidentially
- Meet with the complainant (with the right to be accompanied)
- Consider whether temporary adjustments or suspension are necessary
- Meet with the alleged perpetrator and any witnesses
- Review all relevant evidence
- Keep both parties updated where appropriate

A written outcome and next steps will be shared once the investigation is complete.

Action Following Investigation

Outcomes may include:

- No further action
- Mediation
- Training or coaching
- Adjustments to duties, location or reporting lines
- Disciplinary action under the Disciplinary Policy where behaviours amount to misconduct or gross misconduct

Even if allegations are not upheld, we will consider how best to support both parties and ensure a healthy working environment.

Knowingly making false allegations may be treated as misconduct.

Appeals

Employees may appeal an outcome in writing to a senior manager within the time frame specified in the outcome letter.

Appeal meetings will usually be held within one week. Employees have the right to be accompanied. The decision following appeal is final.

Protection and Support

Monkey Puzzle will ensure that:

- Complainants, witnesses and those raising concerns in good faith are protected from victimisation
- Anyone retaliating or mistreating others for raising concerns will face disciplinary action



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- Adjustments and support will be considered for anyone affected, including access to wellbeing support where available

Employees should report any concerns of victimisation immediately.

Confidentiality and Record Keeping

Confidentiality will be maintained wherever possible.

Information will only be shared on a need to know basis.

Documents relating to complaints or investigations may be stored on personnel files in line with our Data Protection policy.