



Bullying and Harassment Policy

Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out GRIT's approach to preventing and responding to bullying and harassment. It applies to **Growing Resilience in Teens (GRIT)**, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), registered number 1176272.

GRIT is committed to fostering a culture of **dignity, respect, and inclusion** for everyone involved in our work—including young people, staff, volunteers, trustees, and third-party partners. We believe all individuals have the right to participate in an environment free from bullying, harassment, and intimidation.

This policy applies to:

- Trustees, employees, and volunteers
- Young people accessing our services (e.g., coaching, mentoring, group sessions)
- Contractors and external representatives working on behalf of GRIT

Allegations of bullying or harassment will be taken seriously and addressed promptly through appropriate procedures. These may include disciplinary or safeguarding action, depending on the nature of the concern.

Everyone connected to GRIT is expected to **uphold high standards of respectful behaviour** in all interactions. Where young people are involved in incidents of concern, this policy will be applied in conjunction with GRIT's **Safeguarding Policy** to ensure their wellbeing is protected.

1. What are Bullying and Harassment?

Harassment is unwanted conduct that affects a person's dignity. It includes behaviour that may relate to age, gender, race, disability, religion, belief, sexuality, nationality, or any personal characteristic. Harassment may be a one-off incident or a persistent pattern. It can be intentional or unintentional and may occur in person, online, or in any context related to GRIT activities.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting behaviour. It often involves an abuse or misuse of power intended to undermine, humiliate, or injure another person—whether a colleague, volunteer, or a young person receiving support.

Bullying or harassment may involve:

- An individual targeting another individual
- Group dynamics
- Digital communication as well as in-person interactions
- Occurrences in formal or informal settings during work, volunteering, or programme delivery

Whatever form it takes, it is unwarranted, unwelcome, and harmful. It may occur publicly or privately.

Examples include:

- Spreading malicious rumours or insults
- Ridiculing, mocking, or demeaning someone
- Exclusion or victimisation
- Unfair treatment or misuse of authority
- Unwelcome sexual advances or offensive physical proximity
- Making baseless threats (e.g. about job security or removal from a programme)
- Undermining someone's confidence or setting them up to fail
- Blocking access to development or participation unfairly

Note: Fair and constructive feedback, performance discussions, or safeguarding interventions do not constitute bullying if carried out respectfully and appropriately. An occasional disagreement or raised voice, while potentially upsetting, does not in itself constitute bullying. Further guidance is available from ACAS and GOV.UK.

2. Procedures for Reporting and Resolving Concerns

Complaints or Concerns

Anyone—including young people—who experiences or witnesses bullying or harassment is encouraged to speak up. This can be done:

- Informally with a coach, volunteer lead, or line manager
- Formally via GRIT's grievance procedure or safeguarding processes

If the concern involves a line manager or someone in authority, the individual should contact another manager, trustee, or the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Anonymous reports may be considered where possible. GRIT will treat all reports with confidentiality and care.

Investigation

All complaints will be taken seriously and investigated promptly, fairly, and independently. Confidentiality will be maintained, and both the individual raising the concern and the person being reported will be supported throughout.

3. Informal and Formal Action

Informal Resolution

In some cases, an informal discussion may resolve the issue, particularly if the individual was unaware of the impact of their behaviour. Informal actions may include:

- A facilitated conversation
- Mediation
- A written agreement that the behaviour will cease

Formal Action

More serious or repeated incidents may be dealt with under GRIT's disciplinary or safeguarding procedures. This may result in:

- Disciplinary action (for staff or volunteers)
- Restrictions on participation (for young people, where applicable)
- Referral to statutory services (e.g., police, social care)

In cases of gross misconduct, dismissal or removal from role or programme may be appropriate.

4. Supporting Everyone Involved

Support may include:

- Access to counselling or external wellbeing services
- Mediation (where suitable)
- Adjustments to protect the individual (e.g., change of coach, volunteer placement, or session timing)

GRIT will never require the individual raising a concern to move unless they specifically request it. Support will be tailored to individual needs and offered to all parties as appropriate.

5. Unfounded Allegations

Anyone raising a concern will not be penalised unless an allegation is found to have been made maliciously. In such cases, the matter will be investigated objectively and may result in disciplinary or safeguarding action.

6. Why Action Matters

Bullying and harassment, whether by or toward staff, volunteers, or young people, can cause:

- Poor morale and wellbeing
- Disruption of programme delivery
- Reputational harm
- Psychological distress and mental health impacts
- Increased absenteeism or disengagement
- Legal or regulatory consequences

GRIT has a duty of care to everyone involved in its work. We are committed to creating a culture where people feel **safe, heard, and valued**.

7. Legal Context

Relevant legislation includes:

- **Equality Act 2010:** Protects against harassment related to protected characteristics
- **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974:** Requires GRIT to safeguard the welfare of staff and volunteers
- **Children Acts 1989 & 2004:** Require action to safeguard young people
- **Employment law:** Provides for constructive dismissal in cases of unresolved harassment or bullying

8. Responsibilities

All individuals connected to GRIT share responsibility for maintaining a respectful, inclusive culture.

- **Trustees and management:** Must ensure the policy is upheld, model respectful behaviour, and take action where necessary
- **Staff and volunteers:** Must treat all individuals—including young people—with dignity, care, and respect

9. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following:

- GRIT Safeguarding Policy
- GRIT Grievance Policy
- GRIT Disciplinary Policy
- GRIT Code of Conduct
- GRIT Equality and Diversity Policy
- GRIT Volunteer Policy

GRIT is committed to building a culture of openness, learning, and mutual respect. We encourage everyone to speak up if they experience or witness behaviour that goes against these values. Together, we can create a safe, inclusive space for all.

-
- Created by Christine Philpot on 07/10/2017
 - Reviewed by Lucy Walder (Project Manager) on 17/11/2020
 - Updated by: Rebecca Kelly (CEO) 5/6/25
 - Approved by Dr Louise Randall, Chairman

Signature:

Date:

Dr Louise Randall

14/07/2025

- Next review date: 5/6/28