

# **U3A Geelong Incorporated**

Reg. No. A 12137

## **Bullying Policy**

### **Introduction**

U3A Geelong Inc. is committed to eliminating all forms of bullying in its operating environment and relationships, through a culture of openness, support and accountability. Bullying behaviour is based on the misuse of power in human relationships, and negates the dignity and autonomy of its victims. This policy should be read in conjunction with U3A Geelong Inc.'s Anti-Discrimination, and Sexual Harassment and Social Media policies.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to outline U3A Geelong's position on bullying as it is defined in the Policy and to document the process for responding to a report of bullying.

### **Policy**

1. For the purpose of this policy, 'bullying' constitutes behaviour, repeated or otherwise, towards a person or group of persons that is offensive, humiliating, intimidating, abusive, degrading or threatening. It includes but is not limited to:
  - verbal abuse
  - excluding or isolating another person
  - humiliation through sarcasm or belittling someone's opinions
  - constant criticism or insult
  - spreading misinformation or malicious rumour
  - displaying written or pictorial material that personally degrades or offends
2. Repeated unreasonable behaviour that could be expected to intimidate, offend, degrade, humiliate, abuse, undermine or threaten a person or group of persons may constitute bullying.
3. Bullying that directly inflicts physical pain or harm amounts to assault and will not be dealt with under this policy. Instead, complainants will be advised of their option to report the matter direct to the Victoria Police.
4. Formerly accepted behaviour may be found to be bullying when it continues after a request from the complainant for it to stop, or at the point where it becomes intimidating, abusive or humiliating.
5. U3A Geelong Inc. has a duty of care to provide a safe environment and acts on its duty of

care. Any allegations of bullying that are reported to the Management Committee will be investigated promptly, thoroughly and fairly.

6. Complaints will be treated in confidence, and where confidentiality cannot be guaranteed this will be clearly indicated to the complainant. All parties will be treated with respect.
7. The person against whom the allegation is made has the right to know what is alleged against them, the right to put their case in reply, and the right for any decision to be made by an impartial decision-maker.

### **Procedures**

8. A person who believes they are 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 is unable to speak directly to the perceived bully, they should report the matter to U3A Geelong Inc.'s Secretary, who will notify the President immediately.
10. The President or his/her delegate will investigate the matter and negotiate with the complainant as to whether the matter should be dealt with informally or formally in accordance with U3A Geelong Inc.'s Grievance Procedure.
11. The Management of U3A Geelong Inc. should ensure that tutors and volunteers are aware, as far as practically possible, of the occasions of bullying taking place, whether complaints have been received or not, using such indices as:
  - sudden increases in absenteeism
  - sudden deterioration in participation
  - behavioural changes such as depression
12. The Management Committee of U3A Geelong Inc. should ensure that tutors and volunteers are made aware of their obligations and responsibilities to foster an environment that is free from bullying, and that all complaints are treated seriously, promptly and confidentially.

### **Implementation**

These policies were adopted by the Management Committee of Geelong U3A Inc. and minuted as such on 22nd July, 2020.

This policy document will be published on the website of U3A Geelong Inc. within 4 weeks of the date of authorisation, and printed copies made available to all tutors and volunteers.

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