**CATEGORY: Safeguarding**

**TYPE: Policy**

**TITLE: Bullying and Harassment Policy**

**PERSON RESPONSIBLE: Managing Director**

**Policy Statement**

Axia Solutions Ltd is committed to encouraging and maintaining good employee and learner relations within an environment which fosters team working and encourages everyone to give of their best.

All employees and those who have dealings with the organisation have a responsibility to maintain good working relationships and not use words or deeds that may harm the wellbeing of others.

In addition to the obligations placed upon both employers and employees by equality and human rights legislation, everyone has the right to be treated with consideration, fairness, dignity and respect.

This contributes to a workplace and learning environment in which individuals feel safe, where they can work and learn effectively, competently and confidently.

Axia Solutions Ltd has a “zero tolerance” policy and will investigate vigorously any allegations of bullying or harassment, regardless of whether the matter has been raised formally or informally.

We recognise that our partners and the employers we work with have important roles to play in creating workplaces and learning environments where bullying and harassment is not accepted. As such we expect that partners and employers will have similar policies and procedures in place.

**Purpose**

The Purpose of this Bullying and Harassment Policy is to ensure Axia Solutions Ltd provides and sustains a safe working and learning environment in which everyone is treated fairly and with respect.

Those working or dealing with the organisation must not encounter harassment, intimidation or victimisation on the basis of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, age, trade union membership, disability, offending background or any other personal characteristic.

**Definitions**

**Harassment** may be defined as any conduct which is:

* unwanted by the recipient
* is considered objectionable
* causes humiliation, offence, distress or other detrimental effect.

Harassment may be an isolated occurrence or repetitive; it may occur against one or more individuals. Harassment may be, but is not limited to:

* Physical contact – ranging from touching to serious assault, gestures, intimidation, aggressive behaviour.
* Verbal – unwelcome remarks, suggestions and propositions, malicious gossip, jokes and banter, offensive language.
* Non-verbal – offensive literature or pictures, graffiti and computer imagery, isolation or non-co-operation and exclusion or isolation from social activities.

**Bullying** may be defined as repeated and persistent behaviour which is offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting. It is unlikely to be a single or isolated instance. Bullying includes but is not limited to:

* Conduct which is intimidating, physically abusive or threatening
* Conduct that denigrates, ridicules or humiliates an individual, especially in front of colleagues
* Humiliating an individual in front of colleagues
* Picking on one person when there is a common problem
* Shouting at an individual to get things done
* Consistently undermining someone and their ability to do the job
* Setting unrealistic targets or excessive workloads
* “cyber bullying” i.e. bullying via e-mail or social media. (This should be borne in mind where employees are working remotely and are managed through online means. Care and sensitivity should be practised with regard to the choice of context and language).
* Setting an individual up to fail e.g. by giving inadequate instructions or unreasonable deadlines.

*Harassment and bullying may be summarised as any behaviour that is unwanted by the person to whom it is directed. It is the impact of the behaviour rather than the intent of the perpetrator that is the determinant as to whether harassment or bullying has occurred.*

These definitions should be read in conjunction with the Axia Solutions Ltd “Safeguarding Policy” and “Further Safeguarding Advice and Guidance” document to offer a deeper understanding of Bullying and Harassment (in particular the role of technology and the nature of Peer on Peer (child-on-child) abuse).

**Implementation**

Everyone carries a personal responsibility for their own behaviour and for ensuring that their conduct is in accordance with the principles set out in this policy.

**The organisation will:**

* provide all staff with sufficient training to apply this policy in a fair and transparent manner. This will act in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, GDPR Policy, Whistle-blowing Policy and E-Safety & Acceptable Use Policy
* ensure that no employee, learner or other complainant will be victimised or suffer detriment for making a complaint of harassment or bullying and no manager shall threaten either explicitly or implicitly that a complaint will be used as the basis for decisions affecting that complainant. Such conduct will be treated as a very serious disciplinary offence.
* inform all Axia staff that all complaints of harassment or bullying whether raised formally or informally must be notified by the recipient of the complaint to the Axia Solutions Ltd. Managing Director and, where appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead
* Follow disciplinary procedure for employees and learners in a fair and consistent manner

**Axia staff will:**

* have a responsibility to act as role models, pro-actively addressing instances of bullying and harassment
* set out clear expectations of acceptable behaviours for their learners at induction and during their learning programme
* report any instance of bullying or harassment which they witness or which comes to their attention
* take prompt action to investigate when a complaint of harassment or bullying is brought to the attention of a manager at any level, whether informally or formally, paying due regard to Axia Solutions Ltd Safeguarding Policy and any relevant legal duties
* treat all matters relating to the investigation of complaints of harassment or bullying in strict confidence. Any breach of confidentiality in this regard may mean those responsible are liable to disciplinary actions. We recognise that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where it would be a breach of Axia Solutions Ltd statutory responsibilities. Where this is the case statutory guidance will be followed to share information as appropriate.

**Axia Learners are expected to:**

* Demonstrate positive engagement with their training programme and ensure they meet the acceptable behaviour expectations
* Not engage in any form of bullying or discriminatory behaviour or any behaviour that could harm or damage their employer or Axia Solutions Ltd
* report any instance of bullying or harassment which they witness or which comes to their attention
* Behave appropriately online and adopt good online safety practices when using technology during learning or in the workplace
* Agree to follow this Harrassment and Bullying policy

**Outcomes**

Where allegations of harassment or bullying are founded Axia Solutions Ltd will take appropriate action. This may include, but is not limited to, further bullying and harassment training, starting disciplinary proceedings, withdrawal of services, dismissal or removal from a training programme.

Where an allegation is found to be fictitious or malicious, or a person knowingly provides false information, Axia Solutions Ltd will take appropriate action. This may include, but is not limited to, starting disciplinary proceedings, withdrawal of services, dismissal, removal from a training programme.

If an allegation is made that a child or adult at risk has been bullied and harassed or otherwise harmed by a person in a position of trust (i.e. a member of staff) it will be necessary for the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to be notified before any investigation starts.

Staff and learners may also be covered in the scope of the bullying and harassment policy of another organisation where they are conducting their work duties or studying. Where this is the case both policies will apply to any allegation of bullying or harassment and it may be necessary for a cross-organisation investigation to take place. It may be the case that both Axia Solutions Ltd. and the other organisation take appropriate action following the result of any investigation.

**Review**

Axia’s Bullying and Harassment Policy is reviewed annually (or sooner should legislation/guidance change), to determine the impact of the policy and actions required. The policy was last reviewed in **October 2022.**