

Anti-Bullying Policy

August 2019

1.	Statement of intent	2
2.	What is bullying?	2
3.	Why is it important to respond to bullying?	2
4.	Objectives of this policy.....	2
5.	Recognising bullying – what to look out for.....	3
6.	Responding to bullying.....	3
7.	Procedure for dealing with bullying	4

1. Statement of intent

1. ADCA is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our members, volunteers and staff so they can participate in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.
2. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable.
3. If bullying does occur, everyone should be able to tell, and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a **TELLING** organisation. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to **tell** the Development Coordinator, the Assistant Coordinator or any Committee member.

2. What is bullying?

1. Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.
2. Bullying can be:
 - Verbal** - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, constant teasing
 - Physical** - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
 - Emotional** - being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text or phone messages, tormenting, (for example, hiding possessions, threatening gestures)
 - Racist** - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
 - Sexual** - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
 - Homophobic** - because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality.

3. Why is it important to respond to bullying?

1. Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying.
2. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.
3. People who bully need to learn different ways of behaving.
4. ADCA has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

4. Objectives of this policy

1. All committee members, staff and volunteers should
 - **understand** what bullying is
 - **be familiar** with ADCA's policy on bullying, and
 - **follow** ADCA's policy if ever bullying is identified or reported.
2. ADCA takes bullying seriously. Staff and volunteers should be confident that they will be supported when bullying is reported. **Bullying will not be tolerated.**
3. ADCA deals with some potentially highly vulnerable adults who may themselves be experiencing bullying behaviour from neighbours, friends, family, or others. ADCA has a duty of care to follow up any suspicion or report of bullying of a member as appropriate, as this is a form of adult abuse which comes within ADCA's Safeguarding Policy.

5. Recognising bullying – what to look out for

1. There are a number of behavioural and other indicators that can reveal that someone may be being bullied.
2. All staff and volunteers should be aware of these possible signs, and should report to the Development Coordinator, the Assistant Coordinator, the ADCA Chairman or any Committee member if a person:
 - says they are being bullied or that they are unwilling to go to ADCA activities
 - becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
 - feels ill before an ADCA activity or wants to go home early
 - has possessions go "missing"
 - is short of money, asks for money, or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
 - has unexplained cuts or bruises
 - is frightened to say what's wrong
 - gives improbable excuses for any of the above

In more extreme cases:

- starts stammering
 - cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
 - becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
 - is bullying other people
 - stops eating
 - doesn't want to return home
3. It is possible that these signs and behaviours may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility, and will be investigated by ADCA, and so **must be reported**.

6. Responding to bullying

1. Incidents of bullying must be reported as soon as possible to a staff member or a Committee member.
2. Serious incidents will be referred to Cheshire East Council's Designated Safeguarding Officer for advice, in accordance with ADCA's Safeguarding Policy.
3. **If it is appropriate for ADCA to deal with the situation internally, the matter will be dealt with by ADCA staff and Committee in accordance ADCA's Safeguarding Policy**, following the procedure outlined below.
4. Bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
5. Families should be informed as appropriate (with the member's permission) and will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the problem if necessary.
6. An attempt should be made to help the bully or bullies change their behaviour.
7. **If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue, ADCA will initiate disciplinary action** under the appropriate policies for staff or volunteers as necessary. This could lead to the staff member or volunteer having their employment/volunteering with ADCA terminated.

7. Procedure for dealing with bullying

1. If appropriate, attempt reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails, or is not appropriate, a small panel (the Chairman, a staff member and a Committee member) should meet with the member being bullied and their family or advocate (as appropriate) to establish the details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken of this meeting and agreed by all as a true record.
3. The panel should meet with the alleged bully and their advocate or representative and put the allegation to them to answer and give their view. Minutes should be taken and agreed.
4. If the panel determines that bullying has taken place, the member, volunteer or staff member responsible must be warned and put on notice of further action (that is, temporary or permanent suspension) if the bullying continues.
5. Consideration should be given to the appropriateness of a reconciliation meeting between the parties at this time.
6. In some cases the advocate or family members can be asked to attend ADCA activities to support the member if they are able to do so, and if appropriate.
7. The ADCA Chairman and Development Coordinator should monitor the situation for an agreed period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated. A review meeting will take place at the end of the monitoring period and all decisions recorded.
8. All appropriate members, family members, staff and volunteers involved in the matter should be made aware of the concerns that have been raised and of the outcome of the process.