

Harassment Policy

Harassment of any kind is unlawful and U3A Melbourne City supports the rights of its volunteers and members to be part of an environment (while participating in activities of the organisation) which is free from harassment of any kind. Every volunteer and member has a responsibility to ensure that harassment does not occur. Anyone found to have harassed another person will be subject to disciplinary action that may include an apology, counseling or loss of membership.

What is harassment?

Harassment includes a wide range of deliberate and unintentional behaviours which may intimidate, humiliate or offend and which are unwelcome and uninvited.

It includes behaviour which may be written, verbal, non-verbal or physical (including inappropriate electronic communications).

Harassment has the effect of offending, humiliating or intimidating the person to whom it is directed.

It is acknowledged that social and cultural backgrounds may lead people to perceive the same conduct differently and that appropriate behaviour respects the rights and sensitivities of all members and volunteers.

Harassment may occur between one volunteer and another, between volunteers and members, or between volunteers and suppliers or visitors. It may occur wherever volunteers are interacting with others in the context of their position in the organisation, including events, activities off site and social functions.

Sexual harassment is a specific and serious form of harassment. It includes any unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that could be reasonably expected to make someone feel offended, humiliated or intimidated.

This may include (but is not restricted to):

- an unwelcome sexual advance
- a request for sexual favours
- unwelcome comments about someone's physical appearance
- leering and ogling
- sexually offensive comments, stories, emails or jokes or comments on social media sites
- displaying sexually offensive photos, pinups or calendars, reading matter or objects
- sexual propositions or continued requests for dates
- physical contact such as touching or fondling, or unnecessary brushing up against someone
- indecent assault or rape (these are criminal offences).

Sexual harassment does not refer to behaviour that is mutually acceptable to the parties involved.

Bullying is another form of harassment with repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards a volunteer or a group of members that creates a risk to their health and safety.

Types of unreasonable behaviour can include,

- abusive, aggressive, insulting or offensive language
- undue criticism
- humiliating remarks
- excluding, isolating or marginalising a person from activities
- spreading misinformation or malicious rumours
- practical jokes
- ganging up or other types of psychological harassment

Harassment may occur between one volunteer and another, between volunteers and members, or between volunteers and suppliers or visitors. It may occur wherever volunteers are interacting with others in the context of their position in the organisation, including events, work off site and social functions.

Reports of harassment will be treated promptly, seriously and confidentially. U3A Melbourne City's grievance policy and procedures outlines the process that will be implemented.

v1.0 (original) - Approved by the Committee of Management, January 2014