

## **F Ethical Policies of IY(UK)**

### **F3 Harassment and Bullying Policy**

#### **Iyengar Yoga (UK) Limited Harassment and Bullying Policy**

IY(UK) encourages all members to contribute to the building of positive environments where all are treated with dignity, respect and courtesy. All members of IY(UK) have a responsibility to ensure that their behaviour towards each other reflects the principles of treating others with dignity and respect.

Bullying, harassment and intimidation are never acceptable and are not tolerated by IY(UK). All members of IY(UK) (or employees) be they elected officials, volunteer committee members or association members, should be able to recognise, challenge and, where necessary, complain about bullying and harassment, should it arise, with confidence that their concerns will be treated in good faith and investigated fairly and appropriately.

#### **Applicability**

The policy applies to all teacher and non-teacher members of IY(UK) including elected officials and volunteer committee members and to employees. It should be used to deal with any incidents of bullying, harassment or intimidation occurring between employees, elected officials, or volunteer committee members. This policy should also be applied to instances when a student has been harassed, bullied or intimidated by a teacher member of IY(UK).

#### **Principles**

For dignity and respect to be embedded in the behaviour of all IY(UK) members, IY(UK) seeks to develop an environment in which every individual is valued and respected. It is the impact on the recipient of a particular form of behaviour, and not the intention of the perpetrator, that will define whether this policy is relevant in dealing with the impact.

In line with this policy, IY(UK) will:

- treat all allegations seriously and in good faith,
- investigate all allegations in a timely manner,
- ensure that any allegations made maliciously or vexatiously will be dealt with in line with IY(UK) disciplinary procedures.

All members of IY(UK) are responsible for their own behaviour and it is expected that all individuals will comply with the standards of behaviour laid out in this policy.

#### **Definitions**

Harassment is covered by the Equality Act 2010 which addresses nine protected characteristics. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It can cause a person to feel threatened, humiliated or patronised. Whether harassment is intentional or unintentional, the key feature is its effect on the person rather than the motive of the perpetrator.

Harassment can take many forms, including:

- the display or distribution of offensive material, graffiti or badges;
- racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist jokes, or derogatory or stereotypical remarks about a particular ethnic or religious group or gender;
- non-verbal abuse such as offensive gestures and body language;
- inappropriate comments about someone's appearance;
- intrusive questioning about someone's private life;
- verbal abuse such as suggestive remarks, "jokes" and name calling;
- physical contact such as unnecessary touching;
- unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour;
- or threatened or actual physical abuse or attack.

Bullying is not specifically defined by law but can be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or an abuse or misuse of power which has the effect of undermining, humiliating or injuring the recipient. Bullying is a form of indiscriminate harassment in which the alleged bully undermines and belittles or assaults the recipient. Bullies may seek to exploit others' perceived personal weaknesses, either because they enjoy the exercise of such power or because they are under pressure or wish to avoid being bullied themselves, or even because they believe such behaviour is the best means of managing relationships.

Examples of bullying may include (but are not limited to):

- Verbal abuse / insults
- Persistently ignoring or patronising an individual
- Being treated less favourably than other colleagues
- Persistent unjustified criticism
- Being pressured into behaviours or actions against the wishes of the individual

- Intimidation
- Apportioning Blame for things beyond the control of the individual

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

All members of IY(UK) have a responsibility to foster and to contribute towards the creation and maintenance of a culture of dignity and respect. Inappropriate behaviour should be challenged.

Elected Officers and Senior Teachers should lead by example and take prompt action to prevent and stop harassment and bullying when it occurs.

All members can expect to:

- Be treated with dignity, respect and courtesy
- Be able to work, practice and learn free from unfair treatment, bullying, harassment or victimisation
- Be valued for their skills, abilities and experiences.
- And, reciprocally, all members are expected to:
- Familiarise themselves with the content of this policy
- Treat all members IY(UK) with dignity, respect and courtesy
- Contribute towards a culture of positive behaviour within IY(UK)
- Challenge or report unacceptable behaviour
- Be mindful of others when expressing views
- Cooperate with investigations into harassment and bullying.

The common feature of the different forms of behaviour which constitute harassment and bullying is that it is behaviour unwanted by the recipient. In the case of employees it is important, however, to distinguish between reasonable management instructions even those which may be unwelcome, and bullying. It is also important to note that misunderstandings between colleagues do sometimes occur which can lead to a perception that bullying is taking place. In some of these cases, it will be possible to resolve the issue through informal discussion between the two parties.

Proactive corrective intervention by a teacher in a class situation is an important part of the Iyengar method and a teacher needs to give consideration to whether persistent correction of one student could be perceived by that student as intimidatory. All teachers need to refer to the Basic Guidelines for Teachers of Yoga by BKS and Geeta S. Iyengar to ensure that their interactions with students are caring, compassionate and appropriate at all times so that any perception of bullying is avoided.

### **Procedures**

Any employee or volunteer with IY(UK) who experiences bullying or harassment should contact the Chair of IY(UK) or the Chair of the Ethics and Appeals Committee. Any member of the public, teacher or other member who experiences bullying or

harassment from another teacher or member should refer to the IY(UK) Complaints Procedures where guidance is given on how to make a complaint.