

**Affiliation of Colour Therapy Organisations  
Harassment and Bullying  
Prevention Policy  
February 2009**

**1. Policy Statement**

- 1.1 ACTO wishes to provide a stimulating and supportive learning environment which will enable its Members and their students to fulfil their personal potential and creativity. ACTO accepts that such an environment cannot be created or sustained if anyone is subject to harassment, intimidation, aggression or coercion.
- 1.2 ACTO is fully committed to the principles of equal opportunities in the workplace and regards personal harassment as a discriminatory and unacceptable form of behaviour.
- 1.3 Accordingly, ACTO will treat any incident of harassment as a serious matter which may lead to disciplinary action according to the terms of Disciplinary Policy, up to and including termination of Membership or dismissal from a course, being taken against the perpetrator.
- 1.4 All Members of ACTO and listed Practitioners are responsible for ensuring that personal harassment of another person does not occur.
- 1.5 Harassment outside the teaching environment may nevertheless fall within the remit of this policy and its procedures.
- 1.6 In addition to any penalty imposed by ACTO, those responsible for harassing others may be subject to criminal and/or civil proceedings. Nothing in this policy and its procedures will prevent ACHO Members, and listed Practitioners from exercising their legal rights.

**2. Policy Definition**

- 2.1 Harassment may take many forms but essentially consists of behaviour which is unacceptable to and diminishes the dignity of the recipient(s) and which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive workplace environment for that individual.
- 2.2 Harassment may involve single, sporadic or continuing acts of intimidation, coercion, bullying, verbal or physical abuse, or the creation and/or maintenance of an offensive working environment for others. Harassment relating to another's sex, sexual orientation, religion, disability, age, gender reassignment, marital status or ethnic origin is all included within this definition.

**3. Types Of Personal Harassment**

- Sexual harassment
- Racial harassment
- Harassment on the basis of religion
- Bullying
- Other forms of harassment

**3.1 Sexual harassment**

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and involves unwanted and unwelcome attention of a sexual nature. This may be physical or verbal or involve the denigration of an individual on sexual grounds or by sexual means. Some examples of sexual harassment are:

- indecent assault

- deliberate physical contact to which the individual has not consented or had the opportunity to object to
- offensive or derogatory language alluding to a person's private life or sexual behaviour or orientation by innuendo, jokes or remarks
- provocative suggestions
- pressing an individual to accept unwelcome invitations
- the display of suggestive or pornographic material
- unwelcome repeated telephone calls, letters or emails

These examples should not be seen as exhaustive: any unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for the recipient may be regarded as sexual harassment.

### **3.2 Racial harassment**

Racial harassment is any behaviour, deliberate or otherwise, relating to race, colour, ethnic or national origin directed at an individual or group, which is found to be offensive or objectionable to the recipient and which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Some examples include:

- physical attack
- verbal abuse, threats, derogatory name-calling, racist insults and jokes
- ridicule of an individual on racial or cultural grounds
- exclusion from normal workplace interactions or social events
- unfair allocation of work and/or responsibilities
- racist graffiti/insignia or display of racist material
- inciting others to commit any of the above

### **3.3 Harassment on the basis of religion**

Harassment on the basis of religion is any behaviour, deliberate or otherwise, relating to religion or religious persuasion directed at an individual or group, which is found to be offensive or objectionable to the recipient and which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Some examples include:

- physical attack
- verbal abuse, threats, derogatory name-calling, religious insults and jokes
- ridicule of an individual on grounds of religion or beliefs
- exclusion from normal places of interaction or social events
- unfair allocation of work and/or responsibilities
- inciting others to commit any of the above

### **3.4 Bullying**

Bullying damages individuals' health and lives and also undermines productivity and effective relationships. Bullying can occur when a superior uses the opportunity of position to intimidate a subordinate, in peer relationships or, in rare cases, may affect someone in a superior position. Bullying can be broadly defined as behaviour which consistently undermines another's confidence, reducing feelings of self-esteem and self-worth. Such behaviour may be deliberate, as in a planned campaign, or may arise out of the bully's own immaturity, lack of inter-personal skills and poor self-confidence. It is generally psychological, rarely though sometimes physical, and may also be exacerbated by the bully's own susceptibility and reaction to stress. In a teaching environment bullying consists of the abuse of power and the regular use of inappropriate behaviours at the expense of another individual. Some examples of these behaviours include:

- physical or verbal abuse, including threats

- ❑ psychological intimidation, humiliation, excessive and/or unreasonable criticism
- ❑ unjustifiable removal of areas of responsibility
- ❑ ostracism (“sent to Coventry”)/exclusion
- ❑ malicious lies
- ❑ setting unreasonable and unrealistic goals/targets
- ❑ “academic bullying”: i.e. asserting a position of intellectual superiority in an aggressive, abusive or offensive manner; threats of academic failure; public sarcasm and humiliation

**Note:**

Legitimate, constructive and fair criticism of a someone’s performance or behaviour will not be considered to be bullying or harassment. ACTO will not condone bullying under the guise of “strong management” but, conversely, regards an assertive management style as acceptable provided that people are treated with respect and dignity.

### **3.5 Other forms of harassment**

The following are further examples of specific types of harassment but, once again, should not be considered an exhaustive list:

- ❑ homophobic harassment, i.e. harassment directed at homosexual persons or groups on the grounds of their sexual orientation (applying equally to homosexual men or women)
- ❑ harassment in respect of a recipient’s disability or impairment
- ❑ repeated gibes in respect of personal traits or appearance, practical jokes or invasions of privacy, any or all of which may cause physical or psychological distress
- ❑ discrimination on the grounds of age. Harassment on the grounds of age is based on attitudes or assumptions and stereotyping which are prejudicial to older or younger people. Some examples of ageist harassment are derogatory remarks or behaviour, expressing prejudicial assumptions about abilities or excluding people from social activities.