



HARASSMENT, BULLYING AND DISCRIMINATION PREVENTION POLICY

If you are an employee or volunteer with the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens (FGBG) then this policy is important reading for you. Volunteers include nursery growers, members who work on the perennial border or on heritage roses, guides, database and library volunteers and members in the various administrative roles undertaken by volunteers, including serving on our Committee of Management (COM). 'Employee' means that you have a contract of employment with FGBG.

To be a FGBG volunteer, or engaged as a FGBG employee or contractor, you must undertake our Induction Program which includes your formal agreement to comply with this policy. Please read this policy carefully and make sure you understand what is meant by 'harassment', 'bullying' and 'discrimination' and that you are clear about what to do if you experience or witness behaviour that you consider to be harassment, bullying or discrimination.

WHEN THIS POLICY APPLIES

This policy applies whenever you are undertaking FGBG work. Whilst this often takes place within the Geelong Botanic Gardens (GBG), volunteering work in particular also takes place away from GBG such as when volunteers work at plant sales organised by FGBG and when committee members undertake FGBG activities away from the Friends' office.

This document relates specifically to issues involving FGBG volunteers and/or FGBG employees or contractors. In addition, you have a responsibility to ensure that you do not harass, bully or discriminate against members of GBG staff, other City of Greater Geelong (CoGG) employees or contractors and members of the public. Incidents involving people beyond FGBG, whether they are identified as a perpetrator or a victim of harassment, bullying or discrimination will be referred to the GBG Director who will work with the FGBG Committee of Management to resolve the issue. As a volunteer, contractor or employee with FGBG you are protected by CoGG policies and procedures as well as this policy.

WHY WE HAVE THIS POLICY

The Friends are committed to maintaining a working environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and bullying. There is no place for those behaviours in our organisation. It is also important to know that there are laws about preventing workplace harassment, bullying and discrimination with which we must comply.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all FGBG volunteers, contractors and employees understand what we mean by 'harassment', 'bullying' and 'discrimination' and that

everyone is clear about what to do if they witness or experience conduct that they believe to be harassment, bullying or discrimination.

WHAT WE MEAN BY ‘HARASSMENT’, ‘BULLYING’ AND ‘DISCRIMINATION’

As these words can have a range of meanings in everyday life, their intended meaning in the context of this policy is below.

Harassment

Harassment is any form of behaviour that is unsolicited or unwelcome and that the recipient considers offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening. Harassment occurs if a reasonable person would anticipate that the recipient of the behaviour would be offended, humiliated or intimidated. Harassment can be verbal, written, psychological or physical. Harassment is determined by the impact of the behaviour on the recipient regardless of whether it was intended or unintended.

Sexual Harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature.

Bullying

Bullying is repeated*, unreasonable** behaviour directed toward an individual or group that creates a risk to physical or mental health and safety.

* ‘Repeated’ refers to the persistent nature of the behaviour and can refer to a range of behaviours over time.

** ‘Unreasonable’ means behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard for the circumstances, would see as victimising, humiliating, undermining or threatening.

Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than someone else in a similar situation because of a personal characteristic that is protected under equal opportunity laws. This includes age, sexual orientation, disability/impairment, marital status, political belief or activity, race, religious belief or activity and a range of other personal characteristics.

Harassment, bullying and discrimination can each occur face to face, over the phone, via e-mail or using mobile phones, SMS and social networks.

Examples of behaviours which would be considered to be harassment, bullying or discrimination include:

- verbal abuse. For example, being sworn at, threatened, insulted, inappropriate and/or invalid criticism, name calling, practical jokes, unjustified threats of punishment, belittling and humiliation, gossip and malicious rumours, inappropriate language, yelling

- hostile behaviour toward a volunteer or group of volunteers. For example, excluding them from conversations or various activities
- abusive or offensive e-mails or other correspondence
- threatening body language
- unreasonable demands, unnecessary pressure and impossible deadlines which are targeted at a volunteer or group of volunteers
- unfair allocation of tasks and/or working hours
- deliberately changing work rosters to inconvenience a volunteer
- undermining a person's work performance, recognition or position, especially with their managers or co-workers
- deliberately withholding necessary work-related information or resources or supplying incorrect information
- inappropriate surveillance or monitoring
- inappropriate interference with personal belongings or work equipment
- unequal or unreasonable exclusion from or access to training
- unequal application of work rules and benefits
- unreasonably excluding volunteers from activities
- unreasonably isolating a volunteer from others
- setting tasks that are above or beyond a person's skill level without access to training or support

THE FRIENDS' APPROACH

We aim to keep the Friends' workplace free from discrimination, harassment and bullying. The following points summarise how we achieve this aim:

- i. We make known, through formal Induction, posters and reminders at meetings, that harassment, bullying and discrimination are simply not tolerated by The Friends or the City of Greater Geelong.

- ii. FGBG employees, contractors and volunteers are expected to behave in ways that are consistent with our Code of Conduct. This is documented in our Members' Handbook, which includes a form for volunteers to sign at the time of their induction, before commencing work with FGBG
- iii. The FGBG Committee carries ultimate responsibility for ensuring that employees, contractors and volunteers comply with this harassment, bullying and discrimination prevention policy. Our committee also ensures that FGBG fulfils all its responsibilities under the laws relating to harassment, bullying and discrimination.
- iv. We are proactive in ensuring that all volunteers, contractors and employees understand what is expected and we try to act quickly to deal with any suspicion of harassment, bullying or discrimination.
- v. All legitimate complaints are handled quickly, sensitively, confidentially and in accordance with this policy.
- vi. The privacy of all individuals involved in harassment, bullying and discrimination investigations is respected.
- vii. If necessary, a committee member or coordinator will initiate action to address suspected bullying, harassment or discrimination. They do not need to wait for a formal complaint.
- viii. In all cases where discrimination, harassment or bullying allegations have been substantiated, appropriate action will be taken. Such action may include counselling or in more serious cases, disciplinary procedures, possibly including suspension or dismissal from our organisation, as detailed in the Friends Purposes and Rules 2013.

VOLUNTEERS AND MANAGEMENT

In order for our work as volunteers to be efficiently done and productive as well as enjoyable, we need to have management processes in place and for some volunteers to have management responsibilities. It's important to know who, within FGBG, has management responsibilities. Those people are:

- members of our Committee of Management (CoM)
- volunteers formally appointed to 'coordinator' roles.

No other FGBG volunteer has management responsibilities.

Anyone in one of the above roles can assist if you encounter a situation where you witness or experience harassment, bullying or discrimination.

It's important to remember that reasonable management actions carried out in a fair, respectful way are not bullying or harassment. Examples of management actions are:

- Assigning responsibilities
- Reorganising duties

- Setting work standards and/or deadlines
- Allocating work to a volunteer
- Rostering
- Transferring a volunteer
- Deciding not to assign a task to a particular volunteer
- Informing and discussing unsatisfactory work performance with a volunteer
- Informing and discussing inappropriate work behaviour with a volunteer
- Constructive feedback

Each of the above management actions could be associated with harassment, bullying or discrimination if they are not carried out respectfully and fairly.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT HARASSMENT, BULLYING OR DISCRIMINATION

If you have concerns that harassment, bullying or discrimination is taking place, either because you are experiencing it personally or have witnessed it, you can take any of the steps outlined below. It can be helpful to apply them in the sequence shown but this is not essential. The steps are slightly different if you have experienced the harassment, bullying or discrimination compared with if you have witnessed it happening to somebody else.

If you personally experience behaviour that concerns you

1. If you are feeling comfortable to do so, you may choose to speak directly with the person whose behaviour concerns you, making them aware of the impact on you and that you want them to stop that behaviour.
2. Bring your concern to the attention of your coordinator or a member of the FGBG Committee of Management (CoM) and request an informal, confidential discussion. That discussion will help you decide what, if anything, to do next.
3. Tell your coordinator or a member of the CoM about your concerns and that you want their help to deal with them. This could include that person, or an agreed other person, being with you for a conversation with the person whose conduct is of concern to you.
4. Advise your coordinator or a member of the CoM you wish to make a formal complaint and, if necessary, request their assistance with lodging that complaint. If your concern is about your coordinator then you should address your concern to any member of the CoM. If your concern is about a member of the CoM then you should raise the matter with your coordinator or with the FGBG president.

If you witness behaviour that concerns you

If you are witnessing concerning behaviour rather than experiencing it personally, bring your concern to the attention of your coordinator or a member of the FGBG Committee of Management and request an informal, confidential discussion. Provide them with as much specific information as you can, if necessary in writing. You should then leave the matter

with FGBG management to deal with. It might be necessary, as part of the process, for you to be interviewed.

If your concern relates to a volunteer in a management role

If you are concerned that a coordinator or a member of the Committee of Management (CoM) is engaging in harassing, bullying or discriminatory behaviour you should raise your concern with another member of the CoM in the first instance.

If you are accused of harassment, bullying or discrimination

If you are the one accused of harassment, bullying or discrimination, you have the following rights:

- To seek information from an FGBG coordinator or CoM member regarding your rights and options to resolve the issue.
- To have confidential management of the process and privacy.
- To have support throughout the process.
- The option to lodge a formal complaint in line with our Members' Handbook.

LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

The following documents provide more information about workplace harassment, bullying and discrimination prevention and are relevant for FGBG volunteers and staff. Any of these documents may be obtained from the Friends' office.

1. The City of Greater Geelong (CoGG) has a management policy entitled ***Harassment, Bullying & Discrimination Prevention Policy***. It applies to all CoGG employees, volunteers, consultants and contractors.
2. As an incorporated association, The Friends is registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria, with whom our ***Purposes and Rules 2013*** document has been lodged. All FGBG members, including volunteers, must comply with the Friends' association rules. The rules include explanations about how any member can lodge a grievance and about the steps that are taken if disciplinary action against any member is necessary.
3. FGBG publishes a ***Members' Handbook*** which is provided to all members and staff. It also includes reference to FGBG's stance on workplace harassment, bullying and discrimination.