

Balloon Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidelines

Bullying at any level within Balloon Ventures (BV) will not be tolerated. We have defined and described what we mean by bullying below in order to support people to identify bullying when they experience it or see it happening.

We define bullying as a form of *attack* with the *intention* to cause fear, distress or harm, where a *power imbalance* exists, and where these behaviours systematically target the same person or group.

Attack

An attack does not just mean physical – it can also be verbal or psychological. Examples may include:

1. Recurrent behaviour which is offensive, abusive, demeaning, malicious or insulting.
2. Verbal or physical intimidation.
3. Persistent unjustified criticism.
4. Humiliating people in front of others.
5. Setting unrealistic deadlines or targets.
6. Exclusion from general conversation, decision-making and social activities.

Bullying can also be a form of abuse, particularly if children or vulnerable adults are involved. Please see the **Balloon Safeguarding policy**.

Intention

This is the starting point when trying to work out if someone's behaviour can be defined as bullying. Intention can be complicated to assess – particularly as bullies rarely admit to intentionally wanting to cause fear, distress or harm. Often this will be hidden under or distorted by a more reasonable-seeming motivation like 'that person isn't working hard enough, and they need to pull their weight'. To assess intention, ask yourself:

Is the response proportional to the reported intention?

In a cross-cultural setting, clarifying intention can be even more challenging. Communication norms, systems of hierarchy and acceptable topics of conversation vary between cultures and therefore what is reasonable to one group, may be unreasonable to another. To work out the intention of someone who communicates differently from you, compare their approach to others around them that share their culture. It is always a good idea to talk to an objective person you can trust to get another perspective.

Power imbalance

Assessing whether there is a power imbalance can be especially complicated if the individuals involved are equal in terms of seniority or position. Systemic power should be considered in a cross-cultural setting – for example the power that comes with access to resources. In this context, a western volunteer will generally have more access to resource-related power than their in-country counterparts and colleagues. The reverse is the power that comes with being local to the context and part of the culture – a power that staff and volunteers operating in their own

countries have access to. Bullies will exploit power to deepen the impact of bullying while simultaneously reducing the voice of the person or people being bullied.

Duty to report

If you feel like you are being bullied or if you witness another person being bullied, please notify the Country Director if appropriate or the Chief Operating Officer: doug@balloonventures.com. If you would prefer to notify Balloon in a more confidential way, please refer to our Whistleblowing Policy which can be downloaded on our website.

Related policies

- Safeguarding and Child protection
- Whistleblowing
- Code of Conduct
- Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption
- Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking
- Sexual Harassment and Assault
- Equal Opportunities and Diversity
- Health and Safety.

Reviews

All documents are reviewed annually at the same time
Policies apply to the Balloon group of companies
Last Annual Update December 2019