

## Vision for a Nation – Global Bullying and Harassment Policy

Version	Date	Comments
1.0	18/09/2018	Approved by Board of Trustees
2.0	21/05/2019	Amended to ‘Global’ policy

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## 1. Introduction

VFAN is committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity in its activities. Every employee and associated person acting for, or on behalf of, the organisation is responsible for maintaining the highest standards of professional and moral conduct.

VFAN seeks to act in a professional, honest, fair and transparent way within all its relationships and activities and in accordance with all relevant legislation, both UK legislation and the legislation of the countries where we have programme activities.

VFAN is committed to creating a respectful, positive and safe space for all employees. Bullying and harassment in the workplace, in any form, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Bullying and harassment may be treated as disciplinary offences and may result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

This document outlines the organisation's policy on bullying and harassment.

## 2. What is Bullying and Harassment?

There are many definitions of bullying and harassment. Bullying may be characterised as: Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Harassment as defined in the Equality Act 2010 is: "Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual". The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

It is not necessarily always obvious or apparent to others and may happen in the workplace without an employer's awareness. Bullying or harassment can be between two individuals or it may involve groups of people. It might be obvious or it might be insidious. It may be persistent or an isolated incident. It can also occur in written communications, by phone or through email, not just face-to-face.

Put simply, we believe that bullying and harassment are actions, conduct or behaviour that any individual or group of individuals is reasonably likely to find offensive, intimidating, hostile or humiliating. Examples of bullying / harassing behaviour include (but are not limited to):

- spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone
- exclusion or victimisation
- unfair treatment
- deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism

- copying memos that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know
- ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail
- Displaying or forwarding objects, pictures, magazines, cartoons, screen-savers, emails, posters, videos or other content that is likely to make any individual or group of individuals feel unwelcome, offended or uncomfortable
- overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position
- unwelcome sexual advances such as touching, standing too close, display of offensive materials
- retaliation or threats of retaliation after unwanted attention or inappropriate conduct is rejected and/or reported
- any form of violence (verbal, physical and/or sexual)
- making threats or comments about job security without foundation
- preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities
- Any transactional forms of behaviour (cash, food, work or other types of favour for sex or money) or any other forms of coercive, controlling or intimidating behavior

Behaviours prohibited by local, UK and/or international laws (for example: use of prostitutes, age of sexual consent, age of marriage, also refer to the VFAN Global Safeguarding Policy). If employees<sup>1</sup> complain they are being bullied or harassed, then they have a grievance which must be dealt with regardless of whether their complaint accords with a standard definition<sup>2</sup>.

### 3. Policy Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Protect employees from bullying and harassment of all kinds in the delivery of VFAN's work
- Allow all employees and trustees of VFAN to respond in an informed and confident manner to alleged instances of bullying and harassment.

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'employees' is used to cover all those who work for someone else rather than on their own account, regardless of whether they are employed strictly under a contract of employment. Source – ACAS.

<sup>2</sup> Source of section 1 is ACAS's 'Bullying and Harassment at Work – A guide for Managers and Employees'. <http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/c/j/Bullying-and-harassment-in-the-workplace-a-guide-for-managers-and-employers.pdf>

## 4. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals working at or with VFAN, including, but not limited to: VFAN employees (whether permanent, fixed-term or temporary); consultants; contractors; volunteers; agency staff; trustees; partner organisations; donors and suppliers, acting for or on behalf of VFAN. The policy applies equally both within the UK and overseas.

The policy also applies to international and national partners that VFAN choose to work with and creates a requirement for appropriate 'due diligence' in the selection and monitoring of partners.

All relevant parties will be provided with access to a copy of this policy.

## 5. Recruitment

VFAN is committed to ensuring that preventing bullying and harassment is integral to our recruitment processes. All jobs will be advertised with a job description and person specification and will state that the successful candidate is expected to adhere to all VFAN policies, including the Bullying and Harassment Policy. References will always be followed up and VFAN reserves the right to contact any previous employers, not just those cited as referees.

## 6. Education and Training

VFAN will ensure that all staff, trustees and volunteers have access to this policy, understand it and agree to adhere to it.

- Induction of new employees, trustees and volunteers will include a briefing on bullying, harassment and misconduct, including an overview of the policy. Each individual will be required to read the policy in detail and sign to demonstrate that they understand the policy and agree to adhere to it.
- Existing staff, trustees and volunteers will receive a briefing on bullying, harassment and misconduct, including an overview of the policy. Each individual will be required to read the policy in detail and sign to demonstrate that they understand the policy and agree to adhere to it.
- All staff, trustees and volunteers will be required to attend a governance policies and procedures refresher training session on a bi-annual basis and each individual will be required to sign the policy to demonstrate that they understand, and agree to adhere to it.
- Local partners will receive a copy of VFAN's Global Bullying and Harassment Policy.

## 7. Behaviour - Good Practice Guidelines

VFAN's staff handbook outlines appropriate and expected standards of behaviour. There may be minor variance dependent on cultural norms, but those accepted in the UK should always be used as the base reference point. It should be noted that both UK and local laws need to be adhered to, otherwise a criminal offence is being committed. Those contravening UK and local laws may be reported to the appropriate authorities as well as being subject to VFAN's disciplinary procedures.

Whilst engaged in VFAN activities all staff, trustees and volunteers who come into contact with other staff, partners and programme beneficiaries are required to:

- Treat everyone we interact with, with respect and dignity
- Ensure that their health and safety is paramount at all times during our interactions
- Liaise openly with communities and family members
- Only use physical contact if necessary, and during eye examinations, explain what that contact may be
- Avoid being alone with any vulnerable members of the community and respect gender norms (for example in examining women alone in some cultures)
- Listen to any disclosures/allegations/concerns of bullying, harassment and misconduct (of a verbal, physical and/or sexual nature) concerning anyone that VFAN is interacting with, including other staff
- Report any such disclosures/allegations/concerns immediately to the Head of Finance and Operations (in the case of the allegation being made about the Head of Finance and Operations, to the CEO).

## 8. Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Harassment Procedure

All complaints regarding bullying and harassment will be taken seriously, and every single complaint must and will be followed up. In reporting and responding to bullying and harassment issues the best interest and welfare of the individual should be paramount.

Where bullying or harassment is suspected, or there is a complaint against a member of staff, trustee or volunteer of VFAN, that complaint should be reported in the first instance to the individual's line manager, or where the complaint relates to the individual's line manager, then to the next level of seniority.

Following an allegation of bullying, harassment and/or misconduct an appropriate individual will be nominated to coordinate an investigation and/or response. VFAN recognises that it may not always be best placed to ascertain whether or what exactly has taken place – in which case referral to relevant agencies/mediation will take place.

The investigation process will be confidential and information limited to only those that need to know. All parties involved will be required to keep all information relating to the case confidential and all documentation will be filed securely.

VFAN will ensure that all concerns raised are taken seriously, and will act appropriately and effectively in instigating or cooperating with any subsequent process of investigation. It is the responsibility of the CEO to inform the Board in a timely manner.

## 9. Ramifications of Misconduct

If any individual associated with VFAN is found to have violated the Global Bullying and Harassment Policy or committed acts that are criminal or grossly infringe an individual's rights, VFAN's disciplinary procedure will be invoked. This may include:

- Employees: disciplinary action which may lead to dismissal
- Trustees, volunteers, interns: ending the relationship with VFAN
- International/national partner organisation: withdrawal of funding/support and ending the relationship with VFAN
- Consultants/contractors: termination of contract
- Referral to police/relevant authorities.

## 10. Review of this Policy

This policy will be reviewed by VFAN's Senior Management Team on an annual basis, with any changes approved by the Board of Trustees, and with ownership of updates resting with the Head of Finance and Operations.

This policy was adopted by the Trustees of Vision for a Nation Foundation on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018.



**John Rhodes**  
Trustee (Chairman)



**Tony Hutton**  
Chief Executive



## Annex A: VFAN Global Bullying and Harassment Policy Compliance Form

I have received and been briefed on the VFAN Global Bullying and Harassment Policy and fully understand my responsibilities to comply with the Policy.

Name	
Position within VFAN	
Signature	
Date	