



## Equity, Inclusion and Workplace Conduct Policy and Procedure

### Policy Statement

Nature Care College is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, respectful, and equitable learning and working environments for all learners, employees, contractors, and visitors.

Nature Care College values diversity and seeks to ensure that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect regardless of their background, personal characteristics, beliefs, or circumstances. Discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation, and inappropriate workplace conduct will not be tolerated.

This policy establishes the standards of behaviour expected within Nature Care College and outlines procedures for addressing concerns, complaints, and breaches.

### Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Foster a culture of respect and professionalism.
- Prevent discrimination, harassment, bullying, and victimisation.
- Support fair access to educational opportunities and employment.
- Establish clear expectations for workplace and learner conduct.
- Provide procedures for reporting and resolving concerns.
- Meet applicable legal and ethical obligations.

### Policy Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Managers and supervisors
- Trainers and assessors
- Contractors and consultants
- Volunteers
- Learners

The policy applies to conduct occurring:

- On Nature Care College premises
- During training and educational sessions
- During work-related travel
- At Nature Care College events
- Online learning environments
- Digital communications and social media when connected to Nature Care College activities



## **Policy Content:**

### **Guiding Principles**

Nature Care is committed to:

#### **Equity**

Ensuring fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all individuals.

#### **Inclusion**

Creating an environment where people feel welcomed, respected, supported, and able to participate fully.

#### **Diversity**

Recognising and valuing individual differences including:

- Age
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Nationality
- Gender
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Marital or family status
- Socioeconomic background
- Language
- Cultural identity
- Educational background

#### **Respect**

Promoting professional, courteous, and respectful interactions.

#### **Accessibility**

Removing barriers that may prevent participation in learning or employment.

#### **Definitions**

##### **Equity**

The provision of fair treatment and access based on individual needs and circumstances.

##### **Inclusion**

Practices that ensure individuals can participate meaningfully and feel valued.



## **Discrimination**

Unfair treatment of a person because of a protected characteristic or personal attribute.

Examples include:

- Refusing participation opportunities.
- Unequal treatment.
- Unfair employment decisions.

## **Harassment**

Unwelcome behaviour that humiliates, intimidates, offends, or threatens another person.

Examples include:

- Offensive comments
- Derogatory jokes
- Insults
- Repeated unwanted attention

## **Sexual Harassment**

Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favours, or conduct of a sexual nature.

Examples include:

- Sexual comment
- Inappropriate touching
- Suggestive messages
- Displaying offensive sexual material

## **Bullying**

Repeated unreasonable behaviour directed toward a person or group that creates a risk to health and safety.

Examples include:

- Intimidation
- Exclusion
- Verbal abuse
- Excessive criticism
- Deliberately undermining work

## **Victimisation**

Treating a person unfairly because they have made or supported a complaint.



## **Policy Requirements**

### **Equal Opportunity**

Nature Care College will:

- Provide equal access to learning opportunities
- Apply fair recruitment and selection processes
- Make decisions based on merit and legitimate requirements
- Support reasonable adjustments where appropriate
- Ensure educational materials and practices promote inclusion

### **Inclusive Learning Environment**

Nature Care College will:

- Encourage respectful participation
- Promote diverse perspectives
- Accommodate individual learning needs where reasonably practicable
- Address inappropriate behaviour promptly
- Ensure accessible communication methods where possible

### **Respectful Workplace Conduct**

All persons must:

- Treat others respectfully
- Communicate professionally
- Respect cultural differences
- Maintain confidentiality where required
- Follow Nature Care Colleges values and policies
- Contribute to a safe and inclusive environment

### **Unacceptable Conduct**

The following behaviours are prohibited:

#### **Discrimination**

Including direct or indirect discrimination.

#### **Harassment**

Including verbal, written, visual, or online harassment.

#### **Sexual Harassment**

Including any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature.



## **Bullying**

Including repeated unreasonable conduct.

## **Victimisation**

Including retaliation against complainants or witnesses.

## **Vilification**

Inciting hatred, contempt, or ridicule against a person or group.

## **Inappropriate Digital Conduct**

Including:

- Offensive emails
- Social media abuse
- Cyberbullying
- Sharing inappropriate material

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Management**

Management must:

- Demonstrate inclusive leadership
- Promote policy awareness
- Address concerns promptly
- Investigate complaints fairly
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Ensure procedural fairness

### **Employees and Contractors**

Employees and contractors must:

- Comply with this policy
- Report unacceptable conduct
- Participate in training where required
- Cooperate with investigations

### **Learners**

Learners must:

- Behave respectfully
- Follow Nature Care Colleges codes of conduct
- Report concerns appropriately
- Respect the rights of others



## **Complaint and Reporting Procedure**

### **Step 1 – Self-Resolution (Optional)**

Where appropriate and safe, an individual may:

- Explain that the behaviour is unwelcome.
- Request that the behaviour stop.

Individuals are not required to confront another person if they are uncomfortable doing so.

### **Step 2 – Informal Complaint**

The complainant may raise concerns with:

- A manager
- Human resources
- Designated complaints officer

Possible outcomes include:

- Informal discussion
- Clarification of expectations
- Mediation
- Workplace coaching

### **Step 3 – Formal Complaint**

A formal complaint should include:

- Name of complainant
- Description of incident(s)
- Date, time, and location
- Witness details (if any)
- Supporting evidence

Formal complaints may be submitted in writing.

## **Investigation Procedure**

Upon receiving a formal complaint:

### **1. Acknowledge Complaint**

Nature Care College will acknowledge receipt within a reasonable timeframe.



## **2. Preliminary Assessment**

The complaint will be assessed to determine:

- Nature of allegations
- Immediate risks
- Appropriate response pathway

## **3. Investigation**

An investigator may:

- Interview relevant parties
- Review documentation
- Gather evidence
- Obtain witness statements

## **4. Procedural Fairness**

All parties will:

- Be informed of allegations.
- Have an opportunity to respond.
- Be treated impartially.

## **5. Findings**

Findings will be based on available evidence.

## **6. Outcome**

Parties will be advised of the outcome where appropriate and lawful.

## **Confidentiality**

Nature Care College will:

- Handle complaints sensitively
- Maintain confidentiality wherever possible
- Limit disclosure to those with a legitimate need to know

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where:

- Legal obligations require disclosure.
- Health and safety risks exist.
- Investigation requirements necessitate disclosure.



### **Protection Against Victimisation**

No person will be disadvantaged because they:

- Make a complaint
- Participate in an investigation
- Act as a witness
- Seek advice regarding inappropriate conduct

Victimisation may result in disciplinary action.

### **Outcomes and Corrective Actions**

Where a breach is substantiated, actions may include:

#### **Employees and Contractors**

- Coaching
- Training
- Formal warning
- Performance management
- Termination of engagement

#### **Learners**

- Behavioural agreement
- Written warning
- Exclusion from activities
- Temporary suspension
- Removal from program

### **Support Available**

Individuals involved in complaints may access:

- Supervisory support
- Human resources support
- External support services

### **Training and Awareness**

Nature Care College will provide:

- Policy induction for new personnel
- Complaint handling guidance



## Record Keeping

Nature Care College will maintain records of:

- Complaints received
- Investigations undertaken
- Findings and outcomes
- Corrective actions
- Training activities

## Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Every two years; or
- Following significant legislative changes; or
- Following serious incidents or identified improvement opportunities.

## Related Documents

- Code of Conduct
- Complaints and Grievance Policy
- Workplace Health and Safety Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Marketing and Promotional Materials Policy
- Learner Handbook
- Staff Handbook
- Trainer Handbook

**Quality Outcome:** Nature Care College is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, respectful, and equitable learning and working environments for all learners, employees, contractors, and visitors.

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