



Accolade Group North West

Accolade Group NW – Dignity at Work Policy

1. Purpose

Accolade is committed to creating a work environment where every team member feels valued, respected, and safe. Our work with children and families is grounded in relational practice, empathy, and professionalism. These same principles guide how we treat one another. This policy outlines our expectations for behaviour and the steps we take to prevent and address bullying, harassment, discrimination, or any conduct that undermines dignity at work.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Accolade Group NW employees
- Independent Social Workers (ISWs)
- Family Support Workers
- Bank and sessional staff
- Contractors and consultants
- Volunteers and students
- Any individual representing Accolade in a professional capacity

It covers conduct:

- In any Accolade Group NW workspace (including family homes, community venues, and offices)

- During assessments, direct work, and supervised contact
- During travel for work purposes
- At meetings, training, and multi-agency forums
- In digital communication, including email, messaging platforms, and case-management systems

3. Our Values and Principles

Accolade Families operates from a trauma-informed, strengths-based approach. This means:

- Every individual deserves dignity, compassion, and respect
 - Behaviour that undermines confidence, safety, or wellbeing is not acceptable
 - Concerns are addressed early, sensitively, and without judgement
 - No one will experience detriment for raising a genuine concern
 - Managers model relational leadership and create psychologically safe spaces for staff
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4. Prevention Measures

Accolade is committed not only to responding to concerns but actively **preventing** unacceptable behaviour through a culture of respect, fairness, and relational practice. The following measures support a positive, safe, and inclusive working environment:

4.1 Promoting Positive Behaviours

- We encourage open, respectful communication across all roles, including ISWs, Family Support Workers, and managers.
- Team members are expected to model empathy, professionalism, and fairness in all interactions.
- Reflective practice is embedded into supervision and team culture to help prevent conflict and misunderstanding.

4.2 Training on Positive Workplace Relationships

- All staff receive training on:
 - Trauma-informed communication
 - Professional boundaries
 - Respectful challenge and conflict resolution
 - Equality, diversity, and inclusion
- New starters are introduced to these expectations during induction, with refreshers provided regularly.

4.3 Clear, Agreed Procedures

- Accolade Families maintains clear procedures for preventing and resolving unacceptable behaviour.
- These procedures are accessible, consistently applied, and reviewed to ensure fairness and transparency.
- Staff are encouraged to raise concerns early, using either informal or formal routes.

4.4 Straightforward and Confidential Reporting Systems

- Employees can report concerns through simple, confidential channels without fear of retaliation.
- Reports are handled sensitively and shared only with those who need to know.
- Anonymous reporting options may be used where appropriate, though they may limit the ability to investigate fully.

4.5 Management Support and Empowerment

- Managers receive guidance and supervision to help them identify, address, and prevent unacceptable behaviour.
- Leaders are expected to create psychologically safe spaces where staff feel comfortable raising issues.
- Systems are in place to empower employees to speak up, including access to senior leadership where needed.

4.6 Response Plans and Support Systems

- Anyone affected by workplace issues will be offered appropriate support, which may include:
 - Reflective supervision
 - Adjustments to duties or environment
 - Mediation or restorative conversations
 - Access to wellbeing resources
- Response plans are tailored to the individual and situation, ensuring compassionate, trauma-informed handling.

4.7 Regular Review and Communication

- This policy and its prevention measures are reviewed annually or sooner if working environments, legislation, or best practice change.
 - Updates are communicated clearly to all staff.
 - The policy forms part of the organisation's **Health and Safety Policy Statement**, ensuring visibility and alignment with wider organisational responsibilities.
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5. Definitions

5.1 Dignity at Work

A culture where everyone feels safe, heard, and able to carry out their role without fear of negative treatment.

5.2 Bullying

Behaviour that intimidates, undermines, or humiliates. Examples include:

- Persistent criticism or belittling
- Excluding colleagues from communication or decision-making
- Misuse of authority
- Setting unrealistic expectations or workloads
- Undermining professional judgement, especially in front of families or partners

5.3 Harassment

Unwanted conduct that violates dignity or creates a hostile environment. This includes behaviour related to protected characteristics such as race, disability, sex, religion, or sexual orientation.

5.4 Sexual Harassment

Unwanted verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, including inappropriate comments, messages, or physical contact.

5.5 Victimisation

Treating someone unfairly because they raised a concern, supported a colleague, or participated in an investigation.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Accolade Group NW (the organisation)

- Promote a culture of respect, inclusion, and psychological safety
- Provide training on professional conduct, trauma-informed practice, and communication
- Ensure concerns are investigated promptly and fairly
- Take proportionate action where behaviour breaches this policy

6.2 Managers and Senior Leaders

- Model relational, respectful behaviour
- Address issues early and supportively
- Maintain confidentiality and impartiality
- Ensure staff feel safe to speak up
- Provide reflective supervision and space to process concerns

6.3 All Staff and Practitioners

- Treat colleagues, families, and partners with respect
 - Communicate professionally and sensitively
 - Raise concerns promptly
 - Engage in reflective practice and be open to feedback
 - Avoid behaviour that could reasonably be perceived as bullying or harassment
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7. Raising Concerns

7.1 Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, individuals may:

- Speak directly to the person involved
- Explain the impact of the behaviour
- Seek support from a manager or reflective supervisor

This approach aligns with Accolade Families' relational ethos but is not suitable for serious allegations.

7.2 Formal Procedure

A formal concern may be raised when:

- Informal steps are not appropriate or have not resolved the issue
- The behaviour is serious, repeated, or harmful

Formal concerns should be submitted in writing. The organisation will:

- Acknowledge the concern promptly
- Appoint an impartial manager or external investigator
- Conduct a fair, trauma-informed investigation
- Provide clear findings and recommended actions

7.3 Support During the Process

Accolade Families will ensure:

- Access to wellbeing support
 - The right to be accompanied at meetings
 - Reasonable adjustments where needed
 - A sensitive, person-centred approach
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8. Outcomes and Actions

Where allegations are upheld, actions may include:

- Mediation or restorative conversations
- Additional training or supervision
- Management instructions
- Formal disciplinary action
- Termination of employment or contract in serious cases

Where allegations are not upheld, the organisation may still offer mediation or reflective support to rebuild working relationships.

9. Confidentiality

All concerns will be handled sensitively. Information will only be shared with those who need it to manage the issue appropriately.

10. Malicious or Vexatious Complaints

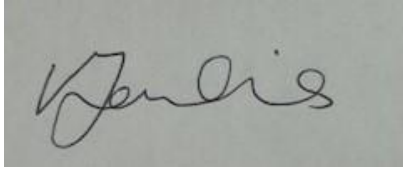
Accolade recognises that raising concerns can be difficult. No action will be taken against individuals who raise genuine concerns. However, knowingly false or malicious allegations may result in disciplinary action.

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation, best practice, or organisational needs change.

Review Date **18.9.2026**

Name: Victoria Jenkins

A handwritten signature in dark ink on a light grey background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Victoria Jenkins'.

Position: Designated Safeguarding Lead

Date: 18.9.2025