

1. Introduction

At Heartwood, we are committed to providing high-quality service and communication with all students and prospective students, whether currently enrolled or considering our counselling courses. While we aim to support and assist everyone in a professional manner, we recognise that on occasion, we may not meet everyone's expectations or be able to offer the desired support. We value feedback and treat any dissatisfaction seriously, using it as an opportunity to learn and improve our services.

However, there may be situations where individuals communicate in ways that disrupt our operations, cause significant time and cost to address, or negatively affect the well-being of our staff. This policy sets out how we handle unreasonable communication from both students and prospective students. It applies to all forms of contact with Heartwood, whether in-person, over the phone, by email, or on social media platforms.

We will also ensure that we make reasonable adjustments where necessary for individuals with disabilities, as per the Equality Act 2010. This includes taking into account circumstances where a student's communication difficulties may stem from a disability.

2. Communicating with Heartwood

We understand that people may express themselves strongly, particularly in situations involving personal or professional challenges, such as mental health issues, career concerns, or personal loss. We are committed to offering support and understanding, recognising that the emotions behind communication are valid. We will not consider communication unreasonable merely because it is forthright or determined, and our staff are trained to manage such interactions professionally.

However, there are instances where a student or prospective student's communication may be deemed unreasonable, and we must take action to protect the well-being of our staff and maintain a productive learning environment.

3. Unreasonable Behaviour

Unreasonable behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- Threatening or abusive language
- Verbal abuse, rudeness, or personal insults
- Derogatory remarks based on gender, race, sexuality, or other personal or protected characteristics
- Harassment (including racist, sexist, homophobic behaviour)
- Obscene or inflammatory language
- Publicly criticising staff, trainers, or the training provider in an abusive or defamatory manner, such as on social media or in the media
- Aggressive behaviour or physical intimidation
- Making threats of violence
- Recording calls or meetings without prior knowledge or consent
- Repeatedly contacting us with no new information after a decision has been made

Some of these behaviours are illegal, and we reserve the right to report them to the police if necessary.

4. Our Duty to Our Staff

Our staff must be able to work without fear of harassment or distress. Heartwood expects all individuals to interact respectfully with our staff, just as we expect our staff to engage professionally and respectfully with students. We will take steps to address any communication that creates a disruptive or unsafe work environment for our team.

5. Violence

We have a duty of care to ensure the safety of our staff. Any behaviour that threatens or intimidates staff will be taken seriously. This includes any form of communication or behaviour that causes staff to feel afraid or unsafe. Such incidents will be reported to the police immediately.

6. Deciding if a Complainant Has Behaved Unreasonably

If a member of staff believes that a student or prospective student has engaged in unreasonable behaviour, they will notify the Centre Director. The Centre Director will review the situation, and if necessary, escalate the matter.

If unreasonable behaviour occurs during a phone call or in person, the staff member has the right to terminate the interaction if the individual does not adjust their approach after being politely asked to do so. Similarly, at events or meetings, staff should use their discretion to end a discussion if it becomes unreasonable.

7. Options for Restricting Future Contact

If it is determined that a student or prospective student has exhibited unreasonable behaviour, we may need to restrict or end future communication with that individual. Options for limiting communication include:

- Restricting contact to specific staff members only
- Limiting communication to specific days or times
- Terminating phone calls if issues have already been addressed or if aggressive behaviour occurs
- Referring any future concerns to written communication only
- Returning excessive or irrelevant documentation
- Blocking excessive or abusive emails
- Limiting the range of issues that we will respond to

8. Challenging a Restriction

If a student or prospective student wishes to challenge a decision made under this policy, they may lodge an appeal with Heartwood's Complaints Officer, who will review the evidence and make a final decision.

9. Recording and Reviewing Restrictions

We will maintain a record of any restrictions placed on communication, and this will be reviewed periodically to ensure the appropriateness of the measures taken. We are committed

to ensuring that any actions taken under this policy are fair, transparent, and consistent with our values of respect and professionalism.

This policy ensures that Heartwood can continue to offer a professional and safe environment for all students, prospective students, and staff while managing any instances of inappropriate communication with sensitivity and fairness.

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