

Woughton Community Council

Anti-Bullying and Harassment policy 2021

Anti-Bullying and Harassment

Woughton Community Council is committed to providing a working environment, free from discrimination, bullying and harassment. We aim to ensure that all staff are treated and treat others with dignity and respect. This policy covers bullying and/or harassment which occurs both at and out of the workplace, including work trips or other work-related events/social functions. This policy should also be related to any communications outside of work hours including social media or messaging apps. We will always work to ensure nobody is treated less favourably based on the grounds of any protected characteristics, please see our Equal opportunities and diversity policy for more specific guidance on this.

Policy Principles

This policy relates to all our employees regardless of employment terms or rank.

Harassment

Harassment is any unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment. A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". Harassment also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past. It is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 to harass a person because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. It also includes conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment). Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories. Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to:

- unwanted physical conduct including touching, pinching, pushing, and grabbing.
- unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour.
- offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content or the display of offensive materials.
- unwanted jokes, banter, mocking, mimicking, or belittling a person

Bullying

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, belittle, or injure the recipient. Bullying can include the use of personal strength or the power to coerce through fear or intimidation, not necessarily from someone in a position of authority. Bullying may be physical, verbal or non-verbal. It can include conduct that is not face-to-face, including via text message, email and social media. Examples of

bullying include:

- physical or psychological threats.
- overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision.
- inappropriate derogatory remarks about a person or their performance.
- shouting at staff or consistently speaking to them disrespectfully.
- persistently picking on people in front of others or in private.
- blocking promotion and training opportunities.
- regularly and deliberately ignoring or excluding staff from work activities or work-related social events.
- setting a person up to fail by overloading them with work or setting impossible deadlines.
- regularly making the same person the butt of jokes.

Legitimate and reasonable criticism of a staff member's performance or behaviour, or reasonable management instructions, do not amount to bullying.

The above lists are not exhaustive, and any other unreasonable behaviour may be deemed to be harassment or bullying.

Procedure and reporting

Bullying and harassment are not tolerated in our workplace. All staff are required to treat each other, residents, external partnerships and councillors with dignity and respect. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary procedure. Serious or persistent instances of bullying or harassment may amount to gross misconduct which would lead to your dismissal. Staff who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our disciplinary procedure. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our disciplinary procedure.

If you feel you are being harassed or bullied you may wish to raise the problem informally with the person responsible first, to be clear about your concerns. However, if you do not feel an informal approach is appropriate, or a previous attempt has been unsuccessful you should raise the issue formally in writing to your Line manager, as per our grievance procedure. All complaints will be investigated in accordance with our grievance procedure. If we consider there is sufficient evidence to suggest you have been harassed or bullied we will take action in accordance with our disciplinary procedure and initially undertake an investigation into the matter which will then potentially result in disciplinary action being invoked. Whether or not your complaint is upheld we will consider how to best manage any ongoing working relationship between yourself and the person concerned.

Linked policies

Equal Opportunities and Diversity
Employee Code of Conduct
Staff Handbook

Relevant legislation

Equality Act 2010
Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999
Race Relations Act 1976 and (Amendment) 2000
Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment 2004)
Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
Sex Discriminations Act 1975 and (Amendment) 1986
The protection from Harassment Act 1997

Last review date:	August 2021
Next review date:	August 2023
Lead:	Operations manager
Overseeing Committee:	Operations
Approved:	31/08/2021
Review cycle:	2 yearly