



HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY¹

1. Overview

1.1 The Christ Church Network is committed to demonstrating its intention to eliminate any form of harassment, bullying or intimidation.

1.2 This policy applies to all employees, Church members, apprentices, consultants, officers, contractors, interns, volunteers, job applicants, agency and casual workers. If you are an employee, this policy does not form part of your employment contract and we may update it at any time. Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that individuals do not suffer harassment, bullying or intimidation.

1.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with our Equal Opportunities Policy and Grievance Policy and Complaints Handling Policy.

1.4 We want to provide an environment free from harassment, bullying and intimidation. This policy applies in the following contexts:

- anywhere on any of the Network's premises
- anywhere off the Network's premises, during Network-related events and meetings, business events or business trips
- online on Network email, intranet and internet systems.

1.5 Taking part in any of the following behaviour will lead to action under our Disciplinary Policy, and potentially dismissal for misconduct or gross misconduct:

- harassing or bullying anyone else (see paragraphs 2 and 3 below)
- threatening anyone who raises a harassment or bullying complaint
- retaliating against anyone who raises a harassment or bullying complaint
- making allegations maliciously or in bad faith
- giving false or intentionally misleading information during any investigation.

1.6 We have a duty to protect all those listed in paragraph 1.2. That means that if you change your mind after having raised a complaint of harassment or bullying (even where you complained informally or in confidence), we may choose to investigate anyway. We will always talk to you about that first and take your views into account.

¹ The Christ Church Network is the operating name of the Newland Christian Trust: a Christian charity (1101648) and Limited Company (04976143)

1.7 If you complain about harassment or bullying, you should not be victimised as a result. If you believe that has happened to you, you must tell your manager/one of the Elders as soon as possible.

1.8 If you are concerned about the way someone is being treated, the best approach may be for you to challenge the behaviour – but do not do so if you are anxious about your own safety. If you do not want to challenge the behaviour yourself, or you have tried doing so but it has not worked, you should speak to your manager/one of the Elders for further guidance.

2. What is harassment?

2.1 Harassment is where a person is subject to uninvited conduct that — as an intended or unintended consequence — violates their dignity, in connection with a protected characteristic (for example age, sex, disability, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation). Please see the Equal Opportunities Policy for more information about protected characteristics. Harassment could be carried out by a colleague/Church member or by a third party such as a client or customer.

2.2 The law defines it as ‘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’ (Equality Act 2020).

2.3 Physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct can all amount to harassment; so can things you say or do online, especially on social media.

2.4 This policy covers isolated or ongoing incidents of offensive behaviour. When someone treats another person less favourably because they either submit to such behaviour or refuse to do so, we also see that as harassment.

2.5 The impact on the victim is very important. A person’s behaviour can amount to bullying or harassment even if they had no idea it would be perceived that way.

3. What is bullying?

3.1 Bullying does not have a legal definition in the Equality Act but it can be defined as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, denigrates or injures the recipient (emotionally or physically). It does not need to be connected to a protected characteristic.

3.2 As with harassment, physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct can all amount to bullying. It can take various forms from extreme behaviour involving violence and intimidation, through to subtle actions such as deliberate exclusion (for example, ‘sending someone to Coventry’). It can also take place online (cyberbullying).

3.3 Constructive and fair feedback about your behaviour or performance from your manager or colleagues is not bullying. It is part of normal employment and management routine and should not be interpreted as anything different.

4. Examples of inappropriate behaviour and actions

The following are examples of behaviour and actions that we would consider inappropriate:

- sexual assault, intimidation, or sexual harassment
- physical assault
- verbal abuse, threats or name calling, including ridicule
- bullying – including any form of isolation
- damage to property
- offensive graffiti
- downloaded inappropriate images of a sexual nature from the Internet
- arson or attempted arson
- telling of racist, sexist or other derogatory jokes and / or stories
- malicious complaint
- victimising a person because of perceived differences
- displays of offensive material, literature or images
- remarks or ridicule about dress, appearance, accent or speech
- stereotyping individuals or groups
- making sexual innuendoes, comments or leering
- unwelcome touching, patting or pinching
- sending threatening messages, including texts and emails
- unprofessional work conduct including belittling or criticising colleagues in front of others; taking credit for other people's work and/or ideas; blaming others for one's own shortcomings
- spreading malicious rumours
- overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position
- deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading them or constantly criticising them.

5. How we deal with harassment and bullying

5.1 Many issues can be resolved informally. People may be unaware that their behaviour has been offensive and when challenged they may immediately apologise and modify their behaviour. Therefore, before you make a formal complaint of harassment or bullying, do you feel able to talk to the person directly, to explain that their behaviour is unwelcome, inappropriate, and upsetting? People may think of their behaviour as 'banter' and have no idea that it is upsetting or unacceptable.

5.2 Sometimes it is difficult to speak with the alleged offender directly. If that is the case, you should talk to your line manager or one of the Elders informally and in confidence. If the issue is with your line manager — or there is another reason you would prefer not to discuss it with them — you should instead speak to one of the Elders.

5.3 It is not always possible to resolve issues informally. If you find yourself in that situation, you should make a formal complaint using either the Grievance Policy (if you are an employee) or the Complaints Handling Policy (if you are a Church member or anyone else listed in paragraph 1.2). We will treat your complaint in confidence, as far as is possible, and if we find that you have been the victim of harassment or bullying, we will take steps to stop

it continuing or recurring. If we think it necessary, we may separate you from the person you are complaining about while we investigate. If that involves moving you on a temporary basis, or even asking you to stay at home during the investigation, it is not a pre-judgment of your complaint. It is simply to enable us to stop things getting worse during the investigation.

5.4 If we decide that your complaint is not upheld, we will explain why. Either way, we will look at ways of addressing your relationship with the person about whom you complained. We may, for example, change your work pattern or theirs, or suggest counselling or mediation.

6. Protecting confidentiality

6.1 Harassment and bullying allegations can raise strong feelings and are always serious. This is why both the Network and the person making the allegation have an obligation to maintain confidentiality as far as possible. This applies at every stage, including the investigation and the outcome.

6.2 (For employees) If you make a harassment or bullying complaint and do not maintain proper confidentiality at any time during the process, or you are interviewed in connection with someone else's complaint and likewise fail to maintain confidentiality, you may face action under our disciplinary procedure. This could lead to dismissal for misconduct or even gross misconduct.

6.3 Sometimes, we may decide it is inappropriate to discuss the outcome of an investigation with you. We recognise that will leave you feeling dissatisfied. We would only do so if there was a good reason not to keep you informed.

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