

Bullying and Harassment Policy

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Statement of Commitment

The Church is required by God to foster relationships of the utmost integrity, truthfulness and trustworthiness. The Diocese aims to provide a supportive environment in which the rights of individuals are respected and each person is treated with dignity and courtesy at all times. It recognises that working relationships can present many different challenges and wishes to have in place appropriate help and support, thereby endeavouring to prevent situations leading into hostile or unacceptable behaviour. Ultimately; abuse, harassment and bullying will not be tolerated, complaints will be taken seriously and thorough investigations are assured.

Defining Bullying and Harassment

- Any behaviour that could potentially undermine someone's dignity and respect should be regarded as unacceptable. If it is not challenged then it is likely to escalate and lead to significant difficulties for all concerned. Unacceptable behaviour changes its label to 'bullying' or 'harassing behaviour' when it causes actual harm or distress to the target(s), normally after a series of incidents over a prolonged period of time.
- The terms harassment and bullying are used interchangeably and there are many definitions.

- In general terms, harassment is:
Unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating another person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It may be related to age, sexuality, gender, race, disability, religion and belief, nationality, marital status or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident.
- Bullying may be characterised as:
Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.
- Bullying or harassment may be by an individual against an individual or involve groups of people. It may be obvious or it may be insidious. Whatever form it takes, it is unwarranted, unwelcome and offensive to the individual affected
- Examples of harassment and bullying behaviour include:
 - Behaviour on more than one occasion which is offensive, abusive, malicious, insulting or intimidating;
 - The use of suggestive or derogatory remarks, jokes or other verbal abuse at an individual's expense;
 - Spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone by word or behaviour (particularly on age, racial, sexual or disability grounds);
 - Copying memos that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know;
 - Ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail;
 - Exclusion or victimisation;
 - Unfair treatment;
 - Overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position;
 - Unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close, the display of offensive materials;
 - Making threats or comments about job security without foundation;
 - Deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism on more than one occasion;
 - Preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities;
 - Punishment imposed without reasonable justification;

- Changing the duties or responsibilities of staff to their detriment without reasonable justification
- Bullying and harassment are not necessarily face-to-face. They may occur in:
 - written communications
 - e-mail or other electronic communication
 - telephone
- Lack of intent does not diminish, excuse or negate the impact on the target or the distress caused

Standards of behaviour

Those with pastoral responsibilities for the clergy in this diocese; Area deans, archdeacons and the diocesan bishop, recognise the importance of setting a good example and undertake to participate in training provided in support of this policy.

Listening Guides

- Listening Guides are concerned members of the clergy and laity who have volunteered to offer a listening ear to any member of the clergy or other licensed minister, as required. They have received special training for this role and have the full support of the diocesan bishop.
- Listening guides will not make judgments, recommendations or reports; they will listen in an informal atmosphere and encourage individuals to make their own decisions about subsequent actions.
- Those wishing to speak with a Listening Guide should contact the Diocesan Secretary in the first instance; either via telephone (02392899650) or email diocesan.secretary@portsmouth.anglican.org
- The Diocesan Secretary will simply act as a facilitator; redirecting to an appropriate Listening Guide or further HR advice and ensuring any contact is treated in the strictest confidence.

Counselling and dispute resolution

Professional counsellors and professional associations are other useful sources of support for individuals. Please contact the Diocesan Secretary for further details.

Fair procedures

- It is possible to follow either the informal route or formal route if wishing to make a complaint of bullying or harassment.
- The informal route normally involves making it clear to the perpetrator that the behaviour offends and that the target wants it to stop. This could be done by letter or email, if a face-to-face confrontation is too difficult in the first instance, and professional support would be available. This route may stop the offensive behaviour quickly and effectively.
- However, there is also the choice of the formal route, which is likely to involve setting out details of the complaint in writing with specifics as to dates and times and an account of what the bullying or harassment is alleged to consist of. The complaint will then be investigated by the diocese, under the direction of the Bishop, as promptly as possible.
- When both the perpetrator and the target are ministers under common tenure, complaints of bullying or harassment may, with the target's consent, be brought under the Grievance Procedure detailed in the Clergy handbook. However, when the perpetrator is a clergy person, it may be more appropriate for the target, or an Archdeacon, with the target's consent, to make a complaint under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003.
- When the perpetrator is a lay person, and the target is either ordained or lay, complaints of bullying or harassment will be dealt with in the most appropriate way according to the circumstances.
- In any case resulting in a formal complaint the diocese, under the direction of the Bishop, will undertake a full investigation which will involve:
 1. checking whether the person suspected of bullying or harassment has received previous warnings for similar misconduct (or other types of misconduct) and, if so, whether any earlier warnings remain active;
 2. talking in confidence to any colleagues who may have evidence relating to the perpetrator's alleged behaviour;

3. endeavouring to persuade any colleagues who may have been witness to the perpetrator's alleged bullying or harassment, or who may have knowledge of it, to give a written statement to that effect;
4. setting up an interview with the alleged perpetrator, allowing him/her the right to be accompanied at the interview;
5. allowing the alleged perpetrator a full and fair opportunity to answer any allegations against him/her and/or explain his/her conduct;
6. assess objectively whether the alleged perpetrator's conduct appears to have amounted to bullying or harassment;
7. adopt an objective and balanced approach to the information gained as a result of the investigation;
8. avoid allowing personal views about the alleged perpetrator to influence the overall assessment of the conduct under review; and
9. keep confidential records of the investigation and ensure that these are handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Policy oversight

The Diocese is responsible for encouraging and monitoring the implementation of this policy. The Diocesan Secretary will ensure that it is included in the clergy handbook and that suitable resources are available to support it.

False accusation

False accusations are a serious matter. The behaviour of anyone who is found to have made an unfounded, deliberately malicious complaint or allegation will be regarded with the utmost seriousness and where possible formal action taken. In the case of a clergy person this may be a complaint under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003. A member of either the clergy or laity could be subject to an action for defamation if they have made false accusations against someone else.