



Anti-bullying and harassment policy

St James Clitheroe

May 2021

Preventing bullying and harassment in St James Church, Clitheroe

Statement of commitment

1. The Church is required by God to foster relationships of the utmost integrity, truthfulness and trustworthiness. Abuse, harassment and bullying – however rare - will not be tolerated in St James Church. All complaints of abuse, harassment and bullying will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

What is bullying and harassment?

2. Any behaviour that could potentially undermine someone's dignity and respect should be regarded as unacceptable. If it is not challenged it is likely to escalate and lead to significant difficulties for all concerned.
3. In establishing the links between 'unacceptable behaviour', 'bullying' and 'harassment' as well as drawing together the common themes and issues the following broader definition may be helpful:

"Any behaviour, always involving a misuse of power, which an individual or group knows, or ought reasonably to know, could have the potential effect of offending, humiliating, intimidating or isolating an individual or group should be regarded as unacceptable in the workplace. 'Unacceptable behaviour' changes its label to 'bullying' or 'harassing behaviour' when it causes actual harm or distress to the target(s), normally but not exclusively, after a series of incidents over a prolonged period of time. Lack of intent does not diminish, excuse or negate the impact on the target or the distress caused. The degree of intent is only relevant in terms of how the behaviour should be challenged and the issues subsequently resolved."

Fergus Roseburgh, Senior Staff Representative, Unite the Union, The Children's Society. March 2007

4. Bullying is most easily identified when it is continuous, frequent, repetitive and part of an overall pattern. However, some abuse is serious enough to be recognised even if the behaviour occurred only once and is therefore not defined as bullying.

How can bullying and harassment be recognised?

5. Bullying may manifest itself in a variety of different ways. It is usually persistent, and often unpredictable, and can amount to severe psychological intimidation. It is insidious, and undermines the ability and confidence of the person suffering from it. It can lead to fear, isolation, demotivation and reduced output, poor concentration, symptoms of stress, a noticeable level of sickness absence or stubborn attendance when obviously unwell, psychological, emotional and physical harm.

Examples of bullying behaviour

6. This list of behaviours is not exhaustive but gives a clear indication of the sorts of actions that constitute bullying or harassment
- removing areas of responsibility without discussion or notice
 - isolating someone or deliberately ignoring or excluding them from activities
 - consistently attacking someone's professional or personal standing
 - setting out to make someone appear incompetent
 - persistently picking on someone in front of others
 - deliberate sabotage of work or actions
 - deliberately withholding information or providing incorrect information.
 - overloading with work/reducing deadlines without paying attention to any protest
 - displays of offensive material
 - use of e-mails to reprimand, insult or otherwise inform someone of their apparent failing, either to the individual or to third parties
 - repeatedly shouting or swearing in public or in private
 - spreading malicious rumours to third parties
 - public humiliation by constant innuendo, belittling and 'putting down'
 - personal insults and name-calling
 - aggressive gestures, verbal threats and intimidation
 - persistent threats about security
 - making false accusations
 - aggressive bodily posture or physical contact
 - talking/shouting directly into someone's face
 - direct physical intimidation, violence or assault

The most serious incidents might result in:

- creating an unsafe working environment
 - ignoring signs of overwork and extreme stress
 - putting someone's health physically, emotionally or psychologically at risk by making them upset, frightened and/or ridiculed
7. On the other hand it is important to distinguish between bullying, and behaviour that is reasonable in a particular context. For example there may be occasions where shortcomings in performance are being addressed and more incisive behaviour is interpreted as bullying simply because the recipient is unused to being challenged or asked to account for their actions.
8. Harassment, in general terms, is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women in the workplace. It may be related to age, sex, race, disability, religious belief (including theology or churchmanship), nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident. The important point is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.

9. On the whole it is safest to take the view that if a person complains that they are being bullied or harassed, then they have a grievance, which should be dealt with regardless of whether or not their complaint accords with a standard definition.

Fair Procedures

10. It is church policy that accusations of bullying or harassment are to be treated with absolute confidentiality and that no action will be taken without the willing consent of the person who feels he or she has been a target.
11. When both the perpetrator and the target is a clergy person or a licensed lay minister, complaints of bullying or harassment may, with the target's consent, be brought under the Grievance Procedure for Licensed Ministers. It has been developed by the Church of England to deal with grievances of various kinds between ministers. 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.
12. When the perpetrator is a layperson, and the target is either ordained or lay, complaints of bullying or harassment may, with the target's consent, be dealt with in one of a number of ways according to the circumstances.
 - a. Informal discussions: If you have a grievance related to bullying or harassment you should discuss it informally with your immediate supervisor. You may choose to have this conversation with a mediator present. It is hoped that the majority of concerns will be resolved at this stage.
 - b. Stage 1: If you feel that the matter has not been resolved through informal discussion, you should put your grievance in writing to your line manager. A response must be given within five working days in an endeavour to resolve the matter.

Where your grievance is against your line manager and you feel unable to approach him or her you should write in the first instance to the Vice Chair of the PCC. The PCC should appoint a small group or an independent person to act as mediator.
 - c. Stage 2: If the matter is not resolved, you may raise the matter, in writing, with your manager, who must give a response within five working days, arranging to meet with you. A mediator should attend this meeting. After this meeting, the PCC will give you a decision in writing, usually within 48 hours (excluding weekends).
 - d. Stage 3: If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction you may appeal against the decision.

Appeals

13. An employee who wishes to appeal against any grievance decision must do so to the named person in the organisation (Vice Chair of the PCC) within five working days. The employer, or a selected panel, will hear the appeal and decide the case as impartially as possible. So far as is practicable, the appeal panel will involve people

who were not directly involved in the original grievance hearing. The appeal panel will hear the appeal independently and decide the case as impartially as possible.