

BISHOPSTOKE PARISH COUNCIL

DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

**This Dignity At Work Policy was adopted
by the Parish Council at its meeting on 14th March 2023**

**D Wheal
Clerk to Bishopstoke Parish Council**

BISHOPSTOKE PARISH COUNCIL
DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

Amendment Sheet

Amendment No.	Date Incorporated	Subject
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DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

Bishopstoke Parish Council believes that civility and respect are important in the working environment, and expect all councillors, officers and the public to be polite and courteous when working for, and with the council.

1 Purpose

- 1.1** Bishopstoke Parish Council is committed to creating a working environment where all council employees, councillors, contractors and others who come into contact with us in the course of our work, are treated with dignity, respect and courtesy. We aim to create a workplace where there is zero tolerance for harassment and bullying.
- 1.2** We recognise that there is a continuum where unaddressed issues have the potential to escalate and become larger, more complex issues and this policy sets out how concerns will be managed however the emphasis of this policy is on resolution and mediation where appropriate, rather than an adversarial process.
- 1.3** This document:
 - 1.3.1** explains how we will respond to complaints of bullying or harassment
 - 1.3.2** ensures that we respond sensitively and promptly; and
 - 1.3.3** supports our employees in ensuring their behaviour does not amount to bullying and/or harassment by giving examples.

2 Scope

- 2.1** This policy covers bullying and harassment of and by clerks and all employees engaged to work at Bishopstoke Parish Council. Should agency staff, or contractors have a complaint connected to their engagement with Bishopstoke Parish Council this should be raised to their nominated contact, manager, or the Chair of the Council, in the first instance. Should the complaint be about the chair of the council the complaint should be raised to the Vice Chair or the People Committee.
- 2.2** Agency staff, or contractors are equally expected to treat council colleagues, and other representatives and stakeholders with dignity and respect, and the council may terminate the contract, without notice, where there are suspicions of harassment or bullying.
- 2.3** Complaints about other employment matters will be managed under the council's grievance policy.
- 2.4** It is noted that the management of a situation may differ depending on who the allegations relate to (e.g. employees, contractor, councillor), however, the council will take appropriate action if any of its employees are bullied or harassed by employees, councillors, members of the public, suppliers or contractors.

3 The position on bullying and harassment

- 3.1** All staff and council representatives are entitled to dignity, respect and courtesy within the workplace and to not experience any form of discrimination. Bishopstoke Parish Council will not tolerate bullying or harassment in our workplace or at work-related events outside of the workplace, whether the conduct is a one-off act or repeated course of conduct, and whether harm is intended or not. Neither will we tolerate retaliation against, or victimisation of, any person involved in bringing a complaint of harassment or bullying. You should also be aware that, if you have bullied or harassed someone (e.g. physical violence, harassment), in some circumstances the treatment may amount to a crime punishable by a fine or imprisonment.
- 3.2** We expect all representatives of the council to treat each other with respect and uphold the values of the code of conduct, civility and respect pledge, equality opportunities policy, and all other policies and procedures set by the Council.
- 3.3** We expect you to demonstrate respect by listening and paying attention to others, having consideration for other people's feelings, following protocols and rules, showing appreciation and thanks, and being kind.
- 3.4** Allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously. Investigations will be carried out promptly, sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. See the grievance policy for further details regarding the process. Employees and others who make allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith will not be treated less favourably as a result.
- 3.5** False accusations of harassment or bullying can have a serious effect on innocent individuals. Staff and others have a responsibility not to make false allegations. While we will assume that all complaints of bullying and harassment are made in good faith, in the event that allegations are found to be malicious or vexatious the person raising the complaint may be subject to action under the council's disciplinary procedure.

Harassment

- Where a person is subject to uninvited conduct that violates their dignity, in connection with a protected characteristic
- Behaviour that creates a hostile, humiliating, degrading or similarly offensive environment in relation to a protected characteristic

Bullying

- Behaviour that leaves the victim feeling threatened, intimidated, humiliated, vulnerable or otherwise upset. It does not need to be connected to a protected characteristic.

4 What Type of Treatment amounts to Bullying or Harassment?

- 4.1** 'Bullying' or 'harassment' are phrases that apply to treatment from one person (or a group of people) to another that is unwanted and that has the effect of violating that person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for that person.
- 4.2** Examples of bullying and harassment include:
- 4.2.1** Physical conduct ranging from unwelcome touching to serious assault
 - 4.2.2** Unwelcome sexual advances
 - 4.2.3** The offer of rewards for going along with sexual advances e.g. promotion, access to training
 - 4.2.4** Threats for rejecting sexual advances
 - 4.2.5** Demeaning comments about a person's appearance
 - 4.2.6** Verbal abuse or offensive comments, including jokes or pranks related to age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation

Unwanted nicknames, especially related to a person's age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation

Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone

Lewd or suggestive comments or gestures

Deliberate exclusion from conversations, work activities or social activities.

Withholding information a person needs in order to do their job

Practical jokes, initiation ceremonies or inappropriate birthday rituals

Physical abuse such as hitting, pushing or jostling

Rifling through, hiding or damaging personal property

Display of pictures or objects with sexual or racial overtones, even if not directed at any particular person

Isolation or non-cooperation at work

Subjecting a person to humiliation or ridicule, belittling their efforts, whether directly and / or in front of others

The use of obscene gestures

Abusing a position of power

5 Disclosure of Personal Data

5.1 Personal Data will only be disclosed in accordance with the provisions of the DPA.

6 Access Rights by Individuals

6.1 An individual may request a copy of any data held about them or information about the reason it is kept and processed and the people to whom it is disclosed. The information must be provided, in clearly understandable terms, within 40 days of a valid written request and the payment of the required fee.

6.2 A person seeking information shall be required to prove their identity in accordance with the DPA. The 40 days will run from the date the person provides this information and pays any required fee.

6.3 Information may be withheld where the Council is not satisfied that the person requesting information about themselves are who they say they are or when the requester is an organisation or body holding itself out as requesting information on behalf of a named individual and the Council is not satisfied that they have the authority to receive that information.

7 Disclosure to and about Third Parties

7.1 Personal Data must not be disclosed about a Third Party except in accordance with the DPA. If it appears absolutely necessary to disclose information about a Third Party to a person requesting data about themselves, advice must be sought from the Clerk.

7.2 All references to Third Parties must be removed from the information that is given to the Data Subject, unless the third party gives their consent, or Council considers it reasonable to provide the information without the other individuals consent.

8 Inaccurate Data

8.1 If an individual complains that the data held about them is wrong, incomplete or inaccurate, the position should be investigated thoroughly including checking with the source of the information. In the meantime, a caution should be marked on the person's file that there is a question mark over the accuracy. An individual is entitled to apply to the court for a correcting order and it is obviously preferable to avoid legal proceedings by working with the person to correct the data or allay their concerns.

9 Requests by Individuals to Stop Processing Information

- 9.1** If data is properly held for marketing purposes, an individual is entitled to require that this is ceased as soon as possible. Requests must be made in writing but generally all written or oral requests should be heeded as soon as they are made. The cessation must be confirmed in writing.
- 9.2** If data is held for any other purposes, an individual may request that processing ceases if it is causing them unwarranted harm or distress. This does not apply if they have given their consent, if the data is held in connection with a contract with the person, if the Council is fulfilling a legal requirement or if the person's vital interests are being protected. Valid written requests must be heeded within 21 days. The cessation must be confirmed in writing.

10 Complaints

- 10.1** Any complaint or concern expressed by an individual in connection with the DPA must be reported to The Clerk immediately in case legal action is taken. The Clerk will ensure that there has been no breach of the DPA and, if there has, what action needs to be taken to remedy it.