



ANTI-BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY

1. Statement of Intent

Martin Village Hall Committee is committed to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment for all users, hirers, volunteers, and visitors. We firmly believe that everyone has the right to be treated with consideration, fairness, dignity, and respect. This principle extends to all interactions associated with the Village Hall and contributes to an environment in which individuals feel safe and valued while participating in activities, working, or volunteering.

The Village Hall Committee will treat all allegations of bullying or harassment seriously, acting promptly and impartially to investigate and address them. We are dedicated to protecting our volunteers, staff, and users from any form of unacceptable behaviour.

2. Why We Have a Policy

- To create a climate in which all types of bullying and harassment are regarded as unacceptable.
- To promote an environment free from threat, harassment, victimisation, and any type of bullying behaviour.
- To take positive action to prevent bullying and harassment from occurring.
- To show commitment to overcoming bullying and harassment by practising zero tolerance.
- To ensure all individuals associated with the Village Hall, particularly our valued volunteers, can contribute in a respectful and safe environment.
- To provide a clear framework for addressing and resolving incidents of bullying and harassment.

Issue date: 1st January 2024

Charity Commission Number 521854

3. Definition of Harassment and Bullying

Harassment and bullying encompass any unwanted behaviour that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. The impact of the behaviour on the recipient is the primary factor in determining whether harassment or bullying has occurred, rather than the intent of the perpetrator.

Harassment may be defined as any conduct which is:

- **Unwanted** by the recipient.
- **Considered objectionable** by a reasonable person.
- **Related to** a protected characteristic (such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation) or is not related to a protected characteristic but still has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- **Causes** humiliation, offence, distress, or other detrimental effect.

Harassment may be an isolated incident or repetitive and can occur against one or more individuals. Harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- **Physical contact** – ranging from unwelcome touching to serious assault, gestures, intimidation, aggressive behaviour.
- **Verbal** – unwelcome remarks, suggestions and propositions, malicious gossip, jokes and banter perceived as offensive, offensive language, belittling comments, threats.
- **Non-verbal** – offensive literature or pictures, graffiti and computer imagery, isolation and exclusion from social activities, offensive emails or social media posts.
- **Written** – by making false or malicious claims, accusations, or suggestions aimed at maligning an individual, including correspondence to third parties.

Bullying is typically a pattern of repeated and persistent behaviour, although severe isolated incidents may also constitute bullying. It often involves the misuse of power and can include:

- Conduct which is intimidating, physically abusive, or threatening.

MARTIN VILLAGE HALL
Anti-bullying & Harassment Policy

- Conduct which denigrates, ridicules, or humiliates an individual, especially in front of others.
- Conduct which is malicious, insulting, or offensive.
- Unfair targeting of one person when there is a common problem.
- Shouting at an individual to get things done in a demeaning way.
- Spreading rumours or gossip with the intent to harm someone's reputation.
- Persistent unwarranted criticism.
- Undermining an individual's work or contribution.

Specifically in the context of volunteers, bullying and harassment may also include:

- Making unsubstantiated accusations or complaints to external bodies with the primary aim of causing distress or damage to their reputation.
- Persistent and unwelcome scrutiny of a volunteer's actions.
- Attempts to undermine a volunteer's role or contribution within the Village Hall.

4. What to Do If You Think You Are Being Harassed or Bullied

We understand that it can be difficult to come forward. If you believe you are being harassed or bullied, we encourage you to take the following steps:

- **If you feel comfortable**, you may consider telling the person behaving in this way that their behaviour is unwelcome and that you would like it to stop.
- **Report the incident** as soon as possible to the Village Hall Chair or another member of the Village Hall Committee. If you feel unable to speak to the Chair, please contact another officer you trust.
- **Keep a record** of the incidents, including dates, times, locations, names of any witnesses, and a clear description of what happened. This will be helpful during any investigation.
- If the harassment or bullying involves a member of the Committee, please report it to another Committee member or, if necessary, directly to the relevant external body (e.g., Charity Commission) after informing another Committee member of your intention.

5. What the Village Hall Committee Will Do

Issue date: 1st January 2024
Charity Commission Number 521854

MARTIN VILLAGE HALL
Anti-bullying & Harassment Policy

The Village Hall Committee is committed to taking swift and appropriate action in response to any reported incidents of bullying or harassment. We will:

- **Treat all incidents seriously, fairly, sensitively, and with the utmost confidentiality**, within the bounds of a thorough investigation.
- **Listen to all parties involved** in the incident, ensuring everyone has an opportunity to share their perspective.
- **Investigate the allegations thoroughly and impartially**, gathering all relevant information. This may involve speaking to witnesses and reviewing any written evidence.
- **Take appropriate action based on the findings of the investigation.** This may include:
 - Mediation (where appropriate and agreed by all parties).
 - Issuing a verbal or written warning to the individual(s) concerned.
 - Requiring the individual(s) concerned to undertake training or other remedial action.
 - Temporarily suspending the individual(s) from using the Village Hall or participating in its activities.
 - Permanently banning the individual(s) from the Village Hall and its activities.
 - Informing relevant external bodies if the situation warrants it.
- **Record all reported incidents** of bullying and harassment and the outcomes of any investigations.
- **Regularly review this policy** and our procedures to ensure they are effective in preventing and addressing bullying and harassment.
- **Promote a culture of respect and understanding** through communication and, where appropriate, training or awareness initiatives.
- **Ensure that volunteers who report bullying or harassment are not victimised** for raising their concerns.

By implementing this policy, Martin Village Hall Committee aims to create and maintain a safe, respectful, and positive environment for everyone involved with our community

MARTIN VILLAGE HALL
Anti-bullying & Harassment Policy

hall. We encourage anyone who experiences or witnesses bullying or harassment to come forward so that we can take appropriate action.

Review

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Date issued: 1st January 2024

Next review date: 1st January 2026

Author

Kevin Garner-Smith (Trustee & Treasurer)