



# Bullying and Harassment Policy

## 1.0 Statement of Commitment

- 1.1 Everyone will be treated with dignity and respect at Market Weighon Town Council. Bullying and harassment of any kind are in no-one's interest and will not be tolerated in the workplace; this includes bullying or harassment of staff by members or visitors to Market Weighon Town Council, or users of our service.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all staff, members, contractors and members of the public both on and off the premises, including those working away from their main office or place of work.
- 1.3 Any and all forms of bullying / harassment will not be tolerated and will be treated as disciplinary offences.

## 2.0 What is bullying and harassment?

- 2.1 Harassment, in general terms is unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of an individual or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual, provided that it could reasonably be considered to have that effect.
- 2.2 It may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident.
- 2.3 Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.
- 2.4 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. It may be face to face or in written communications, email, phone, social media or through other means. Whatever form it takes, it is unwarranted and unwelcome to the individual. It may take place in private or in public.

## 3.0 Examples of bullying/harassing behaviour include:

- a. Spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone by word or behaviour;
- b. Copying emails that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know;
- c. Ridiculing or demeaning someone - picking on them or setting them up to fail;
- d. Exclusion or victimisation;
- e. Overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position;
- f. Unwelcome sexual advances - touching, standing too close, the display of offensive materials;
- g. Making threats or comments about job security without foundation;
- h. Deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism;
- i. Preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities.



- j. Any other perceived unfair treatment;
- k. Legitimate, constructive and fair criticism of an employee's performance or behaviour at work is not bullying.

An occasional raised voice or argument is not bullying.

#### **4.0 Procedures**

Complaints of bullying and/or harassment, or information from staff relating to such complaints, will be dealt with fairly and confidentially and sensitively using the relevant procedure. Bullying and harassment are serious issues and will be treated as such.

- 4.1 Where complaints of bullying or harassment involve your line manager, approaches should be made to the Chair of Personnel. Complaints will be taken seriously and investigated promptly, objectively and independently.
- 4.2 Where complaints are made against any visitors who are not employed members of staff, we reserve the right to prohibit them from using the service/entering the building and will involve other agencies where necessary in order to ensure that the complainants are protected from that kind of behaviour.
- 4.3 Where complaints are made against a Councillor, the complainant will be directed to the East Riding of Yorkshire Council Standards Board.

#### **5.0 Informal Action**

If appropriate, the matter will be dealt with informally; sometimes people are not aware that their behaviour is unwelcome, and an informal discussion can lead to greater understanding and an agreement that the behaviour will cease.

#### **6.0 Formal Action**

- 6.1 Where the complaint is found to be upheld and cannot be resolved informally, the matter will be dealt with in line with Market Weighton Town Councils Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure.
- 6.2 Where bullying or harassment amounts to gross misconduct, dismissal without notice may be appropriate.
- 6.3 The person making the complaint will not be moved from their normal workstation or other place of work unless justified and practical and after consultation.

#### **7.0 Counselling and Mediation**

- 7.1 Counselling or mediation may be considered, particularly where investigation shows no cause for disciplinary action, or where it may be useful to help resolve the issue or help support the person accused as well as the complainant.



## **8.0 Unfounded Allegations**

8.1 Employees lodging a complaint will not be disciplined for doing so unless somebody makes an unfounded allegation of bullying and/or harassment for malicious reasons. The case will then be investigated and dealt with fairly and objectively in line with Market Weighton Town Council Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure.

### **Related Documents**

- Grievance and Disciplinary procedure
- Contract of Employment
- Equality and Diversity policy