



**Church  
Stretton**  
Town Council

## **Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy**

### **Statement**

Church Stretton Town Council understands that people may be frustrated by decisions which are made, even those outside the control of the Town Council, however the Council should not and will not tolerate bullying of Councillors, staff or volunteers. This includes directing abuse at and spreading misinformation about members of the Council.

### **1. Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to all staff, Councillors and volunteers working for or on behalf of Church Stretton Town Council.

Church Stretton Town Council aims to develop a positive workplace culture where all staff are valued and where bullying and harassment are not tolerated.

Related policies include:

- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Policy and Procedure;
- Complaints Policy
- Code of Conduct (for Councillors).

### **2. Definitions**

A complaint about bullying and harassment may be made if something has happened that is unwelcome, unwanted and causes a detrimental effect.

- **Bullying** may be characterised as: offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.
- **Harassment** as defined in the Equality Act 2010 is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.
- **Sexual harassment** is specifically outlawed by the Equality Act 2010 and can be summarised as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.

Bullying and harassment may take place face to face or by email or social media. It may not be obvious to others. Recipients may be anxious that they may be considered to be over reacting or weak or that they won't be believed if they make a complaint.

Staff, Councillors or volunteers may be victims of bullying or harassment by others who do not work for the Council.

### **3. Examples**

Examples of bullying or harassment include:

- Spreading malicious rumours
- Sharing comments which are critical of others
- Ridiculing or demeaning someone
- Exclusion or victimisation
- Unfair treatment
- Misuse of power or position
- Unwelcome sexual advances
- Making threats about job security
- Deliberately undermining a colleague

### **4. Action**

Church Stretton Town Council will take any instances of bullying and or harassment seriously and will investigate all accusations of bullying and harassment. The Council will ensure that complainants are treated with dignity and confidentiality.

Any staff member, Councillor or volunteer should seek support if they feel they are being bullied or harassed. This may be from a trusted colleague, line manager, the Town Clerk or the Chair of the Council or the Chair of the Personnel Committee.

The Town Clerk, or if the complaint is about the Town Clerk or a councillor, the Chair of Council, should be made aware of the complaint as soon as possible.

#### **4.1 Informal Mediation**

If it is felt that the situation can be resolved through informal mediation the Town Clerk, or Chair of Council, will meet with all individuals involved to resolve the situation. If necessary a third party mediator may be appointed.

#### **4.2 Making a Formal Complaint or Grievance**

If following informal mediation, or in the event of a complaint where informal mediation would not be appropriate, the issue is not resolved to all parties' satisfaction a formal process will be undertaken.

##### **Complaints about other staff members or volunteers**

Complaints about bullying and/or harassment by other staff members or volunteers will be dealt with under the Council's Grievance Policy and Procedure. If the grievance is upheld the accused may then be the subject of a disciplinary process.

##### **Complaints about Councillors**

Formal Complaints about Councillors will be dealt with under the Councillor Code of Conduct.

**Complaints about someone outside the organisation**

If the complaint is about bullying or harassment by someone outside the organisation, the Council will consider what action is required to address the issue. This may, if required, involve seeking advice from the Police.

**Complaints about staff members or volunteers**

Complaints about bullying and/or harassment about members of staff or volunteers will be dealt with under the Council's complaints procedure. If the complaint is upheld the accused may then be the subject of a disciplinary process.

**5. Follow Up**

The Town Clerk will provide the Personnel Committee with a full report on any incidents of bullying and/or harassment. The committee should then consider any implications of the incident on future working practice and update policies and procedures as necessary.

**6. Further Advice**

Further advice and guidance about bullying and harassment in the workplace can be found on the ACAS website or by phoning the ACAS helpline 0300 123 1100.

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