

St. Gabriel's Parish Church Weoley Castle Dignity, Respect and Anti-Bullying Guidelines

Date Written: Spring 2025 Written by: St. Gabriel's PCC	Date Approved by St. Gabriel's PCC: 15/07/2025	Next review Date: 15/07/2028
---	--	--

Our commitment

We are committed to creating and providing a safe and respectful environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment, and victimisation where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. We believe that a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion not only benefits our society but supports wellbeing and enables people to function better because they can be themselves and feel that they belong. We therefore adopt a zero-tolerance approach to instances of bullying or harassment. This includes all forms of sexual harassment.

These guidelines accompany our St. Gabriel's Church Safeguarding Policy.

The scope of these guidelines

These guidelines cover bullying, harassment and sexual harassment of and by anyone who is present on our site, whether by direct contact with the organisation, volunteering, visitors, attending a group or event. They are for people of all ages to comply with, and any instance involving a child under 16 that occurs will be taken as a child safeguarding concern and parents or carers will be involved in remedying the situation.

What is bullying and harassment?

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, and/or an abuse or misuse of power that is meant to undermine, humiliate or injure the person on the receiving end.

If the bullying relates to a person's protected characteristic, it may also constitute harassment and, therefore, will be unlawful.

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to one or more of the protected characteristics that:

- has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person; or
- is reasonably considered by that person to have the effect of violating his/her dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for him/her, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct.
- Bullying and harassment may be misconduct that is physical, verbal or non-verbal, eg by letter or email.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour that are covered by these guidelines include (but are not limited to):

- physical conduct ranging from unwelcome touching to serious assault;
- unwelcome sexual advances;
- demeaning comments about a person's appearance;
- unwelcome jokes or comments of a sexual or racial nature or about an individual's age, disability, sexual orientation or religion;
- questions about a person's sex life;
- unwanted nicknames related to a person's age, race or disability;
- the use of obscene gestures;
- spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone;
- picking on someone or setting him/her up to fail;
- making threats or comments about someone's job security without good reason;

- ridiculing someone;
- isolation or excluding someone from social activities.

Sexual harassment is:

- conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment; and
- less favourable treatment related to sex or gender reassignment that occurs because of a rejection of, or submission to, sexual conduct.

Sexual harassment can occur in many forms, and while this is not an exhaustive list, examples include:

- physical conduct of a sexual nature, unwelcome physical contact or intimidation;
- persistent suggestions to meet up socially after a person has made clear that they do not welcome such suggestions;
- showing or sending offensive or pornographic material by any means (eg by text, video clip, email or by posting on the internet or social media);
- unwelcome sexual advances, propositions, suggestive remarks, or gender-related insults;
- offensive comments about appearance or dress, innuendo or lewd comments;
- leering, whistling or making sexually suggestive gestures; and
- gossip about someone's sexual orientation or transgender status, including spreading malicious rumours.

Who is protected from harassment?

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination because of certain protected characteristics. These are:

- age
- disability
- sex
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy
- maternity
- race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)
- sexual orientation
- religion or belief
- being married or in a civil partnership.

Although pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership are not specifically protected under the legal provisions on harassment, we consider harassment on any ground to be unacceptable. We will not tolerate bullying or harassment based on different Political Affiliations nor can a person's political beliefs give reason for any interaction that is considered bullying or harassment by someone.

Conduct may be harassment whether or not the person behaving in that way intends to offend. Something intended as a "joke" may offend another person. Different people find different things acceptable. Everyone has the right to decide what behaviour is acceptable to them and to have their feelings respected by others. Behaviour which any reasonable person would realise would be likely to offend will be harassment without the recipient having to make it clear in advance that behaviour of that type is not acceptable to them, eg sexual touching.

It may not be so clear in advance that some other forms of behaviour would be unwelcome to, or could offend, a particular person, eg certain "banter", flirting or making a joke about that person out of their hearing that they later come to know about. In these cases, first-time conduct which unintentionally causes offence will not be harassment but it will become harassment if the conduct

continues after the recipient has made it clear, by words or conduct, that such behaviour is unacceptable to them. A single incident can be harassment if it is sufficiently serious.

If you are the one bullying or harassing someone

This behaviour is unacceptable at St. Gabriel's Church and St. Gabriel's Centre. Bullying or harassment will often be considered gross misconduct, ***which could lead to banning from the site and all groups and events that meet on it.***

The process that leads to a ban from the site may include:

- A number of conversations with the leader of the event or group before any ban to discuss what behaviour is not acceptable.
- A written warning naming the actions which may lead to a ban unless the actions stop.
- A letter giving a temporary ban and the reasons as to why it is being given. This letter will be given to the participant and talked through by the leaders of the group or event.
- If necessary, a written letter with notice of a permanent ban. This letter will be given to the participant and talked through by the leaders of the group or event or by the church or centre staff.

Appropriate local authorities will also be informed of the situation as necessary. Bullying or harassment will constitute unlawful discrimination where it relates to one of the protected characteristics.

Online Bullying or Harassment

While these guidelines are about bullying and harassment on site at St. Gabriel's Church or Centre please know that any interactions online or via the mobile phone should also be held to this standard. Anyone involved in bullying or harassment online in places linked to the Church or Centre will be held to the standard of these guidelines and may be banned or excluded from those online spaces as well as on site.

What should I do if I think I am being bullied or harassed?

You may be able to sort out matters informally. The person may not know that their behaviour is unwelcome or upsetting. An informal discussion may help them to understand the effects of their behaviour and agree to change it. You should tell the person what behaviour you find offensive and unwelcome, and say that you would like it to stop immediately.

If this informal approach does not resolve matters, you should mention it to the leaders of the group or event you are attending. They should know about what behaviour is occurring in the group and can either support you to speak to the person individually or share a group reminder about what behaviour is not acceptable. If you think the situation is too serious to be dealt with informally in this way you can make a formal complaint to the PCC of St. Gabriel's Church or the St. Gabriel's Centre Board of Trustees.

St. Gabriel's PCC : safeguarding.stgabrielsb29@gmail.com

St. Gabriel's Board of Trustees: stgabrielsboard@gmail.com

All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively. They will go through the guidelines outlined here and each organisation will also act in accordance with their safeguarding policy as relevant.

What can I do to help stop bullying and harassment?

We all have a responsibility to help create and maintain an environment free of bullying and harassment. You can help to do this by:

- being aware of how your own behaviour may affect others and changing it, if necessary - you can still cause offence even if you are "only joking";
- treating people with dignity and respect;
- taking a stand if you think inappropriate jokes or comments are being made;
- making it clear to others when you find their behaviour unacceptable,
- intervening, if possible, to stop harassment or bullying and giving support to recipients;
- making it clear that you find harassment and bullying unacceptable;
- reporting harassment or bullying to PCC or Centre Board of Trustees and the person on site in charge at the time.
- if a complaint of harassment or bullying is made, not prejudging or victimising the complainant or alleged harasser.

How can I help St. Gabriel's Church and Centre to be a great place to be?

- Be welcoming to others, particularly people who are new
- Include others who may be feeling like outsiders
- Ask yourself if you would be comfortable with someone you respect hearing what you are about to say
- Smile and be friendly –Go the extra mile.

The above guidelines are for Children as well as adults with the caveat that bullying among those under 16 years of age will include the parents or carers for each person involved as part of the solution to the problem. If an adult is bullying a child, safeguarding protocol will be used as well.