



Diocese of Peterborough

Dignity at Work

Harassment and Bullying Policy

Policy summary

The Peterborough Diocesan Board of Finance (PDBF) is committed to creating a respectful and harmonious workplace, which is free from harassment and bullying of any kind, and one in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

It is committed to ensuring that individuals do not feel apprehensive because of their religious belief (including theology or church tradition), political opinion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, race, age, or disability, or through any inappropriate behaviour towards them.

This policy outlines the behavioural expectations the Peterborough Diocesan Board of Finance (PDBF) places upon all employees, officers, volunteers and contractors. This policy should be read alongside the Staff Handbook, specifically section 24. Harassment and bullying are regarded as unacceptable behaviour

Approval and review

Approved by	Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group 14/02/2019
Policy owner	Andrew Roberts
Policy author	Sue Ratcliffe
Date	18/10/2024
Review date	17/10/2025

Version No	Revision Date	Summary of Changes
1.0		New Policy
1.1	28/01/2019	Addition of HR provider details and HR v Safeguarding flow chart.
1.2	19/02/2019	Addition of footnote 1 page 4
1.3	16/08/2022	Review no change
1.4	18/10/2024	Review – update link to sharepoint Update HR Partner contact details

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Peterborough Diocesan Board of Finance (PDBF) is committed to creating a respectful and harmonious workplace, which is free from harassment and bullying of any kind, and one in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity.
- 1.2. It is committed to ensuring that individuals do not feel apprehensive because of their religious belief (including theology or church tradition), political opinion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, race, age, or disability, or through any inappropriate behaviour towards them.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. This policy outlines the behavioural expectations the Peterborough Diocesan Board of Finance (PDBF) places upon all employees, officers, volunteers and contractors. Harassment and bullying are regarded as unacceptable behaviour.¹
- 2.2. The policy is in place to allow the PDBF to deal with any form of harassment, bullying, intimidation or other inappropriate behaviour, which causes offence, whether intentional, or not. It should be read in conjunction with the Board's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- 2.3. This policy outlines when an issue should be considered under Safeguarding Policies rather than the Dignity at work Policy as outlined in appendix 1

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy is applicable to and must be followed by all employees, including agency workers, consultants, contractors and volunteers. Failure to comply could result in disciplinary action in accordance with paragraph 24 in the Staff Handbook found here [EDMS - Peterborough Administration - Policies - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#) including dismissal for employees, and termination of contracts with contractors, consultants or agency staff.

¹ In a Parish setting, this would refer to a "Church Officer", who is anyone appointed/elected by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid.

4. Ownership

- 4.1. The Dignity at Work Harassment and Bullying Policy is maintained by the PDBF, All questions or comments related to this policy should be directed to the Diocesan Secretary at andrew.roberts@peterborough-diocese.org.uk
- 4.2. Where any person (employed by the PDBF) needs to invoke the policy and requires HR assistance they should contact andrew.roberts@peterborough-diocese.org.uk who will liaise with the PDBF HR partner as necessary.
- 4.3. Where this policy is adopted by any other constituent part of the Church of England Family (i.e Parish, Cathedral, Bishops Office) HR provision can be sought from Robert Bryan Associates 17 New Street, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5BW email: rob@RobertBryan.co.uk ; tel: 07712 484085 at a cost to the constituent part.

5. What is Bullying and Harassment?

- 5.1. This policy relates to all forms of bullying and harassment, regardless of the basis or cause. However, it should be noted that in particular, the Equalities Act 2010 defines a number of protected characteristics including age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnerships.
- 5.2. *Definition of Harassment*; Harassment, in general terms, is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women in the workplace. It may be related to age, sex, race, disability, religious belief (including theology or churchmanship), nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident. The important thing is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning or unacceptable to the recipient.
- 5.3. Harassment may take many forms. It can range from extreme forms such as violence to less obvious actions such as persistently ignoring someone at work. The following, though not an exhaustive list, may constitute harassment:
 - physical contact ranging from touching to serious assault
 - verbal and written harassment through jokes, offensive language, gossip and slander, letters, emails, etc.
 - isolation or non-cooperation at work, exclusion from social activities
 - intrusion by pestering, spying, following etc.

5.4. *Definition of Workplace Bullying*; Workplace bullying is defined as repeated inappropriate, offensive behaviour, which is often an abuse of power or position. It can be direct or indirect, either verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work. It should be noted that it is the impact of the behaviour which is relevant to the decision of whether it constitutes bullying and not the motive or intent behind it.

5.5. The following list of behaviours is not exhaustive but gives an indication of the sorts of actions that constitute bullying or harassment.

- Removing areas of responsibility without discussion or notice.
- Isolating someone or deliberately ignoring or excluding them from activities.
- Consistently attacking someone's professional or personal standing.
- Making someone appear incompetent.
- Persistently picking on someone in front of others.
- Deliberate sabotage of work or actions.
- Deliberately withholding information or providing incorrect information.
- Overloading with work / reducing deadlines without paying attention to any protest.
- Displays of offensive material.
- Use of e-mails to reprimand, insult or otherwise inform someone of their apparent failing, either to the individual or to third parties.
- Repeatedly shouting or swearing in public or in private.
- Spreading malicious rumours to third parties.
- Public humiliation by constant innuendo, belittling or 'putting down'.
- Personal insults and name-calling.
- Aggressive gestures, verbal threats and intimidation.
- Making false accusations.
- Aggressive bodily posture or physical contact.
- Talking / shouting directly into someone's face.
- Direct physical intimidation, violence or assault.
- Inappropriate text messages.

5.6. It is important to distinguish between bullying and behaviour that is reasonable in a particular context. For example, there may be occasions where shortcomings in

performance are being addressed in a reasonable manner, but this is interpreted as bullying simply because the recipient is unused to being challenged or asked to account for their actions.

6. Responsibility of Employees

- 6.1. All employees have a personal responsibility not to harass or bully other members of staff, or to condone harassment or bullying by others. Harassment or bullying is misconduct and action may be taken under the disciplinary procedure against any employee found to have harassed or bullied an individual at work. Employees should also be aware that they could be personally liable by law if they harass anyone at work.

- 6.2. All employees have a duty to assist in the creation of a safe working environment, where unacceptable behaviour is not tolerated. This may include challenging unacceptable behaviour, ensuring their own behaviour does not contribute to or collude with unacceptable behaviour, and cooperating fully in any investigation undertaken by the Board.

7. Responsibility of Employers; Dealing with Harassment and Bullying

- 7.1. If you think that you are being harassed or bullied and this persists despite your requests for it to stop, then you should raise the matter with your Line Manager. If the complaint is against the Line Manager, then the matter should be discussed with either the Head of Department or another appropriate senior Manager.

- 7.2. **Informal:** In some cases, it may be possible to rectify the problem informally. Sometimes people are not aware that their behaviour or actions are unwelcome, and an informal discussion can lead to a greater understanding and an agreement that the behaviour will cease.

- 7.3. If you feel that you are being subjected to harassment or bullying then you should, if possible, keep a record of the incident(s), including the date and time, the nature of the incident and the names of any witnesses. It is important that anyone who feels subjected to harassment or bullying raises the issue with an appropriate person at the time the incident occurs, in order that the matter can be dealt with swiftly and that further potential harassment is prevented.

- 7.4. If you feel able, you should raise the problem with the alleged harasser, either verbally or in writing, making it clear that their behaviour is offensive and unacceptable, and ask for it to stop.

- 7.5. Where a resolution is reached through the informal stage of the process, with both party's agreement, a copy of the outcome should be given to both parties and a further copy placed on their personal files. An appropriate Manager should make arrangements for ongoing monitoring of the situation. Where the matter is unresolved, or the behaviour or actions are repeated, then a more formal procedure will be followed.
- 7.6. **Formal:** Every employee has the right to raise a complaint at a formal level either as a result of the matter not being resolved at the informal stage or where it is considered sufficiently serious to raise it at the formal level in the first instance.
- 7.7. If an employee wishes to make a formal complaint they should report it in writing to their Line Manager or to an alternative appropriate Senior Manager or Director if it is against their own Manager and it has not been possible to resolve the issue at the informal level. Bullying and harassment is viewed by the Board as a valid reason for making a complaint under the Board's Grievance Procedure and this procedure should be followed for all formal complaints.
- 7.8. Where a counter complaint is made by the alleged harasser or bully, this will be dealt with as part of the same investigation.
- 7.9. Any complaint of bullying or harassment by an employee of the Board which is upheld will result in appropriate remedial steps being taken. This may include disciplinary action, which could lead to dismissal, separation of the parties in the workplace, a behaviour improvement plan, training or a written apology etc.

Appendix 1

Harassment and Bullying Policy Flowchart

