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## **Victoria Village Hall: Equality Policy**

### **1. Policy Statement**

Victoria Village Hall is committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive, and equitable environment for all users, volunteers, and staff. We believe that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their background or personal characteristics. We are committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity in all aspects of the hall's operations.

### **2. Aims of the Policy**

This policy aims to:

- Ensure that all individuals using, volunteering for, or working at Victoria Village Hall are treated fairly and without discrimination.
- Create a culture of respect, understanding, and inclusion.
- Prevent and address all forms of discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Comply with all relevant equality legislation in the United Kingdom, including the Equality Act 2010.
- Promote diversity and encourage participation from all sections of the community.

### **3. Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to:

- All users and hirers of Victoria Village Hall.
- All volunteers associated with the management and operation of the hall.
- Any paid staff employed by Victoria Village Hall.
- All activities, events, and services organised or hosted at Victoria Village Hall.

### **4. Protected Characteristics**

Victoria Village Hall is committed to ensuring that no individual receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of any of the following "protected characteristics" as defined by the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins)
- Religion or Belief
- Sex (gender)
- Sexual Orientation

## 5. Forms of Discrimination

Victoria Village Hall recognises and will not tolerate the following forms of discrimination:

- **Direct Discrimination:** Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect Discrimination:** Applying a provision, criterion, or practice that disadvantages people with a protected characteristic without a legitimate aim.
- **Harassment:** Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.
- **Victimisation:** Treating someone less favourably because they have made or supported a complaint about discrimination, or are suspected of doing so.
- **Discrimination Arising from Disability:** Treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability, where the treatment cannot be justified.
- **Failure to Make Reasonable Adjustments (for disability):** Failing to make reasonable adjustments for a disabled person where they are at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person.

## 6. Responsibilities

### 6.1. Victoria Village Hall Management Committee (Trustees):

- To ensure the policy is widely publicised, understood, and implemented effectively.
- To regularly review and update the policy to ensure compliance with current legislation and best practice.
- To provide training and guidance on equality issues to relevant individuals.
- To investigate thoroughly and address promptly any complaints of discrimination.
- To ensure the hall's facilities are accessible where reasonably practicable and that reasonable adjustments are considered.

### 6.2. All Users, Hirers, Volunteers, and Staff:

- To adhere to the principles of this policy.
- To treat all individuals with respect and dignity.
- To report any instances of discrimination or harassment they witness or experience.
- To challenge discriminatory behaviour appropriately.

## 7. Promoting Equality

Victoria Village Hall will strive to promote equality by:

- Ensuring booking procedures are fair and transparent.
- Encouraging a diverse range of groups and activities to use the hall.
- Making information about the hall and its activities accessible to all.
- Considering accessibility improvements to the hall's facilities where feasible and financially viable.
- Providing clear guidance on expected behaviour and conduct within the hall.

## 8. Breaches of the Policy / Complaints Procedure

Any individual who believes they have been subject to discrimination, harassment, or victimisation in contravention of this policy should:

- **Informal Resolution:** If comfortable, directly inform the individual responsible for the behaviour that it is unwelcome and in breach of this policy.
- **Formal Complaint:** Report the matter to a member of the Victoria Village Hall Management Committee (Trustees) as soon as possible. Complaints can be made in writing or verbally.

All complaints will be taken seriously, treated with sensitivity, and investigated promptly and impartially. The individual making the complaint and the individual against whom the complaint is made will be given the opportunity to present their side of the matter. Confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible, consistent with the need to conduct a thorough investigation.

"We aim to investigate all formal complaints within 21 working days of receipt. If, for any reason, this deadline cannot be met, the complainant will be informed of the reasons for the delay."

Appropriate action will be taken against anyone found to have breached this policy. This may include, but is not limited to, removal from the premises, termination of hiring agreements, or exclusion from volunteering opportunities.

## 9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Victoria Village Hall Management Committee at least annually, or earlier if there are changes in legislation or best practice, or in response to significant incidents.

**Date of Adoption:**

**Date of Last Review:**

**Signed:**

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Chair, Victoria Village Hall Management Committee