

Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf



Bullying and Harassment Policy

(Updated 2022)

DIOCESE OF CYPRUS AND THE GULF

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY (updated 2022)

Introduction

All clergy and lay people within the Diocese are responsible for their own professional and personal behaviour, and are required to conduct themselves in a manner which does not cause offence to another person.

We each have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect and to ensure that other clergy and lay people are not subjected to bullying and harassment.

As a Diocese we:

- recognise the need for good and positive working relationships to exist at all levels within the Church in the Diocese.
- recognise the damaging and detrimental effects that inappropriate behaviour can have on the work and image of the Anglican Church.
- are committed to preventing and eliminating bullying and harassment as far as possible.
- seek to provide fair arrangements for dealing with any complaints of bullying and harassment.

Aim of the policy

Any form of bullying, harassment, abuse or intimidation for any reason will not be tolerated.

The Bishop and his staff team accept responsibility for encouraging and implementing this policy in relation to the duty of care owed to all paid and voluntary workers and others who participate in the life of the Church in the Diocese and for ensuring that their dignity is protected whilst working or participating in its life or worship. All have the right to expect an environment free from threat by colleagues, or others within the Church.

Definition

Bullying and harassment is behaviour which threatens, intimidates and disempowers an individual. It results in low morale, demotivation, poor work rate and lack of concentration. It belittles the individual. It reduces confidence and effectiveness.

Bullying, harassment, abuse and intimidation can be defined as unwanted conduct or behaviour from one to another which the recipient finds offensive. Different situations can produce varying experiences of bullying, harassment, abuse or intimidation. Different attitudes and cultures can mean that what is perceived as bullying, harassment, abuse or intimidation by one person may not be seen as such by

another. The common link is that the conduct or behaviour is unwanted by the recipient.

Policy Statement

The Diocese seeks to provide an environment free from bullying, harassment, abuse or intimidation towards all who participate in the life of the Church in the Diocese including clergy, lay ministers, employed staff, voluntary workers and parishioners.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- verbal or physical harassment
- verbal or physical intimidation
- verbal or physical abuse

Policy Application

The policy shall apply to all who work and participate in the life of the Church in the Diocese.

All persons shall respect the rights of all others and refrain from:

- unwanted physical conduct of an unacceptable nature
- unwanted verbal conduct of a direct or indirect intimidatory nature
- non-verbal conduct of an intimidating nature
- conduct that ridicules, intimidates or abuses an individual
- verbal or written harassment
- unfair or unwarranted exclusion or lack of co-operation

Every effort should be made to ensure that all those who work or participate in the life and work of the Diocese are informed of this policy. Each is responsible for ensuring they are aware that bullying, harassment, abuse or intimidation of others is a serious matter and could result in disciplinary proceedings and possibly a criminal investigation by the police.

All those in positions of responsibility must take prompt action to stop bullying, harassment, abuse or intimidation as soon as it is identified or reported.

All those in positions of responsibility should seek to ensure that bullying, harassment, abuse or intimidation do not occur in the areas for which they are responsible.

All persons associated with the life and work of the Diocese have a particular responsibility to maintain an environment free from bullying, harassment, abuse or intimidation.

Contravention of the Bullying and Harassment Policy

Persons subjected to bullying, harassment, abuse or intimidation or those who think they may have witnessed a case of bullying, harassment, abuse or intimidation shall in the first instance be able to receive advice and assistance, on a confidential basis, from their Parish Safeguarding Officer, Parish Priest or Archdeacon.

Where the alleged complaint is directed at the Parish Priest then the Archdeacon should be informed.

Where the alleged complaint is directed at the Archdeacon then the Bishop should be informed.

When the alleged complaint is directed at the Bishop then the President-Bishop of the Province should be informed. If the Bishop, who is the subject of the alleged complaint is also the President-Bishop then another bishop in the Province should be informed (*in the case of an alleged complaint against a bishop the procedure for the Discipline of Bishops according to the Standing Orders of the Central Synod will be followed*).

The policy allows for either informal or formal complaints.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This procedure is designed to enable complaints of bullying, harassment, abuse or intimidation to be dealt with promptly, fairly and discreetly. It covers both the complainant and the alleged harasser.

Those who consider themselves to be the subject of bullying, harassment, abuse or intimidation will be taken seriously. Any victimisation or retaliation against a person who complains will be regarded as a serious matter. Those who feel they have experienced or witnessed bullying, harassment, abuse or intimidation should contact their Parish Safeguarding Officer, Parish Priest, Archdeacon or the Bishop. Alternatively, a colleague or friend may make initial contact on their behalf.

Information, advice and assistance on the Bullying and Harassment Policy and its application is available from your Archdeacon.

Informal Complaints

To ensure confidentiality, the Bishop or Archdeacon will appoint a suitably experienced person to undertake an initial investigation. The investigation should take place within a short time of the complaint being made. Explanations will be sought on the following:

- what behaviour was found offensive by the complainant
- whether the behaviour was recognised as offensive by the person carrying out the action(s)

No action, including contacting the alleged perpetrator, will be taken without the explicit consent of the person who feels he or she has been a target of harassment or bullying, unless the allegation is so serious that it cannot be ignored, for example where there is alleged abuse of children or vulnerable adults. If there is a risk of harm, either to the person concerned or to others, it may be necessary to pass information to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

After the initial investigation, the appointed person will, if deemed necessary, arrange for an informal meeting between both parties at a convenient date, time and location. This meeting should take place within a short time after the initial investigation. Either party may be accompanied if they so wish. The aim of the meeting will be to try and achieve a resolution, and encourage people to meet, share feelings, and take the opportunity for apologies to be given and reconciliation achieved. The appointed person will minute the meeting, and any consequences or conclusions. Both parties will be required to declare that the minutes are a true and accurate record. This confidential document will be held by the Archdeacon or Bishop. If at the end of a year from the date of the complaint, the harassment, abuse and intimidation has ceased, a note to that effect will be added.

If a face to face meeting is not possible, a written exchange facilitated by the appointed person between the complainant and the alleged perpetrator may be appropriate.

Where necessary, informal monitoring of the situation between the two parties will be carried out by the appointed person until deemed no longer necessary but not exceeding one year from the date of complaint.

The Archdeacon or Bishop will receive regular verbal reports during the year. No further action will be taken if the harassment, abuse or intimidation ceases.

Formal Complaints

The formal procedure will be invoked when:

- the matter cannot be resolved informally
- the complaint is so serious that it is necessary to pursue the complaint through the formal channels

If possible notes or a diary of the harassment or bullying should be kept, so that the written complaint can include:

- The name of the alleged harasser or bully.
- The nature of the alleged harassment or bullying.
- The dates and times when the alleged harassment or bullying occurred.
- The names of any witnesses.
- Any action already taken by the complainant to stop the alleged harassment or bullying.

On receipt of a formal complaint the Archdeacon will arrange to meet with the complainant to discern the most appropriate next steps.

Complaints should normally be made within 3 months of the alleged harassment taking place.

Possible Outcomes of a Formal Complaint

If it is concluded that the allegation is well founded, and the perpetrator is ordained, he or she may be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with the scope and remit of the Diocesan Clergy Discipline Policy.

If it is concluded that the allegation is well founded, and the perpetrator is a lay person, the Bishop will consider what action to take.

If an individual brings a complaint of harassment/bullying, they will not be victimised for having brought the complaint. However, if the report concludes that the complaint is both untrue and has been brought with malicious intent, disciplinary action may be taken against the complainant within the scope and remit of Diocesan Clergy Discipline Policy. If the complainant is a lay person, the Bishop will consider what action to take.