The Archdiocese of Southwark

Volunteer Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy & Procedures

The Archdiocese of Southwark highly values those that volunteer across our parishes and communities. It is important that volunteers offer their services in a positive and supportive environment so all are able to thrive in safe and supportive surroundings.

1. Purpose

The Archdiocese of Southwark wants to ensure that anyone volunteering their time, is able to give their best. This means maintaining a positive and healthy environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. We recognise that bullying or harassment, including sexual harassment, can have a damaging impact on individuals in terms of their health, morale and ability to complete and enjoy their role. It is fundamentally contrary to the values the Gospel teaches us.

A volunteer is someone who willingly gives up their time freely for the benefit of the Catholic Church and specifically for the Archdiocese of Southwark, our Parishes and communities.

Throughout this policy when referring to Bullying and Harassment, this is inclusive of all forms of sexual harassment.

The Archdiocese of Southwark is committed to being an organisation that is fair and reasonable and we expect this same standard of conduct from all our volunteers. The expectations regarding fair and reasonable conduct and how the Archdiocese will manage complaints can be found in:

- Archdiocesan complaints policies
- Whistle-blowing policy

The Archdiocese of Southwark will take any kind of bullying or harassment seriously. This policy sets out specifically how the Archdiocese will work with our volunteers to;

- Prevent all forms of Bullying and Harassment by fostering a safe and healthy environment for everyone
- Manage complaints of bullying and harassment fairly, sensitively and effectively
- Continually monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy.

2. Scope

This policy is for anyone volunteering their time within the Archdiocese of Southwark and covers any bullying, harassment and sexual harassment of or by any volunteer. This policy covers bullying and harassment in the place where;

- an individual volunteers,
- activities which take place outside of the usual meeting place or at a different time to the usual meeting, such as outings or residentials.
- social media and electronic communication.

All volunteer complaints of bullying and harassment should be directed through this policy. Any bullying or harassment allegedly perpetrated by an employee of the Archdiocese of Southwark, must be reported through the staff members relevant line manager for appropriate action to be taken in line with the Archdiocese complaints policy. If the alleged perpetrator is an Ordained Minister the complaint will be reviewed by the Vicar General and in certain circumstances the safeguarding team.

Any bullying or harassment directed at a young person or at an adult who may be considered an Adult at risk, will be covered by the Archdiocese Safeguarding Policy and must be reported to the safeguarding team. Please see the Safeguarding Policy for further details and for the definition of Adult at Risk.
https://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/media/0mfj0vnq/safeguarding-policy-2021.pdf

3. Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy guidance

Bullying and harassment can be detrimental to individuals and may occur without the individual or others recognising the behaviour. It is also important to acknowledge that for various reasons recipients of bullying and harassment may not wish or be able to report their concerns. Bullying or harassment can take many forms, it can occur between two individuals or may involve groups. It may be persistent or an isolated incident. It can also occur in person, written or electronic communications, including social media or by phone.

Bullying-is characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, abuse of misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. It is not classed as bullying solely based on an individual ensuring you are completing the work agreed. It is more than a strong, firm or authoritarian interaction. It is destructive rather than constructive, it is a criticism of the person rather than their mistakes, to publicly humiliate rather than privately correct; and results in the individual feeling threatened or compromised.

Bullying usually results from the misuse of status, it can also result from the misuse of any form of individual power. It is recognised that there is a difference between feeling bullied, and being bullied. An individual may experience feelings similar to those of harassment, for example feeling compromised or threatened, if they are being corrected or reprimanded by an individual. However, provided the correction or reprimand is carried out reasonably, and in an appropriate and constructive manner, this would not constitute bullying.

The following list is a (not exhaustive) list of examples of bullying:

Non Verbal:
- Excluding or ignoring someone
- Withholding essential information/training resources
- Setting impossible objectives
- Unreasonable allocation of tasks/duties/responsibilities
- Deliberate wrongful attribution of blame

Verbal:
- Shouting, swearing, abuse, malicious gossip, assigning unwanted nicknames
- Victimising or singling out someone for different treatment

- Overbearing line management; over demanding or unfair treatment
- Frequent unwarranted criticism or deliberate undermining of someone or their work
- Public reprimand/humiliation, ridicule, sarcasm
- Singling out or victimisation
- Belittling or patronising comments
- Invading personal privacy/unnecessary and intrusive phone calls
- Spreading malicious rumours or gossip
- Making physical or psychological threats

Physical:
- Striking or hitting
- Grabbing a person or their clothes
- Pushing, jostling or prodding
- Practical jokes or initiations
- Rifling, damaging or stealing personal possessions

It is accepted that these descriptions represent extremes of behaviour, although in practice bullying may not always be clear and individuals may display behaviour that does not fall into these categories or may not be explicit.

Harassment-is the 'unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating people's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment' (Equality Act 2010). Harassment may be conduct based on protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender or sexual orientation or identification. Harassment can also occur due to an individual's language, political belief, social background or non-relevant criminal background (the above list is neither exhaustive nor exclusive).

The Archdiocese of Southwark would also consider harassment to be the discrimination or persecution of any individual for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic or on a perception that an individual has a particular protected characteristic when they do not. This may be harassment by perception or association.

Harassment can take many forms; for example verbal and/or written abuse, ignoring or subjugating other volunteers to unwanted attention, ridiculing and humiliation in front of others, mocking, mimicking or belittling a person.

A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment.

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. It has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of an individual, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Something can still be considered sexual harassment even if the alleged harasser didn't mean for it to be. It also doesn't have to be intentionally directed at a specific person. Sexual Harassment can be a one-off incident or an ongoing course of

behaviour. Depending on the circumstances involved, some forms of sexual harassment may be a criminal offence.

Sexual harassment can happen in any number of ways, including:

- written or verbal comments of a sexual nature, such as remarks about a volunteers appearance, questions about their sex life or offensive jokes
- displaying pornographic or explicit images
- electronic communication with content of a sexual nature
- unwanted physical contact and touching
- unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless)
- sexual touching or assault.

Racial harassment may include jokes or gratuitous references to a person's skin colour, race, religion and nationality. It may also include offensive remarks about dress, culture, customs which have an undermining effect on an individual. In extreme cases there may be hatred or prejudice towards individuals from particular groups.

Harassment of disabled individuals can take the form of ignoring disabled people and excluding them from activities based on the assumption that they are unable to participate. The impairment rather than their ability becomes the focus of attention.

Sexual orientation harassment occurs when an individual is harassed on the grounds of an individual's sexual orientation or identification as LGBTQI. Homophobic remarks and jokes, threats to disclose an individual's sexuality or identification to other individuals is unacceptable.

Any such unwanted behaviour is unacceptable if it can reasonably be considered as having the purpose or effect of violating the recipient's dignity and/or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment generally consists of a number of incidents, although a single incident may amount to harassment, if sufficiently serious.

Bullying and harassment includes all communication whether it is verbal, non-verbal or in writing, including over social media and all electronic communication.

Bullying and harassment is not only incompatible with the values of the Catholic Church, but the impact, if unchecked or managed poorly, is potentially damaging for the reputation of the Church and the Archdiocese.

The Archdiocese will ensure that;

- That volunteers are aware of this policy and how to report matters
- The Archdiocese of Southwark will remain alert to unacceptable behaviour, taking appropriate action to address it early on
- Prompt and appropriate response to all complaints of harassment or bullying
- All complainants are protected from victimisation as a result of making the complaint
- Complaints are handled sensitively and confidentially

- Complaints made in good faith will not in themselves be seen as bullying or harassment
- This policy and its effectiveness will be kept under review by the Safeguarding Sub-Committee
- That anyone making a protected disclosure under the Whistle blowing policy is not bullied or harassed as a result of that disclosure.

The Archdiocese of Southwark expects all volunteers to treat each other with dignity and respect and to support our stance on bullying and harassment by

- discouraging it;
- reporting it (whether it is on your own behalf or where you think someone else is being bullied or harassed)
- supporting those who make a complaint in good faith
- Creating a culture which encourages courteous challenge.

Should bullying or harassment occur in a group situation, the most senior person present (Clergy/Religious/Volunteer manager) has the responsibility to recognise and stop the behaviour. The perpetrator needs to be made aware that such behaviour is unacceptable and that failure to comply with this policy may result in the individual being removed from the role/group, while the matter is investigated.

Crimes against a person or property must be reported immediately to the police and subsequently to the Archdiocese Safeguarding team.

4. Raising a concern.

The Archdiocese of Southwark acknowledge that it can be a difficult decision to report a concern of bullying and/or harassment about someone known to you. A volunteer may also feel unsure about whether the behaviour they are experiencing or witnessing amounts to bullying or harassment. However it is important action is taken promptly in order to prevent the situation deteriorating.

Process

The process followed is set out in the Archdiocese complaints policy. Please follow this link to the complaints policy for further information.
https://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/media/40pgzltp/complaints-policy-and-procedure-21-m03.pdf
Please see the flow chart on page 9 for a brief overview of the process

The Archdiocese want to ensure that as an organisation, bullying and harassment is tackled effectively. If the individual/s who raised the concern are not in agreement with the resolution proposed, they may write to appeal. In specific circumstances an individual believes that their complaint has not been taken seriously or fear they will be victimised or punished by reporting the concern, a report may be considered under The Volunteer Whistleblowing policy. This policy gives an individual protection within strict parameters. For further information on how to raise a Whistleblowing concern see the Volunteer Whistleblowing Policy.

Volunteers who also hold a staff position, should use the procedures set out in the appropriate policy for the context of where their complaint of bullying or harassment occurs. Any volunteer making a complaint, may request that they are accompanied to any meetings for support by a friend or another adult member of their Parish/Church group.

If a complaint of bullying and/or harassment is upheld there may be various outcomes. All outcomes will be dependent on the circumstances, the impact on the individual and the Church and/or the views of statutory agencies (if involved). The outcomes may include additional training, managed move, verbal or written warning. In certain circumstances a volunteer may be removed from their role, if the matter is of a serious nature or reaches the criminal threshold. police, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)/equivalent or Social Care.

Any complaints about the process or outcome must be directed to the Chief Operating Officer and dealt with accordingly. For any complaint regarding the safeguarding team should be directed into the Safeguarding complaints policy.

5. Responsibilities

The Archdiocese of Southwark understands the duty to develop and support their volunteers so that the Volunteer Anti-Bullying & Harassment policy is embedded and effective across all levels of the Archdiocese. This policy will be available on the diocesan website.

Clergy/Religious or those with responsibility for Volunteers have a duty to:

- Adhere to this policy which applies to all volunteers within the Archdiocese of Southwark
- Take reasonable steps necessary to prevent bullying and harassment taking place within their Parishes/communities
- Leading by example by being a fair and transparent
- Supporting individuals who are either being bullied and harassed or supporting alleged perpetrators while subject to any enquiry or investigation.
- Report any concerns in regards to adherence to this policy in a timely manner
- Take concerns raised seriously and escalate where appropriate.
- Consulting with the safeguarding team where appropriate

Volunteers have responsibility for:

- Adherence to this policy and representing the values of the Catholic Church
- Behaving with dignity and respect towards each other
- Consistently demonstrating behaviour that is professional, conducive to team-working and respectful of others
- Reporting any concerns regarding themselves or others in a timely manner
- Supporting any enquiry when a concern has been raised

6. Relevant Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 gives protection from discrimination. This is for anyone who is treated unfairly because of one or more of nine protected characteristics or because someone believes you belong to a group of people with protected characteristics.

The Act also protects you if someone in your life (such as family or friends) have a protected characteristic and you are treated unfairly because of that.

The 9 characteristics protected by the Act are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Bullying, Harassment and the law

Certain types of bullying or harassment, if linked to the protected characteristics of Equality Act 2010, will be unlawful and can lead to civil proceedings being taken against the person responsible. In some cases, the behaviour may constitute a crime such as racial hatred or sexual assault and therefore could lead to a report to the Police being made and a criminal prosecution.

Complaints that involve a protected characteristic, reach the criminal threshold or are serious in their nature should be discussed with the Safeguarding Team.

7. Safeguarding Team Contact Details and further information

- Tel Team: 02072611606
- Email Team: safeguardingoffice@rcaos.org.ukk
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8. Review

This policy is due for review;

- every 12 months or
- following any legislative changes, or;
- following any learning by The Archdiocese of Southwark, or;
- as required by the Charity Commission, or;
- any change in jurisdictional guidance, whichever comes first.

The policy will be reviewed by the **Head of HR & Safeguarding** and the **Safeguarding Sub-committee** and revisions will be recommended to the Board of Trustees.

The Archdiocese of Southwark Volunteer Anti-Bullying & Harassment policy -Flow Chart

Step 1.
A concern of Bullying & Harassment is raised by a volunteer to their Parish Priest or volunteer team leader

Where appropriate an informal resolution is attempted. This is where the individual with support from their Priest/team leader, is able explain their concern in person or in writing.

An informal resolution has been reached

Yes

This is the end of the matter

Not Appropriate

No

Step 2.
The complainant or subject is unable to engage in a formal resolution or the behaviour continues. A volunteer should inform their Priest/team leader in writing of their concerns.

No

Yes

Yes

No

Has the concer[illegible]ceived in writing and [illegible]et out in the c[illegible]?

This is the end of the matter

A written receipt will be sent to the volunteer acknowledging the concern raised and who will manage the