



WILLITON PARISH COUNCIL

**2 Killick Way
Williton
Taunton
Somerset
TA4 4PY**

Anti-Bullying Policy

Williton Parish Council fully supports the right of all people to be treated with dignity and respect at work and is committed to promoting a working environment free from all forms of harassment and bullying and outlines in this Agreement the appropriate steps that should be taken to achieve this.

Williton Parish Council as the employer is aware that work-place bullying has a detrimental and negative effect on individuals and therefore operational efficiency. Williton Parish Council therefore resolves to create a working environment that supports the dignity of all employees and is free from bullying and any other forms of harassment.

All employees and Councillors will be made aware of the Council's Policy forbidding the bullying of any employee or Councillor by another employee, Councillor or members of the public and will be expected to comply with this policy. Appropriate disciplinary action including warnings and dismissal for serious offences may be taken against any employees who violate this policy.

Williton Parish Council also recognises that it has a responsibility to protect employees from bullying at work by members of the public and that all staff has the right to be treated with respect by the public they provide services to.

All employees and councillors have a clear role to play in helping to create a climate at work in which bullying behaviour is unacceptable. In particular employees should be aware of their own conduct, avoid colluding with inappropriate behaviour and cooperate fully in any grievance or disciplinary issue, respond positively to any complaints and challenge and stop unacceptable behaviour in the workplace.

What is defined as bullying at work?

Bullying can be defined in many ways but is generally behaviour that is identified as a misuse of power. It is usually persistent (ie more than a one-off incident) is offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, unfair use of sanctions. This makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable and undermines self-confidence.

Bullying behaviour is largely identified not so much by what has actually been done but rather by the effect that it has on its target(s).

Examples of bullying covered by this policy include:

- Persistently criticising an individual unnecessarily
- Shouting at colleagues in public or private
- Deliberate isolation by ignoring or excluding a person

- Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone
- Making inappropriate personal comments
- Setting objectives with impossible deadlines with the deliberate intention of undermining an individual
- Undermining a person's self-respect by condescending and threatening treatment that humiliates, intimidates or demeans

Williton Parish Council will not condone bullying behaviour and encourages effective management to obtain results whilst ensuring that the employees are treated with dignity and respect.

The Legal Position

Williton Parish Council has a duty of care to all its employees to ensure the physical and psychological health, safety and welfare of employees at work under Health & Safety legislation. This includes assessing the causes of stress at work and introducing measures to reduce or prevent stress.

Harassment based on race, gender, sexuality and age, and disability are serious employment issues and may be in breach of the Race Relations Act 1976, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Public Order and Criminal Justice Act 1994, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, and/or Equal Opportunities Code of Practice, Employment Equality Regulations 2005 and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.

Any legal claims for bullying would be concerned with breach of contract and unfair dismissal. That is, that the failure by an employer to deal with bullying related issues may result in a fundamental breach of one of the following implied terms:

- To keep employees safe from harm
- To support and assist
- Trust and confidence

In addition, the Human Rights Act 1998 may also provide legal redress for complainants of harassment or bullying.

Complaints Procedure

Any individual can deal with bullying in various ways, ranging from asking the person to stop their bullying behaviour, to informal discussions with the Chairman of the Council or to make a formal complaint which will be addressed by the Grievance Panel.

Some people are unaware that their behaviour in some circumstances is bullying or harassing. If it is clearly pointed out to them that their behaviour is unacceptable, the problem can sometimes be resolved. With this in mind, Williton Parish Council should consider informal as well as formal action to deal with complaints of bullying.

Re-Adopted by Williton Parish Council on 1st July 2024 item 24/93.4

Signed (Chairman) Cllr Payne