

# Bullying and Harassment Policy & Procedure

## Liquorice Park Millennium Green Trust

The Trust has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment. It aims to provide an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and can participate without fear of bullying or harassment. It aims to ensure that volunteers and trustees feel confident to bring complaints, or to challenge behaviour, without fear of ridicule or reprisal.

### **What are Harassment and Bullying?**

Harassment, in general terms is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of people where actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient. It may be related to age, gender, race, disability, religion, belief, sexuality, nationality, or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate, or injure the recipient.

Bullying or harassment may be by an individual against an individual or involve groups of people. It may be obvious, or it may be insidious. It may be face to face or in written communications, electronic (e)mail, phone. Whatever form it takes, it is unwarranted and unwelcome to the individual.

Examples of bullying/harassing behaviour include:

- Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone by word or behaviour (particularly on the grounds of race, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief).
- Copying emails/text messages that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know.
- Ridiculing or demeaning someone - picking on them.
- Exclusion or victimisation.
- Unfair treatment.

Legitimate, constructive, and fair criticism or behaviour is not bullying. An occasional raised voice or argument is not bullying.

### **Procedures**

Every complaint will be taken seriously and investigated promptly and objectively. All parties will be treated with respect.

Complaints of bullying and/or harassment will be dealt with fairly, confidentially, and sensitively using the format set out below. The complainant can choose whether this is an informal approach or the formal procedure.

## Informal Approaches

In some cases, it may be possible to rectify matters informally. Sometimes people are unaware that their behaviour is not welcome, and an informal discussion can lead to greater understanding and an agreement that the behaviour will cease.

## Formal Procedure

1. A formal complaint can be made to the Trust by sending an email to [enquiries@liquoricepark.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@liquoricepark.co.uk)
2. Once the complaint has been received and identified as a valid complaint, the Trust will appoint a representative to record details on the confidential complaints system and keep up to date notes. The representative will be a trustee but not the Chair of the Trust.
3. The Trust will make best endeavours to respond within 7 days of receipt of complaint.
4. A meeting will be arranged between the complainant and representative to talk through the complaint. At the outset, the representative will endeavour to clarify what exactly is the complaint and what outcome the person wants. A simple apology is sometimes a satisfactory outcome.
5. All person or persons who are involved in the complaint against them will be informed of the grievance and given an opportunity to discuss with the representative. The complainant may expect more than the Trust can achieve. If their expectations appear to exceed what the Trust can reasonably provide, this will be communicated as soon as possible to manage expectations about possible outcomes. The Trust will convey the decision face to face or on the telephone.
6. A meeting of all parties may be achievable.
7. We aim to complete the process within 28 days of receipt of complaint. A letter will be sent setting out the decision.
8. If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may appeal in writing to the board of Trustees. The issue will be reviewed at a meeting of Trustees, who will review the evidence of the complaint afresh and reach a determination within 21 days. Any trustee involved in the complaint will recuse themselves from this meeting.

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