



# Bullying and Harassment Policy for Bethel Church, Coventry

## 1. Purpose and Scope

Bethel Church, Coventry is committed to maintaining a positive, supportive, and respectful environment for all those involved in the life of the church, including Trustees, staff, volunteers, members, their families and visitors. Bullying and harassment of any form will not be tolerated, and we aim to create an atmosphere where everyone can thrive without fear of discrimination, harassment, or mistreatment.

This policy sets out the church's approach to bullying and harassment, the procedures for addressing complaints, and the responsibilities of individuals to ensure a safe and inclusive environment.

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## 2. Definitions

- **Bullying:** Repeated, offensive, and intimidating behaviour directed at an individual or group that causes distress or harm. Bullying can take many forms, including verbal, physical, or psychological abuse.
- **Harassment:** Unwanted, offensive behaviour related to an individual's characteristics such as their age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or any other protected characteristic under UK law. Harassment may include comments, actions, or behaviour that create an intimidating, hostile, or degrading environment.

Both bullying and harassment can be harmful to the wellbeing of the individuals involved and can undermine the church's values of respect, love, and kindness.

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## 3. The Charity's Commitment

- **Zero Tolerance:** Bethel Church has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment. This policy applies to all activities, including church services, charity events, meetings, or any other interactions related to the church.
- **Respect and Dignity:** We are committed to fostering an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their background, role, or position within the church.
- **Support for Victims:** We will offer support and assistance to those affected by bullying or harassment, ensuring they feel safe and valued within our community.

Bethel Church, Spon End, Coventry. CV1 3HB    [www.bethelcoventry.org.uk](http://www.bethelcoventry.org.uk)    [www.wlacademy.org.uk](http://www.wlacademy.org.uk)    024 7625 6874

*Pastor:* Joshua Kindness

*Elders:* Ian Grindell, Chris Page, Gordon Sprouse

*Core Leaders:* Liz Gray, Jane Rubacki, Derek Seedhouse, Karen Sprouse

*Trustees:* Ian Grindell, Chris Page, Joshua Kindness, Liz Gray, Jane Rubacki, Derek Seedhouse, Gordon Sprouse, Karen Sprouse

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## 4. Types of Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment can manifest in various ways, including but not limited to:

- **Verbal abuse:** Name-calling, belittling comments, mocking, or offensive jokes.
- **Physical abuse:** Unwanted physical contact or threats of violence.
- **Social exclusion:** Deliberately isolating an individual or group, excluding them from social activities or communications.
- **Psychological abuse:** Spreading false rumours, manipulation, or undermining someone's confidence or self-worth.
- **Sexual harassment:** Unwelcome comments, gestures, or behaviour of a sexual nature.
- **Discriminatory behaviour:** Harassment based on an individual's race, ethnicity, gender, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.

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## 5. Reporting Bullying and Harassment

If you experience or witness any form of bullying or harassment, we encourage you to report it promptly. You can report an incident through the following channels:

- **Directly to a Trusted Leader:** Speak to the Pastor, Church Elder, or a designated safeguarding lead within the church.
- **Written Report:** If you prefer, you can submit a written report via email to [email address] or by a letter marked 'Confidential' addressed to the Church Leadership Team at Bethel Church, Coventry, CV1 3HB
- **Confidentiality:** All complaints will be treated in confidence to the fullest extent possible. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis to ensure a fair investigation.

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## 6. Investigating Complaints

- **Acknowledgment:** Upon receiving a report, the complaint will be acknowledged as soon as practically possible, but usually within 3–5 working days.
- **Investigation Process:** The church's leadership team (**Safeguarding team?**) will investigate the complaint in a fair, thorough, and impartial manner. This may involve interviewing the complainant, the accused individual(s), and any relevant witnesses.
- **Confidentiality:** All investigations will be conducted with respect for privacy and confidentiality. The church is committed to ensuring that any allegations are handled discreetly.
- **Outcome:** After the investigation, the church will determine whether the complaint is substantiated and take appropriate action. Possible actions may include mediation, training, or disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the situation.

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## 7. Support for Individuals Affected by Bullying or Harassment

- **Emotional Support:** The Charity will offer support to individuals affected by bullying or harassment, including offering access to counselling services or providing spiritual support as appropriate.
  - **No Retaliation:** The Charity has a strict policy against retaliation. No person who reports bullying or harassment, or participates in an investigation, should fear retaliation or negative consequences.
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## 8. Responsibilities of Trustees, Staff, and Volunteers

- **Promote Respect:** Trustees, staff, and volunteers are expected to foster a culture of respect, kindness, and support.
  - **Lead by Example:** Those in leadership roles must set an example by behaving in a manner that is consistent with the values of the church.
  - **Report Incidents:** Trustees, staff, and volunteers must report any incidents of bullying or harassment they witness or are aware of, whether or not they are directly involved.
  - **Cooperate with Investigations:** Trustees, staff, and volunteers are expected to cooperate fully with any investigations into complaints.
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## 9. Disciplinary Action

If bullying or harassment is found to have occurred, the Charity will take appropriate action, which may include:

- **Warning:** A verbal or written warning to the individual involved.
  - **Mediation:** In some cases, mediation between the parties may be recommended.
  - **Training:** Providing training to the individual or group involved on appropriate behaviour and how to avoid harassment.
  - **Removal:** In cases of severe or repeated bullying or harassment, the individual may be asked to step down from their role or involvement with the church.
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## 10. Prevention

To prevent bullying and harassment, the Charity will:

- Provide regular training on appropriate behaviour, respect, and inclusivity.
  - Encourage open communication and ensure that all individuals are aware of this policy.
  - Promote a culture of kindness, care, and Christian love in all interactions.
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## 11. Review and Updates

This Bullying and Harassment Policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees to ensure it remains relevant and effective. Any changes will be communicated to all Trustees, staff, and volunteers.

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## **12. Approval**

This policy was approved by the Board of Trustees of Bethel Church on **12.1.25** and is effective from that date.

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This Bullying and Harassment Policy is designed to protect the wellbeing of all individuals involved with Bethel Church, Coventry and to foster a safe, respectful, and caring environment where people can flourish in their roles and relationships.