

Holbrook Parish Council

Sexual and General Harassment Policy & Procedure Policy

1. Holbrook Parish Council recognises that harassment and victimisation is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010. As such, harassment or victimisation on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
2. Personal harassment takes many forms ranging from tasteless jokes and abusive remarks to pestering for sexual favours, threatening behaviour and actual physical abuse. For the purposes of this policy, it also includes bullying.
3. Bullying is understood to be targeted and persistent offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour and can include the abuse or misuse of power to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.
4. Whatever form it takes, personal harassment is always taken seriously and is totally unacceptable.
5. We recognise that personal harassment can exist in the workplace, as well as outside, and that this can seriously affect employees'/councillors'/volunteers' working lives by interfering with their job performance or by creating a stressful, intimidating and unpleasant environment.

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6. We deplore all forms of personal harassment and seek to ensure that the Council's working environment is sympathetic to all our employees. The aim of this policy is to inform employees/councillors/volunteers of the type of behaviour that is unacceptable and provide anyone who is a victim of personal harassment with a means of redress.
7. This policy covers all employees/councillors/volunteers and all functions of Holbrook Parish Council
8. We recognise that we have a duty to implement this policy and all employees/ councillors/volunteers are expected to comply with it. We will also review this policy at least annually

Examples of personal harassment

9. Personal harassment takes many forms and people may not always realise that their behaviour constitutes harassment. Personal harassment is unwanted behaviour by one employee/councillor/volunteer towards another and examples of harassment include:

- insensitive jokes and pranks
- lewd or abusive comments
- deliberate exclusion from conversations
- displaying abusive or offensive writing or material
- abusive, threatening or insulting words or behaviour
- name-calling
- picking on someone or setting them up to fail
- exclusion or victimisation
- undermining their contribution/position
- demanding a greater work output than is reasonably feasible

10. These examples are not exhaustive and action at the appropriate level will be taken against employees/councillors/volunteers committing any form of personal harassment.

Examples of sexual harassment

11. Sexual harassment can take place in many forms and can go undetected for a period of time where employees/councillors/volunteers do not understand that particular behaviour is classed as sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour related to sex, or of a sexual nature, by one person towards another and examples of sexual harassment include:

- lewd or abusive comments of a sexual nature such as regarding an individual's appearance or body
- unwelcome touching of a sexual nature
- displaying sexually suggestive or sexually offensive writing or material
- asking questions of a sexual nature
- sexual propositions or advances, whether made in writing or verbally.

12. Sexual harassment can also take place where an employee/councillor/volunteer is treated less favourably because they have rejected, or submitted to, the unwanted conduct that is related to sex or is of a sexual nature. Whether less favourable treatment occurs as a result will be examined broadly and includes areas such as blocking promotion and refusal of training opportunities or other development opportunities.

Examples of victimisation

13. Victimisation takes place when an employee/councillor/volunteer is treated unfavourably as a direct result of raising a genuine complaint of discrimination or harassment.

Third party harassment

14. Holbrook Parish Council operates a zero-tolerance policy in relation to harassment perpetrated against one of its employees/ councillors/ volunteers by a third party,

such as a resident or visitor to the Parish Council. All employees/ councillors/ volunteers are encouraged to report any and all instances of harassment that involve a third party in line with our reporting procedure, as contained in our Discipline and Grievance Policies.

15. If Holbrook Parish Council finds an allegation is well-founded, it will take the necessary steps in order to remedy this complaint. This can include, but is not limited to:
 - warning the individual about the inappropriate nature of their behaviour
 - banning the individual from council meetings
 - reporting the individual's actions to the police.
16. In addition to this, Holbrook Parish Council will endeavour to take all reasonable steps to deter and prevent any further form of harassment from third parties taking place.

Holbrook Parish Council's Responsibilities

Holbrook Parish Council will be responsible for ensuring all members of staff, councillors and volunteers, understand the policy relating to the prevention of harassment. Holbrook Parish Council will take prompt action to deal with matters in a sensitive and confidential manner.

Any complaints about harassment and/or bullying should refer to Holbrook Parish Council's Disciplinary and Grievance Policy for further information.