

**WEST SUSSEX GUITAR CLUB
AND
REGIS SCHOOL OF MUSIC**

PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT AND BULLYING PROCEDURES

Policy

Employees, Members and participants ("Affected Person(s)) have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Bullying is harmful, it causes distress and can lead to accidents, illness and poor performance. Bullying is defined as "any unsolicited or unwelcome act that humiliates, intimidates, or undermines the individual involved". No form of bullying will be condoned at the Club or School if it has a bearing on activities of the Club or School.

Procedure

The aim of this procedure is to protect Affected Person(s) from bullying, harassment and to enable them, if necessary, to make a complaint or assist in an investigation without fear of reprisal. When appropriate, every effort will be made to resolve the situation informally. Some incidents, however, by virtue of their serious nature will need to be dealt with immediately under the formal procedure. Disciplinary action, including dismissal or exclusion from the Club or School, will be taken against those failing to fulfil their responsibilities under this policy.

Examples of Bullying

1. Affected Person(s) who are bullied or harassed often feel vulnerable and isolated and believe it is best not to complain, as their complaints will not be taken seriously.
2. If an Affected Person(s) feels bullied or harassed, the matter must be taken seriously. The Affected Person(s) must decide whether to ask for confidential counselling, and whether to proceed with a formal complaint. Examples of bullying behaviour include:
 - a) derogatory remarks;
 - b) insensitive jokes or pranks;
 - c) insulting or aggressive behaviour;
 - d) ignoring or excluding an individual;
 - e) setting unrealistic deadlines;
 - f) public criticism;
 - g) substituting responsible tasks with menial or trivial ones;
 - h) withholding necessary information;
 - i) constantly undervaluing effort

This list is not exhaustive. The actions listed above must be viewed in terms of the distress they cause the individual. It is the perceptions of the recipient that determine whether any action or statement can be viewed as bullying.

Harassment is defined as an act of systematic or continued unwanted and annoying actions including threats and demands. To qualify for "harassment" it should "cause alarm or distress" to the victim or put that person in fear of violence. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a victim in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

3. Any Club Officer receives a complaint of bullying or harassment, or is witness to bullying or harassment, must investigate the complaint or incident and ensure that the problem is resolved as quickly as possible.

4. All Club Officer have a duty to establish and maintain a working environment free from bullying or harassment.
5. All Affected Person(s) must comply with this policy and take steps to ensure that bullying or harassment does not occur.
6. Any Affected Person(s) who feels bullied or harassed should feel confident that complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with in confidence.
7. Any Affected Person(s) who receives a complaint of bullying or harassment must respect confidentiality and should encourage the person being bullied or harassed to consider using the complaints procedure.

Complaints Procedure

8. Any complaint should be made to a Trustee.
9. Complaints will be viewed seriously and treated confidentially.
10. Care will be taken during an investigation to treat all Affected Person(s) involved with consideration.
11. Once the investigation is completed, the Trustee who has conducted it will decide on the strength of the findings, the appropriate action to be taken. This may include disciplinary action.
12. The complaints procedure can be informal or formal. The Affected Person(s) must decide which procedure to use.

Informal Procedure

13. The Trustees should keep a written record of any incidents of bullying or harassment, including the date, time, nature of incident, the names of those involved and the names of any witnesses.
14. If possible, the person who is bullying should be told by the individual who is being bullied that the behaviour is offensive and unwanted, and must stop. A Trustee or Club Officer can act as a witness when this statement is made. Alternatively, a Trustee can speak to the alleged bully or harasser.
15. Whenever possible, any complaint of bullying or harassment should be made in the first instance to a Trustee.

Formal Procedure

16. Where informal methods fail, or the Affected Person(s) chooses not to use them or considers that the problem is sufficiently serious, a formal complaint can be made. The complaint should be made in writing, describing the incident(s) as fully as possible. This complaint should be given to the Office Manager or a Partner.
17. A Trustee will be appointed to investigate the complaint, and will interview the person against whom the allegations are made, the complainant and any relevant witnesses. These interviews will be conducted in confidence. All parties to these proceedings can be accompanied by a colleague.
18. The investigation should be concluded within four weeks of the complaint being received. If this time limit is exceeded, the complainant should be advised of this and given a date when the investigation will end.

19. The investigating Trustee must keep a detailed written record of the investigation and the findings. The complainant and the person(s) against whom the allegation has been made must be told of the findings by the investigating Trustee and these findings must also be given in writing.
20. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, or with the way in which the complaint was handled, then a written request for reconsideration should be made to another Trustee within seven days of receiving the investigating Trustee decision.
21. If disciplinary action is justified, a disciplinary hearing will be arranged within 10 working days of either the decision of the investigating Trustee, or if the matter was referred for reconsideration, the decision of whichever Trustee was directed to reconsider.
22. The Affected Person(s) against whom the allegation has been made will have the right to be accompanied at this hearing by a work colleague or member of the Club or School and will have the opportunity to challenge the evidence and to state his or her case. The hearing will be conducted in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.
23. Any disciplinary action taken will reflect the severity of the offence and may include the transfer of the Affected Person(s) accused of bullying or harassment, on a temporary or permanent basis, suspension or exclusion. The person may appeal against the penalty in accordance with the appeals procedure in the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures.

General Considerations

24. The appropriate Trustee must ensure that any Affected Person(s) who makes a complaint of bullying or harassment is not victimised.
25. Any complaints found to be false and malicious will result in disciplinary action be taken against the complainant.

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