**Policy on Preventing Bullying and Harassment**

We believe that everyone at St John’s – clergy, officers, employees, volunteers, members of our congregations – has the right to feel safe and to be treated with respect and kindness.

Abusive and bullying behaviour has no place in our Christian community and, should it arise, appropriate action will always be taken to protect targeted individuals.

This policy is based upon the model policy contained within the Archbishops’ Council publication Dignity at Work (2008)

**Statement of commitment**

The Church is required by God to foster relationships of the utmost integrity, truthfulness and trustworthiness. Abusive behaviour, harassment and bullying will not be tolerated in the Diocese. All complaints of abusive behaviour, harassment and bullying will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated and the appropriate action taken.

**1 What is bullying and harassment?**

Any behaviour that could potentially undermine someone’s dignity and respect should be regarded as unacceptable. If it is not challenged it is likely to escalate and lead to significant difficulties for all concerned.

In establishing the links between ‘unacceptable behaviour’, ‘bullying’ and ‘harassment’ as well as drawing together the common themes and issues the following broader definition may be helpful:

“Any behaviour, always involving a misuse of power, which an individual or group knows, or ought reasonably to know, could have the potential effect of offending, humiliating, intimidating or isolating an individual or group should be regarded as unacceptable in the workplace. ‘Unacceptable behaviour’ changes its label to 'bullying’ or ‘harassing behaviour’ when it causes actual harm or distress to the target(s), normally but not exclusively, after a series of incidents over a prolonged period of time. Lack of intent does not diminish, excuse or negate the impact on the target or the distress caused. The degree of intent is only relevant in terms of how the behaviour should be challenged and the issues subsequently resolved.”

*Fergus Roseburgh, Senior Staff Representative, Unite the Union, The Children’s Society. March 2007*

Bullying is most easily identified when it is continuous, frequent, repetitive and part of an overall pattern. However, some abuse is serious enough to be recognised even if the behaviour occurred only once and is therefore not defined as bullying. It should of course be acknowledged that firm constructive criticism is not the same as bullying.

**2 How can bullying and harassment be recognised?**

Bullying may manifest itself in a variety of different ways. It is usually persistent, and often unpredictable, and can amount to severe psychological intimidation. It is insidious, and undermines the ability and confidence of the person suffering from it. It can lead to fear, isolation, demotivation and reduced output, poor concentration, symptoms of stress, a noticeable level of sickness absence or stubborn attendance when obviously unwell, psychological, emotional and physical harm.

**Examples of bullying behaviour**

This list of behaviours is not exhaustive but gives a clear indication of the sorts of actions that constitute bullying or harassment:

• removing areas of responsibility without discussion or notice

• isolating someone or deliberately ignoring or excluding them from activities

• consistently attacking someone’s professional or personal standing

• setting out to make someone appear incompetent

• persistently picking on someone in front of others

• deliberate sabotage of work or actions

• deliberately withholding information or providing incorrect information

• overloading with work/reducing deadlines without paying attention to any protest

• displays of offensive material

• use of e-mails to reprimand, insult or otherwise inform someone of their apparent failing, either to the individual or to third parties

• repeatedly shouting or swearing in public or in private

• spreading malicious rumours to third parties

• public humiliation by constant innuendo, belittling and ‘putting down’

• personal insults and name-calling

• aggressive gestures, verbal threats and intimidation

• persistent threats about security

• making false accusations

• aggressive bodily posture or physical contact

• talking/shouting directly into someone’s face

• direct physical intimidation, violence or assault

The most serious incidents might result in:

• creating an unsafe working environment

• ignoring signs of overwork and extreme stress

• putting someone’s health physically, emotionally or psychologically at risk by making them upset, frightened and/or ridiculed.

*A copy of the policy in full can be found on the diocesan website*

[*www.chichester.anglican.org/documents/hr/preventing-bullying-and-harassment-policy/*](http://www.chichester.anglican.org/documents/hr/preventing-bullying-and-harassment-policy/)

This policy was formally adopted on 30th April 2018