

Bishopthorpe Parish Council
Chairman: Cllr. Harrison

Sexual Harassment Policy & Procedure

Date adopted June 2025

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Review period 2 years

1. Introduction

Bishopthorpe Parish Council is committed to providing a work environment free from all forms of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. This policy outlines the council's zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and the procedures for reporting and addressing such behaviour.

2. Definition

Sexual harassment takes many forms and employees may not always realise that their behaviour constitutes harassment. Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour by one employee towards another and examples 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.

These examples are not exhaustive and disciplinary action at the appropriate level will be taken against individuals committing any form of harassment.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and contract workers, as well as volunteers and elected officials associated with Bishopthorpe Parish Council.

4. Reporting Procedure

Any employee who believes they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment is encouraged to report it immediately. Reports can be made to:

- The Chair or Vice Chair
- or Clerk of the Parish Council

Reports can be made verbally or in writing and will be kept confidential to the extent possible. Retaliation against individuals who report sexual harassment is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

5. Investigation Procedure

Upon receiving a report of sexual harassment, Bishopthorpe Parish Council will promptly and impartially investigate the allegations. The investigation will be conducted by the Chair or Vice Chair, who will interview the parties involved and any witnesses. All parties will be afforded due process and confidentiality to the extent possible.

6. Disciplinary Action

If an investigation confirms that sexual harassment has occurred, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. This may include verbal or written warnings, suspension, demotion, or termination, depending on the severity of the offence and the circumstances involved.

7. Training and Awareness

Bishopthorpe Parish Council is committed to preventing sexual harassment through education and training. All employees will receive training on this policy and their rights and responsibilities regarding harassment prevention and reporting.

8. Compliance

All employees and elected officials are expected to comply with this policy at all times. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

9. Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

Conclusion

Bishopthorpe Parish Council is dedicated to fostering a respectful and inclusive workplace where all employees can thrive. The council takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously and will take prompt and appropriate action to address them.