

GWS BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

April 2018

Introduction

This policy applies to all types of members (Full members, Associate and Day members) of Grafham Water Sailability (GWS) and any day visitors to the site including family members and friends of members.

Anyone not covered by this policy, who feels they have a legitimate complaint of bullying or harassment against a person acting on behalf of the GWS, should refer to the Welfare Officers Peter Smith or Wendy Smith. The Board of Trustees will be informed and take action as required.

GWS reserves the right to amend the policy and procedure as necessary to meet any change in requirements.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the GWS Protection Policy

Policy

The aim of this policy and procedure is to take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment or bullying, to provide guidance where problems occur and to prevent any recurrence. Any complaint will be dealt with seriously, without undue delay and, where practicable, in confidence.

GWS aims to provide an environment where everyone is treated with respect and dignity, where no-one feels threatened or intimidated and where everyone can participate in the activities of the club free from harassment and/or bullying.

Unlawful harassment of whatever type (including on grounds of sex, age, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership or gender reassignment) and/or bullying will be viewed with the utmost seriousness. Serious cases of harassment or bullying will, if proven, be treated as gross misconduct and may, depending on the

circumstances, result in removal from site and or termination of membership.

Scope

Bullying within a club environment can include a misuse of power, intimidation of an individual on a regular and persistent basis, and undermining the confidence and competence of that individual. Serious bullying may constitute a criminal offence.

Harassment is defined as unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct, which has the purpose or effect of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Such conduct may also be regarded as unlawful discrimination on the grounds of sex, age, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership or gender reassignment.

Harassment covers a wide range of behaviours including (but not limited to):

1. physical contact ranging from unnecessary touching or brushing against a person, to actual physical contact or serious assault;
2. verbal and written harassment through making derogatory remarks or jokes, racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic remarks or inappropriate comments about disabled people, expressions of discriminatory views and/or intimidating comments, obscene gestures, pin ups, flags, graffiti, using e-mail or social media to send suggestive and unwanted remarks and/or graphics (including pornography) or other offensive material;
3. isolation or non co-operation at work, exclusion from social activities;

4. coercion, including pressure or requests for sexual favours, pressure to participate in political or religious groups;
5. intrusion by pestering, spying, stalking etc, for example persistent unwanted contact via social media, or excessive monitoring of an individual's movements or communications.

One trivial incident will not constitute bullying or harassment. However a series of incidents will do so, particularly where an individual has expressed a dislike of such behaviour and/or has asked for it to stop. A single serious incident such as threatened or actual violence would also be sufficient.

The responsibilities of GWS

As a private club GWS has a legal responsibility to provide a safe environment which is free from unlawful discrimination. Welfare officers or trustees have the authority to issue reasonable instructions and expect them to be carried out. However, they should not behave in a way that would generally be considered unreasonable. They should set a good example by treating everyone with dignity and respect. They should respond sensitively and supportively to anyone who makes an allegation of harassment and ensure that the issue is resolved promptly in accordance with the procedure below.

The responsibilities of Members and Visitors

Everyone has a responsibility to respect the feelings of others and be sensitive to the impact their conduct may have on colleagues. Differences in culture, attitudes and experience can mean that what is perceived by the person experiencing the behaviour as bullying and harassment, may be perceived by others as normal. It is important to be sensitive to the reactions of others and adjust behaviour accordingly.

In some instances individuals may be genuinely unaware that their behaviour is causing offence and there may be no malicious intent, but in most cases people should know that their remarks or actions are causing offence and that such behaviour is unacceptable. The test is: would a reasonable person think that the behaviour amounted to bullying or harassment?

Members and Visitors should discourage bullying and harassment by making it clear that they find such behaviour unacceptable and by supporting anyone who experiences such treatment. Anyone who sees bullying or harassment happening has a responsibility to take action by raising the matter with the welfare officer.

Procedure

1. Informal Stage

Most people suffering harassment or bullying simply want it to stop. Attempts should first be made, if possible, to deal with the problem informally. A GWS member, or visitor may turn to the welfare officer for assistance before taking informal action, but is not obliged to do so. You can seek to resolve matters informally by:

- . a) approaching the alleged harasser/bully directly and speaking to them politely and in private, making it clear that the behaviour in question is offensive, is not welcome and should be stopped. As an alternative, the request may be conveyed in writing specifying the behaviour concerned, with the details and dates of its occurrence.
- . b) approaching the alleged harasser/bully, with the support of anyone unrelated to the incident. Anyone approached to give support is encouraged to do so if willing and able to help. They must respect the need for confidentiality.
- . c) approaching the alleged harasser/bully with the support of a welfare officer or trustee.

- . d) if it is too difficult or embarrassing for you to do this yourself, you may ask a welfare officer or trustee to approach the alleged harasser/bully on your behalf.

2. Formal Complaint

The complaint should be pursued formally if the harassment or bullying continues after the informal procedure has been used, or if you prefer to pursue a formal complaint.

Complaints should be raised as soon as possible following the alleged act of harassment or bullying so that the matter can be dealt with quickly and before memories fade.

The complaint should first be raised with a welfare officer. However, if you prefer and so choose, you may where possible, bring a complaint in the first instance to someone of your own gender or race or to someone, who is aware of disability issues.

The complaint should be made in writing and wherever possible it should include:

- . a) name of alleged harasser/bully;
- . b) nature of behaviour complained of;
- . c) date(s) and time(s) when harassment or bullying is alleged to have occurred;
- . d) names of any witnesses;
- . e) any action already taken by the complainant to stop the alleged harassment/or bullying.

The welfare officer will then report the allegation to the board of trustees and will carry out the investigation or arrange for another trustee to do so. Those carrying out the investigation will not be

connected with the allegations in any way and every effort will be made to ensure that complaints are resolved as quickly as possible.

Both the person making the complaint and the alleged harasser/bully may be accompanied by another person.

3. Timescale

Where it is not possible to comply with the time limits stated below the complainant will be informed of the reason why and given a revised timescale.

The trustee dealing with the complaint will aim to complete the procedure within 21 days of the written complaint being received.

4. Initial Meeting with Complainant

The trustee appointed to carry out the investigation will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 3 working days and will arrange to meet with the complainant as soon as practically possible.

The trustee will meet the complainant to clarify and formally record the nature of the complaint, address the implications of any request for anonymity, ensure the complainant is aware of the next stage of the procedure and remind them they have a right to be accompanied. Further meetings may be necessary.

5. Informing the alleged harasser/bully

The trustee will meet the alleged harasser/bully and outline the nature of the complaint, confirm that it is being handled under the formal procedure, make the individual aware of the procedure and of their right to be accompanied throughout the procedure. This will be followed up and confirmed in writing.

6. Avoiding contact between the complainant and the alleged harasser/bully

Once a formal allegation of harassment or bullying has been made the issue of avoiding contact between the complainant and the alleged harasser/bully must be considered. The trustee will take appropriate action following discussion with the complainant. Both

parties should be advised that there should be no communication between them, directly or indirectly, regarding the complaint and the investigation.

Consideration may also be given to suspension of membership of the alleged harasser/bully to enable the investigation to proceed. An individual who is to be suspended should be notified in writing following a meeting with the trustee investigating the allegation, and has the right to be accompanied at that meeting.

7. Investigation

GWS will ensure that a full, prompt, sensitive and impartial investigation is conducted of all formal complaints, with due regard to the rights of both the complainant and the alleged harasser/bully.

The purpose of meetings is to establish facts. All persons giving information to the trustee will be required to do so in private and not in the presence of any other person present at, or involved in, the alleged incident. Strict confidentiality will be maintained throughout subject to any statutory requirements. A complete record will be maintained of all meetings and investigations.

Having obtained as much information as possible from all persons who can assist with the investigation, the trustee will consider what relevant action should be taken.

Neither the complainant nor the alleged harasser/bully will be victimised in any way. Any malicious complaints will be viewed as gross misconduct and appropriate action taken against the complainant and/or anyone who supports or assists in the bringing of the malicious complaint.

8. Reporting the facts

The trustee undertaking the investigation should prepare a written report outlining the facts, indicating their findings and what action

Both the complainant and the alleged harasser/bully will be informed of GWS decision in writing. Details of any action, including the content of the written report, will remain confidential. The written report shall, at the sole discretion of the GWS, either be promptly

destroyed or alternatively shall be stored by the Welfare Officer for a period of up to twelve months after the investigation is completed.

After the investigation GWS will consider whether it is appropriate to amend working practices or offer support or training.