



## Respect, Bullying and Intimidation Policy

### Introduction

In support of its value to respect others Headcorn Parish Council, the council, will not tolerate bullying or intimidation of or by, any of its employees, officials, members, contractors, visitors to the council or members of the public.

The council is committed to the elimination of any form of disrespect, bullying or intimidation in the workplace or outside the workplace where its employees, officials, members, or contractors act as a representative of the council.

This applies whether the behaviour is by one of these representatives of the council, or by a member of the public towards a representative of the council.

The council will issue this policy to all employees as part of its induction and to all members when they are appointed onto the council. The council will also share this policy with contractors, visitors and members of the public.

### Members

Members undertake on accepting office to comply with the provisions of the Local Code of Conduct. The Code contains certain obligations such as:-

He/she shall behave in such a way that a reasonable person would regard as respectful.

He/she shall not act in a way which a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidation.

Members will carry out some of their duties in the workplace and will come into contact with the Councils employees. Members will also carry out some of their duties outside the workplace when acting, claiming to act or giving the impression of acting as a representative of the council. Members will be expected to conduct themselves in a way that is consistent both with the provisions of their Code and, the contents of this Policy.

The council will expect reciprocal conduct from visitors or members of the public. It will not tolerate disrespect, bullying or intimidation by visitors or members of the public towards members, officers or employees in any form.

### Definitions

**Respect** – this requirement is not intended to stifle political debate. Ideas and policies may be robustly criticised, but individuals should not be subject to personal attack.

**Bullying** – Bullying may be characterised as a pattern of offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating behaviour, an abuse of this use of power or authority which tends to undermine an individual or a group of individuals, gradually eroding their confidence and capacity, which may cause them to suffer stress.



**Intimidation** – implies inducing fear or a sense of inferiority into another. Generally proof of fear is not required in order to establish intimidation. It may be inferred from conduct or words. It can imply a cowering through arrogant, scornful or contemptuous treatment. The behaviour usually takes place in order to persuade others to do something that the perpetrator wants them to do.

## **Responsibilities**

All parties to the council have a responsibility to ensure that their conduct towards others does not demonstrate disrespect, bullying or intimidation. The council undertakes to share its policy with all members, workers, visitors and members of the public and requests that each party accepts its terms to enable the development of positive relationships conducive to efficient and productive working.

## **Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour**

This list is not exhaustive

- Spreading rumours or gossip
- Insulting someone
- Unwanted physical contact, including unnecessary touching, patting or brushing against a person, assault, coercing sexual behaviour, physical threats, insulting or abusive behaviour or gestures
- Display or circulation of material which are sexually or racially offensive or degrading
- Verbal remarks about appearance, derogatory or lewd comments, innuendoes, persistent name calling, statements which are suggestive, unwelcome, abusive and offensive
- Humiliating or ridiculing others about their work
- Shouting
- Pointing your finger, invading personal space, shoving, blocking or barring the way
- Suggesting that others should leave the organisation
- Being hostile to others
- Ignoring the views of others
- Exclusion or victimisation
- Unfair treatment
- Making threats about job security
- Undermining a competent worker by uncalled for criticism
- Preventing an individual's promotion or training opportunities
- Causing embarrassment by disciplining staff in public
- Behaviour that denigrates or ridicules; intimidation or physical abuse; making threats; attempts to stir up hatred against an individual or group.
- The making of vexatious comments
- Defamation of character

## **Legal Position**

Councils have a duty of care towards all their workers under Employment legislation and the Health and Safety at work Act 1974. Under Equalities legislation bullying and intimidation may be considered unlawful.

A member of the public who feels he/she has been disrespected, bullied or intimidated by an officer(s) of the council should use the council's official Complaints Procedure.

# HEADCORN PARISH COUNCIL



If any person feels that they have been disrespected, bullied or intimidated by a Member whilst that Member was undertaking council activities, they can raise a complaint to the Monitoring Officer of Maidstone Borough Council on the basis that there has been an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct. Legislation covering Member misconduct is contained in the Localism Act 2011

## Defamation Act of 2013

If any member, officer, or employee feels that they have been disrespected then actions as outlined in the Headcorn Parish Council Standing Orders (2 D) may be considered.

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