

# ***Umberleigh Village Hall***

## ***Bringing the community together***

### **BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Umberleigh Village Hall Management Committee (Trustees) aim to provide a safe and respectful environment for all Trustees, visitors, volunteers, and anyone using the hall's facilities.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

- This policy aims to provide a safe and welcoming environment for everyone using the village hall, ensuring that no one is subjected to bullying or harassment.
- It applies to all Trustees, volunteers, members of the public, and any other individuals involved in activities held at Umberleigh Village Hall.
- The policy defines bullying and harassment, sets expectations for behaviour, and provides a clear process for dealing with complaints.

#### **DEFINITION OF BULLYING AND HARASSMENT**

1. **Bullying** is repeated, offensive, and intimidating behaviour that targets an individual or group, creating a hostile environment. It may involve verbal, physical, or emotional abuse.
2. **Harassment** refers to unwanted behaviour that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. This includes harassment based on race, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, or any other protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

Examples of bullying and harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal abuse or offensive comments
- Unwelcome physical contact
- Spreading malicious rumours or gossip
- Offensive jokes or inappropriate gestures
- Demeaning behaviour or exclusion from activities

#### **PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS OF BULLYING AND HARASSMENT**

Where an individual wishes to make a formal complaint of alleged bullying and harassment, they should contact the Umberleigh Village Hall Secretary (contact details are provided on the Village Hall website). The complainant will be encouraged to put their complaint in writing (email or post), marked private and confidential. A copy of this policy will be provided by post or email to the complainant.

If the complaint regards the Secretary, then the complainant should contact the Treasurer whose details are also on the Umberleigh Village Hall website.

To help resolve the complaint quickly and effectively, the individual making the complaint should do so within 30 days of the incident and should include in it:

- Name, organisation (if relevant), address, telephone number and email.  
If the complainant does not wish to be contacted in a particular way this will be respected.
- As much information as possible, such as what happened, where, when (date/time), who was present and any action taken, and by whom.
- What was felt to be bullying or harassing behaviour.

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Receipt will be acknowledged, if possible, within 7 working days and the complainant advised of the person – usually a Trustee, who will be dealing with their complaint of alleged bullying or harassment.

The complaint will then be investigated. If necessary, specialist advice will be sought. Where clarification or further information is felt to be necessary, the trustee will contact the person complaining to request this.

A response will be sent within 14 working days. If this is not possible, a holding reply will be sent before the 14 days advising when the investigation will be completed.

The complaint response will explain our findings and what action we will be taking/have taken, subject to the constraints of the Data Protection Act, which will almost certainly not allow us to disclose sensitive personal information.

### **APPEAL**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they may appeal the decision, by writing to the Chair of Umberleigh Village Hall (or the Treasurer if the complaint relates to the Chair), the contact details of whom will be included in our response. Appeals must be submitted within 28 days of the response to the complaint.

The appeal should be specific about why the individual feels the decision made was wrong and provide the facts and information necessary to demonstrate this.

A decision will be notified within 28 days and will be final.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROTECTION**

- All complaints and investigations will be treated with respect for confidentiality, and information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.
- The complainant and witnesses will be protected from retaliation or victimization as a result of making a report.

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

- If someone is found guilty of bullying or harassment, Umberleigh Village Hall will take appropriate disciplinary action. This may include:
  - Removal from events or activities at the village hall.
  - Temporary or permanent exclusion from the premises.
  - Further legal action, if necessary.

This policy and procedure will be made available on the Umberleigh Village Hall website.

<b>Approved: 21 January 2026</b>	<b>By: Trustees Committee Meeting</b>
<b>Review date: January 2027</b>	<b>By:</b>