St Mark’s Unitarian Church

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Aim

We aim to create a safe, caring environment for everyone to find spiritual nourishment and community.

Purpose

This policy is designed to identify and prevent bullying and harassment in any form, by any member of the community, by our Minister, our contractors, trustees, members, friends and all who use our premises so that everyone can feel that they are in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment.

Context

All those who work for us and with us should understand the importance of treating each other with dignity and respect and be committed to acting with consideration and courtesy for one another. This means not showing disrespect, ridicule, or other discriminatory behaviour to anyone. Examples of bullying behaviour would be slurs based on race, national origins, gender, sexuality, social, or economic status etc. It means being mindful of the impact of expressions of anger on those for whom aggression and violence are common experiences.

These interactions include formal and informal gatherings, meetings one to one and larger gatherings, events at church, at home and in the community. In all these settings gossip and saying things behind someone’s back that would not be said to them directly are inappropriate.

All those in positions of status or responsibility should be mindful of their potential to act in an intimidating or discriminatory manner and be sensitive to how their behaviour may be experienced by others. Such status should not be used to impose one’s will on another, a form of bullying.

Bullying and harassment (“any form of persistent conduct which causes another person alarm or distress”) can include physical, verbal, sexual and emotional abuse. Repeated intimidation is harassment and, if for purposes of control, also constitutes bullying and all allegations of such behaviour will be taken seriously and reported to the police, if appropriate.

Anyone witnessing bullying has the right and responsibility to name it and to challenge this behaviour. If disrespectful or undermining behaviours continue this should be reported.

We have a zero tolerance policy to all forms of bullying and harassment and allegations will be investigated and appropriate action taken.

Reporting incidents

Depending on the circumstances there are a range of people to whom bullying and harassment can be reported. These include: the Minister, the Convenor, a member of Council, the Venue Manager, the Safeguarding Team and the Scottish Unitarian Association (SUA).

The Safeguarding Policy [2022-02] for St Mark’s Unitarian Church was presented to the Council of St Mark’s approved, and signed

on 27th February 2024

by *Julie Finneran*

Position Convenor, on behalf of St. Mark’s Church Council