



Committed to providing quality social space for our community

Registered Charity
Number 301590

Oakridge Village Hall Trust (OVHT) Harassment and Bullying Policy

Scope

This policy and procedures apply to any incident or incidents within the Village Hall (VH) premises and grounds or any function related to or sponsored, or in support of, OVHT even if it occurs elsewhere (eg. at a meeting or function on other premises).

Purpose

Oakridge Village Hall Trust is dedicated to providing a safe and harassment-free experience for everyone. We, the Trustees, will not tolerate harassment or bullying of anyone using the hall. Hirers of the hall are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy through the Code of Conduct shown in the Booking Conditions and displayed on the VH Notice Board. The following sets out examples of applicable situations and the preferred course of action to resolve them.

Harassment includes:

- offensive comments related to:
 - sex*
 - gender reassignment,*
 - age*,
 - sexual orientation,*
 - Being married or in a civil partnership,*
 - pregnancy and maternity*
 - disability,*
 - physical appearance,
 - body size,
 - race,*
 - ethnicity,
 - religion or belief,*
 - technology choices,
- deliberate intimidation,
- stalking,
- unwanted recording,
- sustained disruption of talks or other events,
- unwelcome sexual attention.

**Harassment is against the law when the unwanted behaviour is related to any of these categories, termed "protected characteristics". By law (Equality Act 2010), discrimination is*

when someone is treated 'less favourably' than someone else because of these protected characteristics.

Bullying includes:

- spreading malicious rumours
- unfair treatment
- picking on or regularly undermining someone
- denying someone opportunities normally available
- also many of the categories listed under Harassment depending on context

Although there is no legal definition of bullying, it covers various types of unwanted behaviour. Bullying behaviour can be harassment if it relates to a protected characteristic.

Post Incident Procedure

In the event of an incident participants will be asked to cease any harassing or bullying behaviour and are expected to comply immediately. Anyone hiring the hall as well as visitors, tradesmen, volunteers and OVHT trustees and officials are subject to the Code of Conduct set out in the Annex to this Policy.

Anyone being harassed, or who notices that someone else is being harassed, or has any other concerns, and the situation cannot be resolved immediately, should notify the organiser of the event. The organiser may ask any persons deemed the cause of nuisance to leave the premises. Organisers/Hirers or anyone else involved may wish to report the incident to, or seek advice on further recommended actions from, a member of the OVHT Executive Management Committee (EMC).

Paul Timms (OVHT Chairman) Tel 07949785374

John Loosley (OVHT Bookings Secretary) Tel 01285 760460

Victoria Beard (EMC member - lead on Safeguarding) - *ovht21@gmail.com*

Chris Gregg (OVHT Secretary) - *chrisgregg173@gmail.com*

OVHT Procedure

Any OVHT Trustee or Officer receiving a report under this Policy should discuss the situation verbally or by email with at least one member of the EMC. Reports naming individuals must be treated in confidence and any correspondence marked CONFIDENTIAL. The report may take the form of a "complaint" but if confidential it will not be subject to the normal complaints procedure (eg writing in a publicly available complaints register).

However, EMC Officers should look into the complaint in a way that is fair and sensitive to:

- the person who made the complaint
- anyone who witnessed it
- anyone accused of harassment, bullying or discrimination

If someone makes a complaint a long time after an incident has taken place, it should still be taken seriously.

Officers should try to resolve a complaint informally if possible as this is usually quicker and less stressful for everyone. However, not every situation is suitable to handle informally.

How the situation is handled will depend on:

- what the person making the complaint wants
- what may be in the best interests of OVHT as a voluntary organisation and/or the Oakridge community as a whole
- how serious the issue is (eg. if the law has been broken referring it to the police may be appropriate)

The complaint should be handled confidentially, including any investigation.

V.2 15 February 2024

This Policy will be subject to Annual review by the EMC

Useful reference web pages:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>

<https://www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harassment>

<https://www.acas.org.uk/handling-a-bullying-discrimination-complaint>

<https://www.lawscof.org.uk/research-and-policy/equality-and-diversity/guides/preventing-bullying-and-harassment-guide/model-policies/>

“In Plain Sight” -

<https://www.acevo.org.uk/influencing/leading-safe-cultures/in-plain-sight/>

<https://www.acevo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/>

ACEVO_CentreforMH_InPlainSight_ExecSummary.pdf

Inspiration for the “Code of Conduct”

<https://beedingandbrambervillagehall.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Code-of-conduct.pdf>

ANNEX - OVHT CODE OF CONDUCT



Committed to providing quality social space for our community

Code of Conduct

Oakridge Village Hall is dedicated to providing a harassment-free experience for everyone. We will not tolerate harassment of anyone using the hall. Hirers of the hall are responsible for ensuring compliance with this code of conduct.

Harassment includes offensive comments related to gender, gender identity and expression, age, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, ethnicity, religion, technology choices, deliberate intimidation, stalking, harassing, recording, sustained disruption of talks or other events, and unwelcome sexual attention. Participants asked to cease any harassing behaviour are expected to comply immediately. Anyone hiring the hall as well as visitors are subject to this code of conduct.

If you are being harassed, notice that someone else is being harassed, or have any other concerns, please notify the organiser of the event who may wish to seek advice from one of the members of the Executive Management Committee listed below on further guidance.

Paul Timms (OVHT Chairman) Tel 07949785374

John Loosley (OVHT Bookings Secretary) Tel 01285 760460