

# THE GIRLS' BRIGADE IN SCOTLAND

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### 1. Policy statement

The Girls' Brigade in Scotland (GBS) is committed to providing a working and volunteering environment free from harassment and bullying and ensuring all staff, members, and volunteers are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect. We recognise that harassment or bullying can occur both in and outside the workplace, such as on business trips or at work-related events or social functions.

### 2. About this policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out a framework for GBS to deal with any harassment or bullying that occurs by staff or volunteers, and also by third parties such as or visitors to our premises. It applies to all employees, officers, and volunteers.

This policy does not apply where there appears to be bullying between members of the GBS. In that case, you should refer to "Girls' Brigade Scotland says NO to Bullying!".

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time.

### 3. What is harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment.

It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.

Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

Harassment may include, for example:

- unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- continued suggestions for social activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome;
- sending or displaying material that is pornographic or that some people may find

offensive (including emails, text messages, video clips and images sent by mobile phone or posted on the internet);

- unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless);
- racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist jokes, or derogatory or stereotypical remarks about a particular ethnic or religious group or gender;
- outing or threatening to out someone as gay or lesbian;
- offensive emails, text messages or social media content; or
- mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability.

A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended target. For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment.

#### **4. What is bullying?**

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority, but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.

Bullying may include overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision or inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance. However, legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a worker's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to workers in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying on their own.

#### **5. If you are being harassed or bullied**

If you are being harassed or bullied, consider whether you feel able to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. You should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult, you should speak to your Company's Captain/Leader-in-Charge, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally. If you feel unable to speak to the Captain/Leader-in-Charge because the complaint concerns them, then you should speak informally to the Chaplain. If this does not resolve the issue, you should raise the matter formally under our Grievance Procedure (if you are a staff member) or Policy for Resolving Volunteer Problems and Concerns (if you are a volunteer).

If you are not certain whether an incident or series of incidents amounts to bullying or harassment, you should initially contact the Captain informally for confidential advice.

As a general principle, the decision whether to progress a complaint is up to you. However, we have a duty to protect all staff, volunteers, and members and may pursue the matter independently if, in all the circumstances, we consider it appropriate to do so.

We will investigate complaints in a timely and confidential manner. The investigation will be conducted by someone with appropriate experience and no prior involvement in the

complaint, where possible. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused must only be disclosed on a "need to know" basis. We will consider whether any steps are necessary to manage any ongoing relationship between you and the person accused during the investigation.

## **6. Action following the investigation**

If the manager considers that harassment or bullying has occurred, prompt action will be taken to address it.

Where the harasser or bully is an employee the matter will be dealt with as a case of possible misconduct or gross misconduct under our Disciplinary Procedure. If the harasser or bully is a volunteer, they will normally be removed from their volunteering position. If the harasser or bully is a third party such as a customer or other visitor, we will consider what action would be appropriate to deal with the problem. Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing relationship between you and the person concerned.

Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage the ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned. It may be appropriate to arrange some form of mediation and/or counselling, or to change the duties, working location or reporting lines of one or both parties.

Any staff member or volunteer who deliberately provides false information or otherwise acts in bad faith as part of an investigation may be subject to action under our Disciplinary Procedure or Managing Volunteers Policy as appropriate.

## **7. Protection and support for those involved**

Staff, volunteers, or parents who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure or Managing Volunteers Policy as appropriate.