

Respect and Dignity Policy

Aims and Objectives of Blaise Community Garden "BCG") in pursuing the Respect and Dignity Policy

The BCG project has been established as a charitable community group, to involve interested parties from the local area, by giving their time and effort, as volunteers, to promote the aims and objectives of the group

In pursuing those objectives, whatever his or her role is, everyone should be treated with respect and dignity whilst involved with any aspect of the garden project. The diversity of our community is one of our greatest strengths and we are committed to providing a working environment which is responsive to the varied needs of its members and volunteers who should all be able to work in a safe environment founded on mutual respect without feeling threatened or demeaned by anyone else. Bullying and harassment of any kind are in no-one's interest and will not be tolerated in the BCG. Equally volunteers should not behave in a manner which would make others feel uncomfortable through use of alcohol or drugs.

It is important that everyone who works in the garden as a volunteer understands that all have individual needs in coming to the garden and have different amounts of time to contribute. In this context it is entirely reasonable that everyone is greeted warmly whenever during the session they arrive without any teasing or flippant remarks if they are perceived to have been absent for a period. Even if the latter remarks are made in a jocular or affectionate manner by the welcomer it may not always be understood or received as such by the receiver. Above all, everyone is entitled to be recognised as a respected volunteer.

Legitimate, reasonable and constructive feed-back on members' and volunteers' work or behaviour and reasonable instructions to volunteers are **not** construed as bullying or harassment. Members and volunteers are expected to bear this in mind and are asked to give and receive feed-back in an open, constructive and positive spirit. Members and volunteers are asked to work together to resolve misunderstandings before any formal resolution procedure (as detailed in the policy) is needed.

This policy applies to all members and volunteers, wherever they happen to be working.

Definitions

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour. It is unlikely to be an isolated occurrence. It may include, but is not limited to:

- Conduct which is intimidating, physically abusive or threatening
- Conduct that denigrates, ridicules or humiliates an individual, especially in front of colleagues
- Picking on one person when there is a common problem
- Shouting at an individual to get things done
- Consistently undermining someone and their ability to do the job
- Setting unrealistic targets or excessive workloads
- "cyber bullying" i.e. bullying via e-mail. (This should be borne in mind where members and volunteers are working remotely and are managed by e-mail when care and sensitivity should be

practised with regard to the choice of context and language)

- Setting an individual up to fail e.g. by giving inadequate instructions or unreasonable deadlines
- Deliberate ostracism of a person by another.

Harassment in general terms is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of people in the workplace. It may be isolated or repetitive. It may include but is not limited to:

- Physical contact – ranging from touching to serious assault, gestures, intimidation, aggressive behaviour
- Verbal – unwelcome remarks, suggestions and propositions, malicious gossip, inappropriate jokes and banter, offensive language
- Non-verbal – offensive literature or pictures, graffiti and computer imagery, isolation or non-co-operation and exclusion or isolation from social activities.

Harassment and Bullying may be summarised as any behaviour that is unwanted by the person to whom it is directed. It is the impact of the behaviour rather than the intent of the perpetrator that is the determinant as to whether harassment or bullying has occurred.

Procedures

We encourage all members and volunteers to raise issues of harassment or bullying with the person allegedly bullying or harassing the complainant or, if the complainant feels unable to do so, an appropriate trustee. Such allegations will be taken seriously and investigated promptly by the trustee, unless previously resolved informally to the complainant's satisfaction.

Informal resolution

Very often people are not aware that their behaviour is unwelcome or misunderstood and an informal discussion can lead to greater understanding and agreement that the behaviour will cease. Complainants are therefore encouraged to try, if they feel able to do so, to resolve the problem informally by politely making it clear to the alleged bully or harasser, as soon as possible after the incident, that they are offended or upset by such action and request them to desist from it. Suitable phrases may include:

“I find that last remark offensive”, or
“ I am upset by that last comment”, or
“That last comment has made me feel uncomfortable / undermined”, etc. The complainant may simply wish to draw the person’s attention to the Respect and Dignity Policy

To avoid an escalation of the matter, the complainant is advised to withdraw from further discussion with the alleged harasser.

If the complainant feels unable to respond straight away, he /she may communicate their concerns in writing to the alleged bully or harasser, that his/her actions are unwanted and should not be repeated. Alternatively, the complainant may raise the matter with a trustee, to request him / her to inform the person complained about, that his / her behaviour is unacceptable and why.

If the conduct complained of is repeated, the complainant has the option of raising the matter with

the trustees, for the matter then to be formally investigated. In this event, the complainant should keep a record of the events complained of and when they occurred, to pass to the trustee investigating the matter.

An individual who is made aware that their behaviour is unacceptable should:

- Listen carefully to the complaints and the particular concerns raised
- Respect the other person's point of view: everyone has a right to work in an environment free from harassment/intimidation
- Understand and acknowledge that it is the other person's reaction to/perception of to their behaviour that is important
- Agree the aspects of behaviour that will change and offer an apology
- Review their general conduct/behaviour at BCG with other volunteers and members.

Formal resolution

If an informal resolution is not possible and the complainant has requested a formal resolution by one of the trustees, that trustee, acting reasonably and in consultation with the other trustees, shall determine whether the complaint is valid and what action (if any) should be taken. Such action may include, but is not limited to:

Determining that the complaint is invalid and communicating the same to the parties concerned; or requiring the person complained about to apologise to the complainant; or excluding the person complained about from the BCG for a specified period; or permanently excluding the person complained about from the BCG.

Before a final decision is made the person complained about shall have the right, accompanied by a supporter, to be heard by the trustees. Once a decision has been made, the investigating trustee shall communicate it promptly to the person complained about and pursue any follow-up action via the appropriate ...