

DERSingHAM PARISH COUNCIL

PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Introduction

Dersingham Parish Council is committed to providing a work environment free from all forms of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. It is dedicated to fostering a respectful and inclusive workplace where all employees and councillors can thrive. The council takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously and will take prompt and appropriate action to address them.

This policy outlines the council's zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and the procedures for reporting and addressing such behaviour.

Definition

Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, including but not limited to:

- Unwanted sexual advances
- Requests for sexual favours
- Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature
- Displaying sexually explicit materials.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and contract workers, as well as volunteers and elected officials associated with Dersingham Parish Council.

Prohibited Conduct

Sexual harassment in any form is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Making sexual propositions, innuendos, or suggestive comments
- Physical contact of a sexual nature without consent
- Sending sexually explicit messages or materials
- Creating a hostile or offensive work environment based on gender or sexual orientation.

Reporting Procedure

Any employee who believes they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment is encouraged to report it immediately. Reports can be made to:

- The Chairman of the Parish Council
- Any member of the Staffing Committee

Reports can be made verbally or in writing and will be kept confidential to the complainant and members of the Staffing Committee.

Investigation Procedure

Upon receiving a report of sexual harassment, Dersingham Parish Council will promptly and impartially investigate the allegations. The investigation will be conducted by the Chairman of the Staffing Committee, who will interview the parties involved and any witnesses. All parties will be afforded due process and confidentiality to the extent possible.

Disciplinary Action

If an investigation confirms that sexual harassment has occurred, and if it involves another member of staff appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. If it involves a contractor it may result in a verbal or written warning, or termination of the contract, depending on the severity of the offence and the circumstances involved. If it involves a councillor, they will be spoken to, offered appropriate training or be reported to the Monitoring Officer of the Borough Council, depending on the severity of the offence and the circumstances involved.

Training and Awareness

Dersingham Parish Council is committed to preventing sexual harassment through education and training. All employees will receive training about sexual harassment, what it is, how to deal with it and how to prevent and report it when appropriate courses are available. Appropriate support will be offered to staff who are subjected to sexual harassment

Compliance

All employees, contractors and councillors are expected to comply with this policy at all times.

Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

Policy Adopted Date: 24th March 2025