



## Ditton Church Pre-School



## Sexual Harassment Policy

### About this policy

Ditton Church Pre School is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive working environment free from sexual harassment, where everyone is treated and treats others with dignity and respect.

Ditton Church Pre School has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is unlawful and Ditton Church Pre School will not tolerate sexual harassment in the workplace. All incidents of sexual harassment will be treated seriously and will be dealt with sensitively, promptly and confidentially. Ditton Church Pre School will take appropriate action against any person found to have sexually harassed another.

This policy covers sexual harassment which occurs in work and out of the workplace, such as work-related events or social functions.

This policy applies to all employees, trustees and volunteers and covers harassment by staff and also by third parties such as parents, suppliers, contractors and other visitors.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract and it may be amended at any time.

### Responsibility for this policy

Trustees (Ditton Church Pre School committee) have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy but have delegated day-to-day responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the Manager (Wendy Caldicott) and Deputy Manager (Bev McCrum). They will ensure all staff understand and follow the policy and take appropriate action if the policy is breached.

All staff are encouraged to report any instances of sexual harassment and to support colleagues who have encountered sexual harassment.



## **What is sexual harassment?**

Sexual harassment occurs when a person is subjected to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of either violating their dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It also happens if they are treated less favourably because they are subjected to, or rejected that unwanted conduct.

Even if such behaviour is not intended to cause offence or distress, if that is the effect of the conduct, then it could be considered as sexual harassment. Someone may be sexually harassed even if the conduct was not directed at them because of the environment it creates for them.

## **Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:**

Sexual comments or jokes

Displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photographs

Suggestive looks, staring or leering

Propositions and sexual advances

Making promises in return for sexual favours

Sexual gestures

Intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life or a person discussing their own sex life

Sexual posts or contact on social media

Spreading sexual rumours about a person

Sending sexually explicit emails or text messages

Unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging or kissing

Anyone can experience sexual harassment.

Sexual interaction that is invited, mutual or consensual is not sexual harassment because it is not unwanted. However, sexual conduct that has been welcomed in the past can become unwanted.

## **Third party harassment**

Sexual harassment will not be tolerated by staff (which may include volunteers on work placements) and third parties such as volunteers, committee members, parents, suppliers and other visitors to the setting.

## **Procedure to follow if you are being sexually harassed:**

### **Informal steps**

If you are being sexually harassed and you feel comfortable raising the issue informally with the person responsible, you could explain to them that their behaviour is unwelcome, how it has made you feel and that you want the conduct to stop. You should make a note of the time and place of the meeting and who was present so that there is a record of these should you wish to make a formal complaint under the procedure below.



If you do not feel comfortable taking this approach or would like confidential advice and support, you should speak to the Manager or Deputy who can help you resolve the issue.

The Manager or Deputy will:

- Contact the LADO (Local area designated officer) to report the allegation and follow their advice.
- Keep a record of the discussions
- Provide information about the relevant policies and procedures and the support available
- Determine your views on what outcome you would want to be achieved
- Provide support and guidance on how to address the issue informally, which may include facilitating discussion between both parties to achieve an informal resolution
- Discuss and agree next steps
- Keep the matter under review and if the situation has not improved or is sufficiently serious, explain the options available to you.
- Inform the chairperson of the committee.

If you're unclear whether an incident or series of incidents amounts to sexual harassment, please contact the Manager or Deputy for informal confidential guidance.

If informal steps are not appropriate or have been unsuccessful, then you should follow the formal procedure set out below. You can also report sexual harassment anonymously via our Whistleblowing Policy, although the action we take can be more limited.

## **Formal complaints**

### **Reporting the complaint**

If you want to make a formal complaint about sexual harassment, you should submit it in writing to your Manager (Wendy Caldicott) or if your complaint is against your Manager you should report it to the Pre School Chairperson (Ross Terranova). If you feel unable to submit the complaint to either of these individuals then you should send it to the Deputy Chairperson (Caroline Gibbons).

Your complaint should provide the full details of the incident(s), dates, times, witnesses and what happened. You should also include details of any actions taken under the informal element of the procedure if relevant.

Your complaint should set out full details of the conduct complained of, including the name of the harasser, the nature of the harassment, date(s) and time(s), witnesses and any other relevant information.

You do not have to be the recipient or target of sexual harassment to submit a complaint. If you see it happening or become aware of a problem, you have the right to challenge it.



### **What happens next**

The decision to proceed with a complaint is up to you. However, you have a duty to protect all staff and may pursue the matter independently if we consider it appropriate to do so.

Ditton Church Pre School will investigate complaints promptly, sensitively and confidentially. We will ensure the person investigating the complaint is able to effectively do so.

The investigation will be carried out thoroughly, impartially and objectively and will be dealt with sensitively and with due respect for the rights of all parties concerned. We recognise there may be circumstances where an individual may feel more comfortable discussing their complaint with an investigating Manager of a particular sex due to the sensitivities of the case. We will try to accommodate this where possible.

Usually within one week of receiving a formal complaint a meeting will be arranged with you and the Manager investigating your complaint or another appointed person. You have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague only. Those accompanying you must abide by the confidentiality of the investigation.

As part of the investigation, you may be asked to provide the investigator with details of anyone else who you think they should talk to, such as any witnesses.

If your complaint is about a colleague we will follow advice from the LADO regarding whether or not they should be suspended or other temporary working arrangements made pending the outcome of the investigation'. This is to allow a full and objective investigation to take place without any undue influence. The alleged harasser will be instructed not to discuss the matter with anyone else unless they have been authorised to do so. The investigator will arrange a meeting with the alleged harasser to respond to the allegations against them. They may also be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union official.

If your complaint is against a third party such as a parent or other visitor, we will consider what action may be appropriate for your protection pending the outcome of the investigation. Where possible, we will discuss the matter with the third party. We will also consider any request that you make for changes to your own working arrangements during the investigation. For example, you may wish to avoid contact with the alleged harasser.

Where witnesses are interviewed the importance of confidentiality will be emphasised to them.

You will be kept regularly informed of the progress of the investigation and supported throughout.



### **Outcome of investigation**

Once the investigation has concluded, the investigating Manager will submit a report to the setting Manager or Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson nominated to consider the complaint. If the Manager or nominated trustee considers that there is a case to answer, where the alleged harasser is an employee, the matter will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure. The nature of any sanctions will depend on the seriousness and extent of the harassment. If the harasser is a third party, such as a parent or other visitor, we will consider what action would be appropriate to address the issue and to protect you and fellow staff members.

Regardless of whether your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned and will provide support beyond the investigation and any disciplinary procedure.

### **Appeals**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may appeal in writing to the Chairman of the trustees (Ross Terranova), stating your full grounds or appeal within seven days of the date the decision was provided to you.

We will hold an appeal meeting, usually within one week of receiving your written appeal. This will be dealt with impartially by a nominated trustee who has not previously been involved in the case. You may bring a work colleague with you to the meeting.

We will confirm the final decision in writing, usually within 14 days of the appeal hearing. This is no further appeal route.

### **Protection and support**

Ditton Church Pre School has a zero-tolerance policy of victimisation. Those who make a complaint of sexual harassment or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of victimisation or detriment as a result. Anyone found to have victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary procedure.

If you believe you have been victimised, you should inform the Manager (Wendy Caldicott) or Chairperson (Ross Terranova). If the matter is not resolved, you should raise it formally either through this procedure or our Grievance procedure.



The below organisations can also provide advice and support:

ACAS – [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

Victim support – [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

Rights of women – [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk)

### **Confidentiality**

Details of the investigation including the names of people involved must only be disclosed on a need-to-know basis and subject to any legal, statutory or regulatory obligations and requirements. Breach of confidentiality may lead to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary procedure.

Information recorded about the complaint, the people involved, the outcome and any other relevant documents or notes compiled will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

### **Other relevant policies:**

Code of conduct

Disciplinary procedure

Grievance procedure

E-Safety policy

Whistleblowing policy

Mobile phone/social networking policy

**This policy was adopted by the**

**Date**

**Signed on behalf of the Management Committee**

Ditton Church Pre School Management Committee

June 2026

**Role of Signatory**

**Next Review Date:**

Chair of Management Committee

June 2027