

Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviour

1. Background

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear standards of behaviour for all employees, visitors, suppliers and customers ("Users") within the Cloisters. By adhering to this policy, we will create a positive and respectful environment that promotes equality, safety, and ensures that everyone who uses the Cloisters is treated equally and fairly and not discriminated against.

2. Acceptable behaviour

The Cloisters expects that all Users will conduct themselves in a professional manner when interacting with others or when managing colleagues. All Users of the Cloisters should consider their own behaviour and the impact that this can have on others. The Cloisters recognises that personalities, characters and management styles may differ but, notwithstanding these differences, as a minimum standard everyone expected to:

- Work cooperatively with others in order to achieve objectives
- Manage performance in an appropriate and fair manner
- Give and receive constructive feedback as part of normal day-to-day work. Such feedback should be evidence-based and delivered in an appropriate manner
- Consider other people's perspectives in order to help reach agreement
- Establish good working relationships.

3. Unacceptable behaviour

Unacceptable behaviour (including bullying, harassment and victimisation), may involve actions, words or physical gestures that could reasonably be perceived to be the cause of another person's distress or discomfort. Bullying or harassment may be by an individual against an individual or involve groups of people.

The Cloisters defines behaviour as being unacceptable if:

- It is unwanted by the recipient;
- It has the purpose or effect of violating the recipient's dignity and/or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment; and
- Having regard to all the circumstances, including the recipient's perception, it was reasonable for the behaviour to have that effect.

Unacceptable behaviour does not have to be face-to-face, and may take many forms such as written, telephone or e-mail communications or through social media

If anyone behaves in an unacceptable manner, this should be reported to the General Manager of the Cloisters who will determine an appropriate course of action to deal with the issue. If the General Manager is not able to resolve the issue or the complaint is about the General Manager then complaint will be forwarded to the Board.

Some examples of unacceptable behaviour are:

- Aggressive or abusive behaviour, such as shouting or personal insults
- Spreading malicious rumours or gossip, or insulting someone
- Discrimination or harassment when related to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 (see Annex 1)
- Unwanted physical contact
- Stalking
- Offensive comments/jokes or body language
- Publishing, circulating or displaying pornographic, racist, sexually suggestive or otherwise offensive material or pictures
- Isolation, deliberate exclusion and/or non co-operation at work
- Persistent and unreasonable criticism
- Unreasonable demands and impossible targets
- Coercion, such as pressure to subscribe to a particular political or religious belief

4. Bullying and Harassment

Unacceptable behaviour may contravene equalities and/or other legislation.

Whilst bullying and harassment will always be deemed to be forms of unacceptable behaviour, the two terms have distinct and separate legal meanings.

Harassment is connected to anti-discrimination legislation. Therefore, if an individual is on the receiving end of unacceptable behaviour which relates to their sex, race, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion or belief or gender reassignment (collectively known as 'the protected characteristics'), this will be deemed to be harassment. Harassment may be established from a single event and a series or pattern of behaviour is not necessary in order to establish that an individual has suffered harassment.

Individuals are also protected from harassment based on someone else's protected characteristic, or based on the perception that they have a protected characteristic.

Harassment is defined in Annex 1.

Bullying is a broader concept and is defined in Annex 1. For bullying to be established, there will generally be a series of patterns of events in which one individual has demonstrated unacceptable behaviour towards another individual.

With regards to both harassment and bullying, the unacceptable behaviour may be overt (for example, verbal abuse/threats/physical violence) or it may be more subtle and insidious. In either case, it is unacceptable behaviour and is a breach of this Policy.

5. Victimisation

Victimisation is unfavourable treatment of a person ('the victim') to a detriment because they have:

- brought discrimination (including harassment) proceedings or given evidence or information in connection with such proceedings
- done anything other thing in connection with discrimination (including harassment) proceedings
- made an allegation (whether expressly or otherwise) of discrimination or harassment
- or because it is suspected that the victim has done or intends to do any of these things.

Unfavourable treatment of a complainant or a witness in relation to a dignity at work complaint which relates to a protected characteristic is likely to be victimisation.

The Cloisters will not tolerate victimisation and a perpetrator will be subject to disciplinary action which may result in action up to and including dismissal or expulsion from the Cloisters (see Annex 2).

6. What does not constitute Unacceptable Behaviour?

It is important to note that behaviour that is considered bullying by one person may be considered acceptable by another. For instance, legitimate, constructive and fair feedback on a User of staff's performance or behaviour at work is not bullying.

Isolated incidents of unreasonable behaviour such as abruptness, sharpness or rudeness whilst unacceptable, will generally not be considered to amount to bullying. However, individuals may want to let the other person know how their behaviour has made them feel in order to avoid a repeat of such behaviour. If the behaviour does continue over a period of time this may be considered to be bullying/harassment.

7. Criminal offences

Some forms of unacceptable behaviour may be serious enough to constitute a criminal offence.

If the Cloisters becomes aware that a User has (or may have) committed an offence the Cloisters may report its concerns to the police or other authorities, as appropriate.

Where matters are reported to the police, whether by an individual or the Cloisters, internal investigations and disciplinary action may still take place, whether or not the police decide to proceed. However, in some cases there may have to be a delay whilst police investigations are carried out.

Annex 1

Definitions under the Equality Act 2020:

1. The protected characteristics are reasons why a person could be discriminated against and are the following:
 - age;
 - disability;
 - gender reassignment;

- marriage and civil partnership;
 - pregnancy and maternity;
 - race;
 - religion or belief;
 - sex;
 - sexual orientation.
2. Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.
3. Bullying is a broader concept which may generally be characterised as: offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. For bullying to be established, there will generally be a series of patterns of events in which one individual has demonstrated unacceptable behaviour towards another individual.

Annex 2 for Users who are not Freemasons

Consequences of failure to adhere to this Policy.

1. The first time the General Manager and/or the Board is made aware of an incident they will investigate the incident and then depending on the type and severity of the incident they will do either one or all of the following:
 - a) Issue a warning to the User with the actions they must take;
 - b) Ban the User from the Cloisters depending for a period of between one week and one month;

- 2) The second time the General Manager and/or the Board is made aware of an incident they will investigate the incident and then depending on the type and severity of the incident they will do either one or all of the following:
 - a) Issue a letter to the User with the actions they must take;
 - b) Ban the User from the Cloisters depending for a period of between one month and two months;
- 3) The third time the General Manager and/or the Board is made aware of an incident they will investigate the incident and then depending on the type and severity of the incident they will do either one or all of the following:
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The right to appeal the decision must be made with the authority of the Lodge/Chapter President or Secretary and the Provincial President must be included in all correspondence.

The Lodge, Chapter or Provincial President has the right at any time to decide that the User is bringing Freemasonry into disrepute.