

Lewisham Islamic Centre

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Version: 1.0
Policy owner: General Secretary
Date of approval: 10/10/10
Effective from: 10/10/10
Next review: 10/10/14

Revision history

Version	Date	Description of Revision
1.0	29/12/11	Policy finalised

The latest version of this policy will always be on the intranet.



In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the most Compassionate

All Lewisham Islamic Centre employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and work in an atmosphere free from intimidation. The policy aims to protect employees from any bullying or harassment and enable them, if necessary, to make a complaint or assist in an investigation without fear or reprisal. No form of bullying or harassment will be condoned at work.

Sexual and racial harassment and harassment on the grounds of religious beliefs, sexual orientation and age at work are unlawful and both Lewisham Islamic Centre and the harasser may be held liable for such unlawful actions and may be required to pay damages.

Where appropriate, every effort will be made to resolve the situation informally. Some incidents, however by virtue of their serious nature, will need to be dealt with immediately under the formal procedure.

Disciplinary action, including dismissal, will be taken against those failing to fulfil their responsibilities under this policy.

1) Bullying

Employees who are bullied often feel vulnerable and isolated and believe that it is best not to complain, as their complaints will not be taken seriously. For this reason, any employee who feels bullied should feel confident that their complaint will be taken seriously and dealt with in confidence. Any employee who receives a complaint of bullying must respect confidentiality and encourage the person being bullied to use the complaints procedure.

Bullying can be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means, which lead to or result in undermining, humiliating, denigrating or injury of the recipient. It can take many forms, for example

- Derogatory remarks
- Insensitive jokes or pranks
- Insulting or aggressive behaviour
- Ignoring or excluding an individual
- Setting unrealistic deadlines
- Public criticism
- With hold necessary information
- Constantly under valuing effort

Bullying may not necessarily take place face-to-face, it may be conducted through written communication, e-mail or via the telephone. The above list is not exhaustive. The examples listed above must be viewed in terms of the distress they cause the individual. It is primarily the perceptions of the

recipient that determine whether any action or statement can be viewed as bullying.

2) Harassment

Harassment in general terms is unwanted conduct affect the dignity of men and women in the workplace. It may be related to age, sex, race, disability, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident. The key factor is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.

Employees may not always realise that their behaviour constitutes harassment but they must recognise that what is acceptable to one person may not be acceptable to another. Harassment may take many forms, from relative minor abuse to actual physical violence. Examples of harassment may include:

- Lewd comments about appearance
- Unwanted bodily contact
- Displays of sexually offensive material
- Speculation about a person's private life and sexual activities
- Threat of dismissal, loss of promotion, etc for refusal of sexual favours

Harassment may not necessarily take place face to face; it may be conducted through written communication, e-mail or via the telephone. The above list is not exhaustive. The examples listed above must be viewed in terms of the distress they cause the individual. It is primarily the perceptions of the recipient that determine whether any action or statement can be viewed as harassment.

3) Responsibilities of Staff

All Lewisham Islamic Centre employees have a duty to comply with this policy and to take steps to ensure that bully or harassment does not occur.

4) Responsibilities of Managers and Senior Members of Staff

All managers have a duty to establish and maintain a working environment free from bullying or harassment. They should ensure that all employees are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and that all employees within their team, themselves included, adhere to this policy and procedure at all times.

5) Complaints Procedure

Whenever possible, any complaint of bullying or harassment should be made in the first instance to the immediate Line Manager. Where this is not possible, because for example the Line Manager is implicated in the allegation, the employee may submit their complaint to the Centre Manager.

The employee should be advised to keep a written record of any incidents of bullying or harassment, including the date, time, and nature of the incident, the names of those involved and the names of any witnesses.

All complaints should be viewed seriously and treated confidentially.

The employee should be advised the complaints procedure can be either informal or formal, and it will be their choice as to which procedure they use.

6) Informal Procedure

In some cases it may be possible to rectify matters informally. Sometimes people are not aware that their behaviour is unwelcome and an informal discussion can lead to greater understanding and an agreement that the behaviour will cease.

If possible, in cases of minor bullying or harassment, the person whom the allegation has been made should be told of the complainant that their behaviour is offensive and unwanted, and must stop. A colleague can act as a witness when this statement is made. Alternatively, an appropriate Line Manager can speak to the person against whom the allegation has been made.

Where the problem is of a more serious nature, or where the bullying or harassment continues following an informal discussion, the formal procedure should be instigated.

7) Formal Procedure

Where the informal methods fail, or where serious bullying or harassment occurs, employees should be advised to bring a formal complaint. The complaint should be made in writing, and where possible, state;

- The name of the person against whom the complaint is made;
- The nature of the bullying or harassment;
- Dates and times when the bullying or harassment occurred;
- Names of witnesses to any incidents of bullying or harassment.

In cases which appear to involve serious misconduct, and there is reason to separate the parties, a short period of suspension, with pay, of the person against whom the allegation has been made may need to be considered while the case is being investigated.

The manager, to whom the complaint is made, along with the Management Committee, should appoint an investigating officer to review and investigate the allegation of bullying or harassment. The investigating officer will usually be a line manager and these meetings are bound by confidentiality.

The investigating officer will conduct a detailed and thorough investigation into the circumstances surrounding the allegation. They will interview the person against whom the allegations are made and any relevant witnesses will be contacted for a statement. These interviews should be concluded within four weeks of the complaint been received. If this time limit is exceeded, all parties involved should be made aware of this and given a date when the investigation will end. Care should be taken during the investigation to treat all employees involved with consideration.

The person(s) against whom the allegation has been made will be required to attend a formal investigation hearing at the earliest opportunity. During the interview they should be given the opportunity to refute allegations, to provide their account of events, as well as to explain any mitigating circumstances.

The investigating officer should keep a detailed record of the investigation and the findings. The complainant and the person(s) against whom the allegation has been made must be told of the findings by the investigating officer and these must also be provided in writing.

If disciplinary action is justified, a disciplinary hearing will be arranged with 10 working days of receipt of the investigating officer's findings. The Lewisham Islamic Centre Disciplinary Policy will then be instigated. Any disciplinary action will reflect the severity of the offence. Where it is felt that the actions of the individual are grossly unacceptable Lewisham Islamic Centre retain the right to dismiss on the grounds of gross misconduct.

Where the complaint is found to be false and malicious, disciplinary action may be taken against the complainant.

The investigation may alternatively conclude that a penalty is unnecessary, or that counselling or training is the preferable option. Following the conclusion of the formal procedure, the person(s) against whom the allegation has been made may now be more able to accept the need to change their behaviour.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, or with the way in which the complaint was handled, then a written request for reconsideration should be made to the Centre Manager within seven days of receiving the investigating managers decision.

8) Counselling

The Centre Manager will facilitate, within available resources, confidential support and advice to staff involved in an allegation of bullying or harassment.

9) Implementation, monitoring and review of this policy

This policy will take effect from December 2010. The Centre Manager has overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy, which will be reviewed on a regular basis following its implementation and additionally whenever there are relevant changes in legislation or to our working practices.