

DOVE RIVER CHURCH

Dove River Church Bullying and Harassment Policy

1. Purpose

Dove River Church is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and Christ-centred environment for all staff, volunteers, members, and visitors. We believe every person is created in the image of God and deserving of dignity and respect. Bullying, harassment, or abuse of any kind contradicts our faith and will not be tolerated in any ministry, workplace, or event associated with the church.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees (paid and unpaid),
- Volunteers, ministry leaders, and church stewards,
- Contractors, visitors, and anyone participating in church activities or events.

3. Definitions

Harassment

Harassment includes unwanted behaviour — verbal, physical, written, or digital — that demeans, threatens, or offends another person. It can be based on characteristics such as gender, age, race, disability, or beliefs, or any other personal trait.

Examples include:

- Offensive jokes or comments
- Unwelcome physical contact
- Derogatory language or slurs
- Intimidation or humiliation
- Displaying or circulating offensive materials

Bullying

Bullying is repeated; unreasonable behaviour directed at an individual (or group) that creates a risk to health and safety. This may include:

- Verbal abuse, shouting, or ridicule
- Excluding someone from ministry activities
- Undermining or sabotaging another's work or reputation

- Misuse of power or leadership authority

4. Biblical and Ethical Foundation

We affirm that:

- Every person is made in God's image (Genesis 1:27).
- Christ calls us to love one another (John 13:34–35).
- The church must reflect justice, mercy, and humility (Micah 6:8).

Therefore, harassment or bullying violates both our faith and our duty of care.

5. Responsibilities

Church Leadership

- Model respectful, Christ-like behaviour;
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of this policy;
- Receive and respond promptly to any reported concern.

Staff, Members, and Volunteers

- Treat others with kindness, fairness, and respect;
- Report any concerns of bullying or harassment;
- Refrain from gossip or retaliation related to complaints.

6. Reporting and Response

1. **Reporting** – Anyone who experiences or witnesses bullying or harassment should report it to a pastor, elder, or designated safeguarding officer.

Internal contact:

Joe Aiken - ajoe@hotmail.co.uk

Jenny Chartier- Designated Person for Safeguarding

doveriverchurchdps@outlook.com

External contact:

Contact one of the regional minister team via www.easternbaptist.org.uk

2. **Confidentiality** – Reports will be handled discreetly, protecting all parties' privacy to the extent possible.
3. **Investigation** – The leadership team (or assigned panel) will review the complaint swiftly, impartially, and with pastoral sensitivity.

4. **Resolution** – Action may include counselling, mediation, discipline, or removal from ministry roles, as appropriate.
5. **Support** – Both complainants and respondents will be offered pastoral care and external referral if needed.

7. Training and Awareness

- All church employees, volunteers, and leaders will be aware of this policy and training conducted as required.
- Policy updates will be communicated regularly and displayed publicly.

8. Commitment to Restoration

We aim not only to protect and discipline but also to restore relationships where possible, guided by biblical reconciliation principles (Matthew 18:15–17).

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or following any reported incident to ensure continued relevance and compliance with local laws.

10. Policy adopted

Date