



Scottish Canoe Association
Comann Curach na h-Alba

Anti Bullying and Anti Harassment Policy

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The Scottish Canoe Association has a continuing responsibility to maintain, as far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all whilst engaged with the SCA. In accordance with this, the SCA seeks to ensure that all are treated with dignity and respect during the course of their duties. This includes providing an environment that is free from bullying and harassment.

Contents	2
Definitions of Bullying and Harassment	3
Consequences of Bullying and Harassment	4
For the individual	4
For the organisation	4
Procedure	4
Accessing a confidential contact	5
Informal stage	5
Formal stage	5
Use of SCA Grievance Handling Procedure for volunteers	6
Use of SCA HR Disciplinary Procedure for employed staff	6
Bullying and Harassment by those external to the SCA	6
Informal stage	6
Formal stage	6

Definitions of Bullying and Harassment

Bullying can be defined as:

Persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, which makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, undermines their self-confidence and may cause them to suffer stress.

Examples of bullying behaviour, which the SCA considers to be unacceptable, are listed below. However, please note that bullying has many forms and this list is not exhaustive.

- Shouting at a colleague
- Persistent negative attacks on a colleague's personal or professional performance
- Belittling or unprofessional criticism of a colleague in front of others
- Spreading malicious rumours or allegations
- Threatening behaviour or attack, both verbal and physical
- Isolating staff by treating them as non-existent
- Undervaluing a colleague's work, withholding significant information, constantly changing work targets or setting unattainable targets in order to cause a colleague to fail
- Imposing unfair sanctions or unnecessarily intrusively monitoring a colleague's work
- Deliberately blocking a colleague's training or promotion opportunities

Harassment can be defined as a form of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010:

Behaviour or conduct, which is inappropriate or unsolicited, unwanted and unacceptable to the recipient making them feel upset, embarrassed, offended, isolated, threatened or humiliated. It can occur on its own or alongside other forms of discrimination. It is important to note, that it is not the intention of the perpetrator but the behaviour or actions and their impact upon the recipient, that constitutes harassment. Unwanted behaviour could be:

- spoken or written words or abuse
- offensive emails, tweets or comments on social networking sites
- images and graffiti
- physical gestures
- facial expressions
- Unwelcome physical contact, ranging from touching to serious assault
- Inappropriate jokes or gossip, offensive language or e-mails, slander or sectarian songs in verbal or written form
- Isolation or non-cooperation at work
- Exclusion from social activities otherwise open to all in a work group
- Coercion for sexual favours or pressure to participate in political/religious groups
- Intrusion by pestering, spying, stalking

You don't need to have previously objected to something for it to be unwanted.

The relevant protected characteristics under the [Equality Act 2010](#) are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- race
- religion or belief

- sex
- sexual orientation

Consequences of Bullying and Harassment

Anyone can be a victim of bullying or harassment and it can occur at any level within the organisational hierarchy. Although the bully or harasser may hold a position of power or authority, bullying or harassment can also happen at peer group level or be instigated by subordinates or external customers and partners. Bullying and harassment are not only unacceptable on moral grounds but may, if unchecked or badly handled, cause serious problems. Consequences may include:

For the individual

- Loss of confidence and self-esteem
- Demotivation
- Poor work quality and reduced output
- Stress or anxiety related ill-health
- Stress and strain in personal or family life
- Resignation from work

For the organisation

- Increased absenteeism
- Increased staff turnover
- Decline in staff relations, loss of team spirit or possible industrial unrest
- Lack of motivation within the workforce
- Decline in productivity or profit
- Damage to the organisation's reputation
- Potential tribunal or court cases

Achieving high levels of performance from people is essential for an organisation to be successful and people cannot contribute their best or work well when under fear of harassment, bullying or abuse. The SCA will not tolerate such behaviour and accordingly encourages an open and trusting culture where everyone has the confidence to report bullying or harassment without fear of the consequences.

Procedure

This applies to SCA volunteers, members and staff and is available on the SCA website. The SCA expects all SCA volunteers, members and staff to take responsibility for their behaviour and have knowledge of, and adhere to this policy at all times.

Where an individual believes that they have been bullied or harassed there are a number of options available to them dependent upon the circumstances of their situation. These options are listed below.

- Accessing a confidential contact
- Informal stage
- Formal stage

Accessing a confidential contact

The SCA recognises the sensitive nature of complaints involving bullying or harassment. Consequently, anyone who wishes to raise a complaint in confidence should contact the CEO, or if the CEO is either unavailable or involved then the person should contact the Chair of the SCA. If the Chair of the SCA is unavailable they should contact the President or if they are unavailable they should contact the General Secretary.

The CEO (or person handling it, as above) will:

- Listen to the concerns
- Explain or clarify the SCA policy or other concerns regarding this matter
- Advise on the courses of action available

Informal stage

The SCA recognises that it is preferable for all if complaints of bullying or harassment are dealt with informally wherever possible. It is hoped that this approach will produce speedy and effective solutions and therefore minimise stress.

Any person who believes that he or she has been treated in a way that they consider to be bullying or harassment, but consider that this is unintentional may consider raising this with the person concerned to see if the situation can be resolved amicably.

It may be that the perpetrator has been unaware of the impact of their behaviour on the other person and so hopefully this informal approach will put an end to the situation. However, if it does not, the individual may decide to progress with a formal complaint.

If this is not appropriate or does not resolve the matter, or in the case of allegations of discriminatory behaviour against the SCA itself, the person may raise the matter via the formal stage below.

Formal stage

The SCA is aware that formal procedures are necessary where an informal stage proves ineffective or inappropriate or where an individual prefers to use the formal procedure. Any formal report of harassment should include:

- The name of the alleged harasser
- The nature of the harassment
- Dates and times when harassment occurred
- The names of any witnesses to the harassment

- Any action taken by the complainant to stop the harassment

Use of SCA Disciplinary Procedure for volunteers

Where the alleged bully or harasser is a volunteer the SCA Grievance Handling Procedure will be followed.

Use of SCA HR Disciplinary Procedure for employed staff

Where the alleged bully or harasser is an employed member of staff the SCA HR Disciplinary Procedure will be followed. This includes the right to be accompanied and the right of appeal as set out in the SCA HR Disciplinary Procedure

Bullying and Harassment by those external to the SCA

The SCA recognises that a circumstance could arise where those engaged with the SCA feel bullied or harassed by external people. If someone is bullied or harassed in the course of carrying out SCA duties the following procedure should be adopted.

Informal stage

If the person feels able to do so they could inform the alleged bully or harasser that they find their behaviour to be unacceptable and ask them to stop. If the person does not feel able to do this or if they have done so but it has proved ineffective then the person should inform the CEO as soon as practically possible. The CEO will discuss the situation and the action taken to date and what could be done in the future if any further incidents occur.

Formal stage

The CEO will consider the following prior to taking any action:

- The degree to which the incident undermines the relationship between parties
- If any previous incidents have occurred and the severity of these
- The effects of the incident on the complainant

If the incident is serious, or a repetition of a previous incident(s) for which informal action has been taken, then the alleged bully or harasser should be written to officially by the CEO informing them:

- That their behaviour is not acceptable
- That further incidents will not be tolerated
- Further incidents may result in the withdrawal of services

