



Worcester City Women's Football Club ("WCWFC", "the Club")

Policy:	Anti-harassment and anti-bullying policy
Purpose:	To ensure that our club promotes, supports, and protects a culture of inclusion. We have a culture of commitment to those who play, support, and enjoy our football.
Values:	Respectful, inspiring, successful, and exceptional
Scope:	This policy applies to our employees, players, coaches, support teams, interns, apprentices, supporters, and volunteers. This includes job applicants.
Associated policies:	Equality, diversity and inclusion policy; Disciplinary procedures; Grievance procedures.

WCWFC reserve the right to amend or withdraw this policy at any time.

Our commitment to you

We are committed to promoting an environment and culture based on dignity, trust and respect, and one that is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.

We therefore adopt a zero-tolerance approach to instances of bullying or harassment.

What we expect from you

We expect everyone associated with the Club to take personal responsibility for observing, upholding, promoting, and applying this policy.

Any dealings you have with third parties, including customers, suppliers, contractors, agency staff and consultants, must be free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying.

If any of our people is found to have committed, authorised or condoned an act of bullying or harassment, we will take action against them (for those to whom it applies) under our Disciplinary procedure, up to and including dismissal.

There is no justifiable reason to bully or harass someone else. For example, observing a particular religion is not a legitimate reason for bullying or harassing a colleague because of their sexual orientation. Even if you do not intend to bully or harass someone else, this does not legitimise your behaviour as it is the impact on the recipient that is important.

You should be aware that you can be personally liable for harassment.

If you experience bullying or harassment, we encourage you to speak up without delay and to ask for appropriate support by raising it with the Club CEO.

Who is protected from harassment?

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination because of certain protected characteristics. These are:

- disability;
- sex;
- gender reassignment;
- marital or civil partnership status;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sexual orientation; and
- age.

Although pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership are not specifically protected under the legal provisions on harassment, we consider harassment on any ground to be unacceptable.

Meaning of harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of:

- violating someone else's dignity; or
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone else.

Harassment can occur where someone perceives another person to have a protected characteristic, for example a perception that someone is transgender even if they are not.

Harassment can also arise by association, where someone is harassed because they are associated with someone with a protected characteristic, for example having a family member of a particular religion.

Examples of harassment

Harassment can occur in many forms and can take place either at work or outside work. While this is not an exhaustive list, examples include:

- "banter", jokes, taunts or insults that are sexist, racist, ageist, transphobic, homophobic or derogatory against any other protected characteristic;
- unwanted physical behaviour, for example, pushing or grabbing;
- excluding someone from a conversation or a social event or marginalising them from the group;
- derogatory comments about pregnancy, maternity leave or IVF treatment;
- mimicking or making fun of someone's disability;
- derogatory or offensive comments about religion;
- unwelcome comments about someone's appearance or the way they dress that is related to a protected characteristic;
- "outing" (i.e. revealing their sexual orientation against their wishes), or threatening to "out", someone;
- consistently using the wrong names and pronouns following the transition of a person's gender identity;
- displaying images that are racially offensive; and
- excluding or making derogatory comments about someone because of a perceived protected characteristic, or because they are associated with someone with a protected characteristic.

Meaning of sexual harassment

Harassment may be sexual in nature. The law defines sexual harassment as:

- conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment; and
- less favourable treatment related to sex or gender reassignment that occurs because of a rejection of, or submission to, sexual conduct.

Examples of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment can occur in many forms. While this is not an exhaustive list, examples include:

- physical conduct of a sexual nature, unwelcome physical contact or intimidation;
- persistent suggestions to meet up socially after a person has made clear that they do not welcome such suggestions;
- showing or sending offensive or pornographic material by any means (e.g. by text, video clip, email or by posting on the internet or social media);
- unwelcome sexual advances, propositions, suggestive remarks, or gender-related insults;
- offensive comments about appearance or dress, innuendo or lewd comments;
- leering, whistling or making sexually suggestive gestures; and
- gossip and speculation about someone's sexual orientation or transgender status, including spreading malicious rumours.

Bullying

There is no legal definition of bullying. However, we regard it as conduct that is offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting, or an abuse or misuse of power, and usually persistent, that has the effect of undermining, humiliating or injuring the recipient.

Bullying can be physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct. It is not necessarily face to face and can be done by email, phone calls, online (cyber-bullying) or on social media. Bullying may occur either inside or outside of the Club.

If the bullying relates to a person's protected characteristic, it may also constitute harassment and, therefore, will be unlawful.

Examples of bullying

While this is not an exhaustive list, bullying may include:

- physical, verbal or psychological threats;
- excessive levels of supervision; and
- inappropriate and derogatory remarks about a person's performance.

It is important to understand that legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a person's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions

given to people in the course of their duties, will not of themselves amount to bullying.

Microaggressions

Microaggressions are statements, actions, or incidents that are regarded as indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalised group such as a racial or ethnic minority. Microaggressions generally take one of three forms:

- **Micro-assaults:** Conscious and obvious insults made verbally or non-verbally to a marginalised individual or group
- **Micro-insults:** Unintentionally insensitive remarks or assumptions based on stereotypes
- **Micro-invalidations:** Where a person denies, or seeks to cancel, the feelings and lived experiences of a marginalised individual or group.

Serious microaggressions can amount to unlawful harassment, bullying or discrimination but even less serious microaggressions can negatively impact the health and wellbeing of the person experiencing them.

What to do if you are being bullied or harassed

Informal route

Bully/harasser is someone within the Club environment.

If you feel able to, you may decide to raise the issue with the individual themselves, to make clear that their behaviour is not welcome and to ask them to stop. They may not be aware that their behaviour is offending you.

Alternatively, if you do not feel up to speaking directly to the individual, you may consider asking the Club CEO for support.

You may or may not want them to talk to the individual on your behalf and, where possible, we will respect your wishes. However, if the welfare or safety of you or others is at risk or where your allegations are particularly serious, we may have to approach the individual and instigate a formal investigation.

Bully/harasser is a third party outside the Club environment

If you are experiencing bullying or harassment by a third party, for example a supporter, client or a supplier, we encourage you to report this to the Club CEO

without delay so that they can advise and support you on the best course of action.

Formal route

If you are not happy with the outcome of an informal process, or if you feel it is not appropriate to approach the issue informally, you may decide to raise it formally.

To make a formal complaint, you should discuss this first with the Club CEO. You can raise a complaint under this policy or under the Grievance procedure.

Under the formal procedure within this policy, we will usually:

- ask you to set out your complaint in writing and include as much detail as possible, for example the alleged bully/harasser's name, the nature of the bullying/harassment, the dates of the alleged acts of bullying/harassment, names of any witnesses, and details of any action taken to address the matter so far;
- hold a meeting with the alleged bully/harasser to ascertain their response to the allegations;
- carry out further investigations where necessary, including interviewing potential witnesses who we will instruct to keep the matter confidential;
- invite you to a meeting to discuss your complaint in full and where you will have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative;
- hold a meeting with you to enable us to ask you further questions in light of any information we have gathered from the alleged bully/harasser and/or witnesses;
- consider all the evidence in full and make a decision; and
- inform you of our decision and, if we uphold the complaint, instigate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal against the bully/harasser.

We will investigate fully every formal complaint in an objective and confidential way, while also ensuring that we respect your rights as well as the rights of the alleged bully/harasser.

We will use every effort to complete an investigation into bullying or harassment as quickly as possible.

Where the alleged bully/harasser is a third party, we may need to adjust the procedure under this policy to ensure we conduct appropriate investigations and we will discuss this with you.

Appeals

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the formal investigation, you have the right to appeal.

Should you wish to appeal, you should write to the People Board Champion setting out what aspects of the decision you are unhappy with and the reasons why. Appeals should be submitted without unreasonable delay and usually no longer than five working days after we inform you of the decision.

The People Board Champion will arrange a meeting with you to discuss your appeal in full and to try and reach a satisfactory solution. You must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting and you may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.

The People Board Champion will write to you to confirm the outcome of the appeal, which will be final.

Support for those affected or involved.

We understand that anyone affected by, or involved with, a complaint of bullying or harassment may feel anxious or upset and we will do what we can to support you.

If you feel you cannot continue to work in close contact with the alleged bully/harasser, we will consider seriously any requested changes to your duties during our investigation into the matter.

Anyone who complains or takes part in good faith in a bullying or harassment investigation must not suffer any form of detrimental treatment or victimisation. If you feel you have suffered such victimisation, please inform the Club CEO as soon as possible.

Regardless of the outcome of your complaint, we will consider carefully how to best approach any ongoing Club relationship between you and the individual concerned.

Sensitivity and confidentiality

Anyone involved with an informal or formal complaint about bullying or harassment, including witnesses, must keep the matter strictly confidential and act with appropriate sensitivity to all parties.

If you are found to have breached confidentiality or acted without due care or sensitivity in a case of bullying or harassment, we may take disciplinary or other appropriate action against you.

Consequences of breaching this policy

If, following a formal investigation, we find that you have committed, authorised or condoned an act of bullying or harassment, we will deal with the issue as a possible case of misconduct or gross misconduct.

We may take disciplinary action against you, up to and including dismissal or other appropriate action for non-employees.

Anyone who complains or takes part in good faith in a bullying or harassment investigation must not suffer any form of detrimental treatment or victimisation. If we find that you have victimised anyone in this way, we will instigate disciplinary action against you up to and including dismissal or other appropriate action for non-employees.

Training

Everyone associated with the Club will be invited to attend a training session related to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the beginning of every season.

Record-keeping

We process personal data collected in relation to bullying or harassment complaints in accordance with our data protection policy. In particular, data collected in relation to the investigation of bullying or harassment complaints is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of responding to the complaints and conducting an investigation. You should immediately report any inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data in accordance with our data protection policy as this constitutes a data protection breach. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which we will deal with under our disciplinary procedure.