

Sankey Valley Methodist Circuit Anti-Bullying Policy

CIRCUIT MEETING 19 SEPTEMBER 2016. AGENDA 6.2

Reference:

A. Positive Working Together guidelines. www.methodist.org.uk/pwt

B. Lay Employment Guidance Pack. www.methodist.org.uk/layemployment

C. Complaints and Discipline Procedure. CPD Vol 2. Part 11. www.methodist.org.uk Complaints and Discipline

1 Statement of Intent.

1.1 The Sankey Valley Circuit is aware of its duty of care towards all its members and is committed to providing a working environment for all members that is free from any form of bullying, harassment and intimidation. The Circuit opposes all forms of unfair discrimination.

1.2 This policy applies to all members of the Sankey Valley Methodist Circuit. Reference A is issued by the Methodist Council and is clear about how the guidelines apply to Ministers, Members of the Methodist Church and to Lay Employees. Further guidance for Lay Employees is available in Reference B. *The Church has no jurisdiction over persons who are not church members but are involved in the life of an individual church or circuit.* However, the Church expects all those involved in its life to behave with respect and dignity for others, as set out in Reference A.

2 What is Bullying and Harassment?

2.1 Bullying can be defined as the misuse of power, persistent, offensive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting behaviour, or the unfair use of sanctions, which make the recipient upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable and which undermine self-confidence. This can also include for example, cyber-bullying.

2.2 Harassment is conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, (for example age, disability, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity,) which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating hostile degrading or offensive environment or violating an individual's dignity.

2.3 The perceptions of both parties should be considered. Bullying and harassment are not dependent upon the motive or an intention to cause distress or hurt. Consideration must be given to the behaviour and the impact it has on the recipient. However, it should be considered whether there is an indication of sensitivity on the complainant's part.

3 Responsibilities.

3.1 Every member of the circuit has a responsibility to prevent bullying or harassment in the circuit.

This can be done by:

- Ensuring that all members of the circuit are aware of this circuit policy.
- Highlighting and/or challenging unacceptable behaviour in the workplace.
- Not colluding with or condoning bullying or harassment by failing to take action.
- Informing ministers of incidents of bullying or harassment as soon as reasonably possible.
- Co-operating fully in any investigation undertaken.

3.2 In the event of an accusation of bullying or harassment being unresolved after following the guidelines at Reference A and/or B, the Superintendent is the Circuit Complaints Officer to whom the matter should then be referred. The formal complaint procedure can be found at Reference C.

4 Protection against Victimisation

4.1 Circuit members have the right to highlight examples of bullying or harassment without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. Malicious or vexatious complaints will not, however, be tolerated.

4.2 Both the complainant and the respondent should be offered support (perhaps an informal or intentional peer support group) from within the circuit whilst the matter is investigated. If this is not practicable, then support from a neighbouring circuit or the district should be offered.

THE CLT RECOMMENDS ACCEPTANCE OF THE ANTI – BULLYING POLICY WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT.