



# Conquest Equestrian Centre

Specialising in Riding for the Disabled  
Improving Lives

Conquest Farm, Norton Fitzwarren  
Taunton, Somerset, TA2 6PN  
01823 433614

## **POLICY ON AVOIDANCE OF HARASSMENT**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

It is our policy to take all reasonable steps to ensure the protection of the dignity of all our employees, and to prevent harassment occurring on any grounds.

We will take all necessary steps to implement this Policy and ensure its effectiveness, including the provision of this and other information to employees. You have a duty to co-operate with us to ensure that the Policy is effective, and that work colleagues are treated with respect and dignity.

You should discourage harassment in the workplace by making it clear to the perpetrator (wherever possible) that you find such behaviour unacceptable, and by supporting colleagues who suffer such treatment.

Harassment pollutes the working environment and can have a devastating effect on the health, confidence, morale and performance of those affected by it. It may also have a damaging effect on other staff who are not the object of unwanted behaviour. All staff are entitled to a working environment which respects their personal dignity and which is free from such objectionable conduct.

Harassment is a disciplinary offence and incidents will be dealt with in accordance with the Employer's Disciplinary Procedure.

We will deal with all complaints seriously, promptly and confidentially. Complaints that are made in bad faith will also be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

### **WHAT IS HARASSMENT?**

Harassment is unwanted conduct relating to the recipient's disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race, colour, religious belief, age, national or ethnic origins, HIV positive or AIDS status which has the effect or purpose of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

It can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct. Examples of harassments include:

- Physical conduct (ranging from touching to serious assault);
- Verbal and written harassment (through jokes, remarks, offensive language, gossip or threats);
- Visual displays (posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, emblems, E-mails and materials downloaded from the Internet);
- Isolation or non-co-operation at work, including social and other events away from our premises - for example, it may constitute harassment where an older person is excluded from a social event - however informal, even a casual drink after work;
- Exclusion from social activities;
- Coercion (including pressure for sexual favours); and
- Intrusion (pestering or spying).

This list is not exhaustive.

A single incident can amount to harassment if sufficiently serious in the perception of the recipient.

It is not the motive behind the behaviour which is relevant, but the impact of the behaviour on the recipient, especially once it has been made clear that it is regarded by the recipient as offensive (although this is not a necessary condition).

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **Informal Approach**

If you are the victim of harassment, you should consider whether you can resolve the problem informally, as the person concerned may be unaware that their behaviour is unacceptable to you.

For example, it might be possible (and sufficient) to explain clearly and unambiguously to the person concerned that the behaviour in question is not welcome, that it is offensive, makes you feel uncomfortable or interferes with your work. If this is pointed out at an early stage, the problem may be resolved.

In circumstances where it is too difficult or embarrassing to do this, an alternative approach might be to seek support from, or for an initial approach to be made by, a sympathetic friend or work colleague. However, if this informal approach is not possible, or does not have the desired effect, and the conduct continues, then you should follow the formal procedure set out below.

### **Formal Approach**

You should make a formal complaint to the Stable Manager. If, in the particular circumstances, you do not feel it is appropriate to go to the Stable Manager, or feel that it would be difficult to discuss the matter with him/her, then you may bring the complaint to the Employer.

Once you have made a complaint, your complaint will be investigated in accordance with our Grievance Procedure set out above. Whilst we appreciate that this may be difficult for you, to help us deal with your concerns you should be prepared to provide sufficient information so that the alleged incident(s) can be fully investigated.

The investigation will be carried out with all due respect for the rights of both you and the alleged harasser. At any stage during the investigation, both you and the alleged harasser may be accompanied and/or represented by a colleague or a Trade Union representative.

Strict confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigation. Where it is necessary to interview witnesses, the importance of confidentiality will be emphasised. Every effort will be made to resolve the complaint speedily.

If, following the investigation, it is considered that there is on the face of it behaviour amounting to harassment, the alleged harasser will be taken through our Disciplinary Procedure set out above. This means that the alleged harasser will be given full details of the nature of the complaint, and will be given every opportunity to respond.

If your complaint is upheld, we will take such disciplinary action as is appropriate in the particular circumstances.

Where appropriate, the situation will be monitored to ensure that the harassment has stopped.

Even if your complaint is not upheld, where possible consideration will be given to rescheduling work/hours, rather than requiring you and the alleged harasser to continue to work together against the wishes of either of you.