



## Woodbrooke Learning and Research Participant Behaviour Policy

Woodbrooke Learning & Research (WL&R) wants all participants in worship and learning activities to feel safe and welcome. WL&R supports the right of all people to be treated with dignity and respect. WL&R is committed to promoting an environment free from all forms of unacceptable behaviour and will take appropriate steps to achieve this. People who carry out work on behalf of WL&R<sup>1</sup> sign a Code of Conduct concerning behaviour, which can be seen as an appendix to our [Safeguarding Policy](#).

This policy is concerned with the behaviour of a person or persons which may cause harm, or the threat of harm, either directly or indirectly to another person or persons. Experiencing, or having the perception of experiencing, unacceptable behaviour can have a significant effect on a person's well-being and their chances of achieving their learning goals. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Bullying or victimisation, including via the internet or by texting
- Harassment
- Physical abuse or threat of it
- Behaviour intended to humiliate, frighten, distress, denigrate, pester or ignore
- Behaviour or language which is hostile or shows prejudice towards individuals based on their disability, gender, age, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation or other protected characteristic.
- Verbal abuse
- Use of offensive language whether spoken or written (for example in email, text message, forum posts or verbal comments)
- Breach of health and safety rules and guidance, including those related to acceptable computer use
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst attending WL&R worship or learning activities or whilst on the premises where WL&R worship or learning activities are being held.
- Involvement in anti-social behaviour such as theft
- Wilful damage or misuse of property or equipment, including inappropriate use of IT equipment
- Failing to respect no smoking rules which also include the use of e-cigarettes

Any participant who has experienced unacceptable behaviour from another participant or someone who carries out work on behalf of WL&R should report this immediately to either their tutor, online worship facilitator or to [learning@woodbrooke.org.uk](mailto:learning@woodbrooke.org.uk). Anyone working for WL&R who experiences unacceptable behaviour from a participant should report this immediately to their staff liaison, online worship coordinator or line manager.

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<sup>1</sup> This will include employed staff, freelance tutors, volunteer tutors, facilitators, elders, pastoral friends and accompaniers

## Procedure

It is acknowledged that many WL&R worship and learning activities are by their nature short and that if a participant does not adhere to this policy the activity may have finished before they can be called to the kind of meeting described in Stage 2. However, the purpose of this policy is to ensure guidelines are in place to enable all participants, volunteers and staff in any worship and learning activity to be treated with respect. It should be noted that regardless of the length of the learning or worship activity WL&R can move straight to Stage 3 of the process if the unacceptable behaviour is of a serious nature.

The procedures that will be followed in relation to participants are as follows:

### Informal procedure

Someone working on behalf of WL&R may need to challenge unacceptable language or behavior in a activity, session or Meeting for Worship. They should try and discuss minor matters of concern with a participant and agree appropriate action. This may necessitate arranging a conversation in a break out room during or after an online learning session or time of worship. They must ensure their staff liaison or online worship coordinator is kept informed about any informal discussions regarding a participant's behaviour.

### Formal procedure

If a participant refuses to participate in an informal discussion, there are further causes for concern or further incidents the person working on behalf of WL&R must contact their staff liaison or coordinator who will instigate a formal discussion with the participant. A written record (minutes) must be kept and the minutes of the meeting given to the participant and any staff (including volunteer staff) involved.

**Stage 1** In the event of unacceptable behaviour, as defined above, the relevant staff liaison or online worship coordinator will meet with the participant to discuss the nature of the problem. An agreement about acceptable behaviour and a review date will be agreed. If everything has gone well by the review date, and the participant is committed to maintaining standards, the matter will be considered to be resolved.

**Stage 2** If the matter is not resolved following this process a follow up meeting will be arranged between the participant, the staff liaison or online coordinator and a member of the WL&R management team and the participant may bring a friend for support if they wish. The meeting will identify and agree actions to enable the participant to continue to attend worship or learning and research activities, including any support required. A review date will be agreed and, if all goes well thereafter, that will be the end of the matter.

**Stage 3** This stage will be applied if Stage 2 has not resolved the problem or the unacceptable behaviour, or allegation of unacceptable behaviour, is of a particularly serious nature or is a repeat of a previous offence. The participant will be temporarily suspended from online worship and/or learning and research activities and invited to attend a panel comprising the Head of Learning or their Deputy, a Member of the Woodbrooke Learning and Research Committee and others as appropriate. The allegations and evidence will be reviewed and the participant asked to comment and

present any additional evidence. The participant can bring along a friend or representative for support.

If the participant's unacceptable behaviour is found to have been serious the panel will normally take one of the following courses of action if the allegations are proven and upheld:

- A final written warning
- Temporary exclusion from attending worship or learning activities
- Permanent exclusion from worship or learning activities
- Exclusion from all Woodbrooke activities and premises

#### **Stage 4 – Appeal**

The participant can appeal against the outcome of the panel to the Director of Woodbrooke. This should be done within five working days of being informed of any decision. Participants also have the right to appeal using the WL&R Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure.

Policy Last Reviewed: March 2022

Next revision date: March 2022

Reviewed by: Head of Learning & Research

Contact us: If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact the Head of Learning & Research [learning@woodbrooke.org.uk](mailto:learning@woodbrooke.org.uk)