**Dignity Charter**

**Introduction**

The Christian scriptures are deeply ethical documents. The Old Testament consistently speaks of mercy, and the care of the outsider, while in the New Testament, Jesus and the authors of the epistles set high standards for the way in which we should relate to one another. In particular, Jesus was deeply critical of the abuse of power by religious leaders and confronted it directly. He was also subject to attempts by those he led to make him follow their preferred agenda. The scriptures also teach that change is possible: the Greek word often translated as repentance, *metanoia*, has an active quality to it. Repentance is a decision to change one’s mind, to resolve not to repeat error, and all are called to reconciliation and restoration.

The Church in Wales recognises that positive relationships and an inclusive and supportive environment are a vital part of our wellbeing and performance. How we treat each other has a direct impact on our connections with one another and our commitment, enjoyment, and effectiveness.

Everyone has a right to be treated with dignity and respect and this means that everyone also has a duty and responsibility to treat others with the same dignity and respect. Treating people in a manner which is discourteous and undignified in any way or which causes harm undermines individual dignity as well as the life and ministry of the whole church. Poor relationships will make people feel undervalued and unhappy. They can cause distress, affect physical and mental wellbeing, and have adverse effects on social relationships.

The right to be treated with dignity and respect extends to all aspects of our church life including those which are outside of the typical workplace, for example, working with the community, church services, business meetings and work-related social events or through the use of social media.

This Dignity Charter applies to both groups and individuals by providing a framework of expectation for managing how we behave towards one another. It sets out standards which everyone should meet. It is intended to create a supportive environment where mistakes are recognised, acknowledged and which can result in positive learning and progressive change in behaviour. The Charter sets out how respect and the valuing of individuals are core principles which positively increase diversity and the subsequent flourishing of our common life.

This charter, underpinned by the Church in Wales Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy, will guide the decisions we make, how we communicate with each other across the whole church and how we create a culture of respect and mutual acceptance. We need to practice the high standards of relationships and care for one another exemplified in the scriptures and to embrace the spirit of *metanoia* so that together we can walk the path of reconciliation, restoration, and respect together.

**Church in Wales Commitments**

Unacceptable behaviour is not tolerated. We will support people where they have experienced behaviour which compromises any individual’s right to be treated respectfully. Anyone who displays unacceptable behaviour towards another individual (whether a colleague, volunteer, or member of the community) may be in violation of the Church in Wales’ Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation Policy as well as this Dignity Charter and may become the subject for formal action under the Disciplinary Policies.

**Personal responsibility framework for Respect within the Church in Wales**

Everyone associated with the Church in Wales is expected to behave respectfully and courteously and has the right to expect respectful and courteous behaviour from others.

We will:

* Treat everyone with courtesy, dignity, and respect ensuring that the rights of others are respected and upheld
* Be aware how our own behaviour impacts on others and we will make changes if it has caused offence, or others tell us that it is likely to do so. We will never behave in a manner that could be characterised as bullying, harassing, or victimising
* Foster a culture of continuous improvement, recognise that improvement will bring change and that change will often be initiated by challenge. We accept that bringing challenge must be done in a courteous and respectful manner, but that challenge is not inherently bullying, harassment or victimisation
* Promote an environment which values all people’s differences and does not cause embarrassment, conflict of interest, harassment, alarm, or distress to any other person, nor discriminate unfairly or unlawfully on any grounds
* Be aware of the power imbalances which can exist between people working, worshipping, studying, or ministering closely together but with very different roles and levels of seniority and behave accordingly
* Be polite in all forms of communication and take a positive, responsive, and considered approach in dealings with others
* Acknowledge and learn from our mistakes
* Maintain a professional approach to our work, ministry, and common life and always act towards others with integrity
* Ensure that everyone has a secure route to notify concerns about the conduct of those senior to them (which for some may be their line manager) either in their own diocese or in a wider Church in Wales context
* Ensure that everyone has a secure route to notify concerns about the conduct of the people that they lead either in their own diocese or in a wider Church in Wales context
* Conduct ourselves in accordance with the procedures and guidance of the Church in Wales

**Reporting unacceptable behaviour**

If we feel uncomfortable with behaviours we have experienced or have witnessed, we will report any incidents to our line manager / Archdeacon, or the People Services team of the Representative Body. Concerns about the behaviour of committee members should initially be reported to the relevant diocesan secretary or the Chief Executive of the Representative Body. Concerns about the behaviour of a bishop should be reported to the Archbishop of Wales. Concerns about the Archbishop of Wales should be reported to the Senior Bishop[[1]](#footnote-1) and also to the Chief Executive of the Representative Body.

**Monitoring and review**

Monitoring and reviewing will help us assess the effectiveness of our Dignity Charter.

The People Services team will monitor the outcomes and effectiveness of this charter.

It is the responsibility of the Director of People Services to monitor and review this charter and to present any changes to the People Committee, Standing Committee and Governing Body for approval.

**The Law**

* The Equality Act 2010
* Protection from Harassment Act 1997
* Health and Safety at work Act 1974
* Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
1. The Senior Bishop is the longest serving of the Diocesan Bishops, excluding the Archbishop. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)