Newbiggin Arts Centre

*The place for all things art…where **Arts** are for **All***

# Newbiggin Arts Centre Bullying and Harassment Policy

**Approved by Trustees on:** **2nd October 2026**
**Review Date:** **1st October 2027**

---

## Our Promise

At Newbiggin Arts Centre, everyone has the right to feel safe, respected, and valued. We will not tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind. This includes sexual harassment and victimisation. If concerns are raised, we will respond promptly, fairly, and sensitively, keeping things as confidential as possible.

## Who This Policy Covers

This policy applies to:

- Trustees
- Staff and volunteers
- People working on our behalf
- Participants in the Centre's activities

We also expect partner organisations, visitors, and the public to treat our community with respect.

If anyone linked to our work is bullied or harassed by a partner, beneficiary, or member of the public, we will take action.

## What We Mean by Bullying and Harassment

- Bullying is behaviour that hurts, demeans, or intimidates someone.
- Harassment is unwanted behaviour that violates someone's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment related to certain protected characteristics is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.
- Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour 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.
- Victimisation is treating someone unfairly because they have raised, supported, or been involved in a complaint or concern about discrimination or harassment.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Examples include:

- Spreading rumours
- Excluding someone unfairly
- Picking on or undermining someone
- Denying fair opportunities (e.g. training or participation)
- Offensive comments, jokes, or behaviour
- Unwanted sexual comments, jokes, messages, attention or behaviour
- Treating someone unfairly because they have raised or supported a concern

Bullying and harassment can happen:

- Face to face
- In writing
- By phone, email, or online including social media and other digital channels

It is important to note that reasonable criticism of performance or behaviour, when done fairly and respectfully, is not bullying.

**Our Responsibilities as Trustees**

We recognise that:

- Bullying and harassment have no place in our charity.
- Trustees must set a positive example and promote a culture of openness, kindness, and respect.
- Clear policies and fair processes must be in place.
- Allegations must be handled quickly, fairly, and in line with the law.
- People must feel confident that they can raise concerns safely.
- We will take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and, recognise the additional requirements coming in force from 30 October 2026.
- We will consider the risks of sexual harassment, including from people who come into contact with the Arts Centre through our activities, and take appropriate steps to reduce those risks.

**Reporting Concerns**

If you are worried about bullying or harassment:

- You are encouraged to speak directly to a Trustee or to the Arts Centre leadership.
- Concerns will be recorded and looked into.
- Anonymous reports will be considered carefully, but we encourage people to give their details so we can provide updates and avoid misunderstandings.

- We will take concerns seriously even where they cannot ultimately be substantiated.
- Knowingly false or malicious allegations will not be tolerated.

Concerns involving a Trustee or someone in a position of authority should, where possible, be raised with another Trustee who is not involved in the concern.

Serious cases may need to be reported to the Charity Commission under its serious incident reporting rules. Trustees are responsible for deciding whether an incident meets the reporting threshold. Staff and volunteers can also make reports directly to the Commission where the circumstances meet the Commission's whistleblowing arrangements.

**Children's Classes, Clubs and Workshops**

- Small disagreements are usually sorted out on the spot by talking things through calmly.
- If bullying or harassment occurs, the club leader will work with the children and their parents/guardians/carers to resolve it.
- Bullying or harassment is not acceptable. If the problem cannot be resolved, a child who continues to bully others may not be able to attend in future.
- Any concern involving safeguarding or a risk of significant harm to a child must be dealt with in line with the Arts Centre's Safeguarding Policy.

**The Law**

- Bullying on its own is not against the law.
- Harassment related to a protected characteristic, and sexual harassment, are unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.
- Victimisation because someone has raised or supported an equality-related concern is also unlawful.
- Everyone involved with our charity has the right to work and take part in a safe and respectful environment.
- Employers have a legal duty to take steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. From 30 October 2026, employers must take all reasonable steps to prevent it.

**Where to Get Help**

If you have concerns, you can:

- Speak to the Chair of Trustees or another Trustee.
- Seek advice from the Charity Commission or ACAS.
- Find more information on GOV.UK.

**Review**
This policy will be reviewed every year, or sooner if needed.

**Last reviewed: October 2026**

**Next review:** **October 2027**

**Signed on behalf of the Newbiggin Arts Centre Board of Trustees:**



Steve Wilkinson
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

**Date: 2nd October 2026**

**Further Guidance**

This policy is based on current law and good practice, including:

- GOV.UK – Workplace Bullying & Harassment
- Charity Commission – Serious Incident Reporting
- Charity Commission – How to report serious wrongdoing at a charity
- Charity Commission – *Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees*
- ACAS – Sexual Harassment
- ACAS – Preventing Sexual Harassment

Trustees should make sure they are familiar with these resources.