

## GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH, ULVERSTON

### Anti-Bullying Policy

#### Church Details

**Church address: Quebec Street, Ulverston, LA12 9AD**

**Church Trustees: Ole Kristian Hunt; Dave Whitworth; Andrew Hewitt; Matt Rawlinson**

**Elders: Ole Kristian Hunt (Pastor)**

**Deacons: Dave Whitworth; Andrew Hewitt; Matt Rawlinson**

**Safeguarding Lead: Chrissie-Mary Hunt**

**Assistant Safeguarding Lead: Natalie Hewitt**

**This policy first adopted / last reviewed: February 2026**

**This policy should be reviewed bi-annually. The next review is due on: February 2028**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Details of change</b>	<b>Page / paragraphs affected</b>	<b>Date of up-issue</b>
Draft (1)	New document drafted	New document	14 January 2026
Draft (1.2)	Comments throughout	N/A	31 January 2026
1.1	Approved by Andy Hewitt & Ole Hunt	N/A	07 February 2026

## 1. Purpose and Commitment

- 1.1. GBCU is committed to being a Christ-centered fellowship that reflects love, dignity, respect, and safety for all people. Bullying, harassment, and intimidation are inconsistent with Christian values and will not be tolerated in any form.
- 1.2. This policy affirms our commitment to:
  - 1.2.1. Treat every person as made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27)
  - 1.2.2. Love one another as Christ has loved us (John 13:34)
  - 1.2.3. Protect children, youths, vulnerable adults, staff, and volunteers from harm (in line with our Safeguarding Policy)

## 2. Scope of the Policy

- 2.1. This policy applies to all individuals involved in the life of the church, including:
  - 2.1.1. Church officers
  - 2.1.2. Employees and contractors
  - 2.1.3. Trustees
  - 2.1.4. Volunteers
  - 2.1.5. Members and regular attendees
  - 2.1.6. Children, youth, and adults
- 2.2. It applies to behavior occurring:
  - 2.2.1. On church premises
  - 2.2.2. During church-sponsored activities, events, or trips
  - 2.2.3. In online or digital spaces connected to church life (e.g., social media, messaging apps, email)

## 3. Definition of Bullying

- 3.1. Bullying is repeated or severe behavior that intentionally harms, intimidates, humiliates, or controls another person. Bullying may occur between individuals or groups and may involve a real or perceived power imbalance. Bullying can include, but is not limited to:

### 3.1.1. Verbal Bullying

- 3.1.1.1. Insults, name-calling, mocking, or teasing
- 3.1.1.2. Threats or intimidating language
- 3.1.1.3. Spreading rumors or gossip

### 3.1.2. Emotional or Psychological Bullying

- 3.1.2.1. Exclusion or isolation
- 3.1.2.2. Manipulation or coercion
- 3.1.2.3. Shaming, belittling, or humiliation

### 3.1.3. Physical Bullying

- 3.1.3.1. Hitting, pushing, or physical intimidation
- 3.1.3.2. Damage to personal property

### **3.1.4. Cyberbullying**

- 3.1.4.1. Harassing or threatening messages
- 3.1.4.2. Posting harmful or embarrassing content online
- 3.1.4.3. Misuse of digital platforms to intimidate or shame

### **3.1.5. Spiritual Bullying**

- 3.1.5.1. There are many in our society who would consider Biblical teaching and practice within a church context (and the proper application of Church Discipline) to be Spiritual Abuse or Bullying. We strongly repudiate such worldly thinking, and firmly desire to be conformed to God's pattern (revealed in the Bible) for life & faith. For example:
  - 3.1.5.1.1. The correct administration of church discipline (i.e. conversation, rebuke, warning, excommunication) is not spiritual bullying.
  - 3.1.5.1.2. The teaching & encouragement of Biblical standards of behaviour - whether in finance; sexuality & personal relationships; parenting; etc. is not spiritual bullying.
- 3.1.5.2. We are committed to trusting God, by his Word and Spirit, to bring conviction of Sin through the regular means of grace and the teaching of the church.
- 3.1.5.3. However, we acknowledge that even in apparently Biblical churches, spiritual bullying may occur, as with the following characteristics:
  - 3.1.5.3.1. Misusing Scripture or spiritual authority to control, shame, or silence others (especially for the promotion of individual or organisational goals and agendas)
  - 3.1.5.3.2. Pressuring individuals through fear, guilt, or manipulation in the name of faith

## **4. Prohibited Conduct**

- 4.1. Within any group of people with such diverse backgrounds, characters and temperaments as a local church, and with the closeness with which we conduct our lives in fellowship, it is easy for people to upset each other or give inadvertent offense. This (where it does not form a harmful pattern of apparently "careless" behaviour) is not considered bullying.
  - 4.1.1. Where this occurs, it may require open discussions and pastoral intervention to help church members be reconciled to each other. "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:3)
- 4.2. Bullying, harassment, retaliation, or intimidation of any kind is strictly prohibited. Retaliation against anyone who reports bullying or participates in an investigation is also prohibited.

## **5. Reporting Bullying**

- 5.1. All members of the church community are encouraged to report bullying concerns promptly.

- 5.2. Reports may be made to:
  - 5.2.1. The Pastor (*Ole Hunt*) or any other church elder
  - 5.2.2. The Deacons or other Trustees
  - 5.2.3. Our designated Safeguarding Lead (*Chrissie-Mary Hunt*) or Assistant Lead (*Natalie Hewitt*)
  - 5.2.4. A Sunday School teacher or helper
  
- 5.3. Reports should include, when possible:
  - 5.3.1. Description of the incident(s)
  - 5.3.2. Names of those involved
  - 5.3.3. Dates, times, and locations
  - 5.3.4. Names of witnesses (if any)
  
- 5.4. Reports may be made confidentially and will be handled with sensitivity and care.

## **6. Response and Investigation**

- 6.1. All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and addressed promptly. The church will:
  - 6.1.1. Listen respectfully to all parties involved
  - 6.1.2. Investigate the matter fairly and impartially
  - 6.1.3. Maintain confidentiality as far as reasonably practicable
  - 6.1.4. Take appropriate action based on the findings, including but not limited to the administration of church discipline
  - 6.1.5. When necessary, the church may involve external authorities, especially in cases involving children, abuse, or criminal behavior.

## **7. Consequences and Corrective Action**

- 7.1. If bullying is confirmed, appropriate action will be taken, which may include:
  - 7.1.1. Pastoral counseling or mediation
  - 7.1.2. Formal warnings
  - 7.1.3. Church discipline
  - 7.1.4. Removal from leadership or volunteer roles
  - 7.1.5. Suspension or exclusion from activities
  - 7.1.6. Termination of employment (if applicable)
- 7.2. Corrective actions and consequences will be proportional to the severity and frequency of the behavior and guided by both church governance and pastoral care principles.

## **8. Support and Care**

- 8.1. The church is committed to supporting those affected by bullying. Support may include:
  - 8.1.1. Pastoral care and prayer
  - 8.1.2. Counseling referrals
  - 8.1.3. Advocacy and follow-up

8.1.4. Restorative processes when appropriate and safe

## **9. Prevention and Education**

9.1. GBCU will work proactively to prevent bullying by:

9.1.1. Promoting respectful communication and healthy conflict resolution, both within and without the church fellowship

9.1.2. Teaching biblical principles of love, kindness, and accountability, and cultivating a yearning for Christlikeness in all our thought and conduct.