Deal Pentecostal Church
Behaviour and Suspension Policy and Bullying and Harassment Policy

Reviewed and accepted Signed *PSFermor* **08/03/2026**

Contents

Behaviour and Suspension Policy 1
1. Statement of intent 1
2. Behaviour: 2
3. Procedure 2
4. Conclusion 2
Church Membership and Discipline including Suspension and Banning 3
Bullying and Harassment Policy 4
Harassment 4
Bullying 4
Procedure 4
Legal notes 5
Suspension Letter Templates: 6

Behaviour and Suspension Policy

1. Statement of intent

We strive to make our church community a place where we model the Christian behaviour that we teach and expect. As a community aiming to reflect a Christ-like ethos, we promote respect for all with whom we work, and celebrate differences in a positive manner. We place a high importance on good manners and positive communication, founded on mutual respect.

The vast majority of people visiting our church are keen to worship with us and are supportive of the church community and our beliefs. However, on the rare occasions when a negative attitude towards the church is expressed, this can result in aggression, verbal and/or physical abuse towards staff, volunteers or members of the congregation.

Our church community expects and requires our staff and volunteers to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to defuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues. However, all staff and volunteers have the right to serve others without fear of violence and abuse and the right, in an extreme case, of appropriate self-defence.

We expect all visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards our staff, volunteers and congregation. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

2. Behaviour:

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated:

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour:

- Shouting, either in person or over the telephone
- Physically intimidating others, e.g. standing very close, invading personal space
- The use of aggressive hand gestures, threatening, shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- Swearing at others
- Pushing or hitting, including slapping, punching and kicking
- Spitting
- Racist or sexist comments
- Intentional disruption of a meeting or any other Church activity

Unacceptable behaviour may result in the Police being informed of the incident.

3. Procedure

When a member of the public behaves in an unacceptable way towards staff, volunteers or congregation, the Senior Pastor or appropriate member of staff will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. Where all avenues have been exhausted, and aggression or intimidation continue, or where there is an extreme act of violence, an individual may be banned by the Senior Pastor from our premises for a period of time, subject to review. Prior to being banned the following steps will be taken:

1. The individual will be informed, in writing, that s/he is banned from the premises, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached (for example, that an injunction application may follow).

2. Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the Police will be included.

3. The Chair of the Trustees will be informed of the ban.

4. Conclusion

Deal Pentecostal Church will take action where behaviour is unacceptable or serious and breaches our behaviour policy, or health and safety legislation. **In implementing this policy, Deal Pentecostal Church will, as appropriate, seek advice from our legal advisors to ensure fairness and consistency.**

Church Membership and Discipline including Suspension and Banning

It is implicit in membership of the Church that members accept the responsibilities and privileges of membership as set out in the Church's Constitution. Church membership may be terminated by the Minister together with the Church Council for any of the following reasons:

- ✓ failure to attend the Church Services for three consecutive months
- ✓ death or presumed death
- ✓ misconduct
- ✓ regular attendance at another Church unless approved by the Church Council
- ✓ unable to worship and serve God within the context of the Church's Statement of Faith
- ✓ unable to actively support the Church's Vision and Values

The Minister/Church Council are responsible for maintaining good discipline within the Church for the glory of God and the sake of the testimony. The Minister/Church Council should investigate any alleged breach of the accepted rules of Christian conduct. Where such breach is substantiated the following disciplinary measures may be imposed:

- ✓ private verbal caution by the Minister
- ✓ verbal caution in the presence of the Minister and Church Council
- ✓ written caution as to future behaviour
- ✓ temporary suspension of membership for a limited period, involving possible absence from Church activities and meetings
- ✓ removal from office
- ✓ permanent revocation of membership

The making of apologies and/or restitution may also be required. The individual has the right to make representation in person or writing to the Minister and Church Council when the matter is considered. In accordance with Scriptural requirements it may also be necessary for the Minister and Church Council to inform the Church of a disciplinary measure. However, it is our intention to restore and reinstate in a loving and discreet manner. The more severe measures will only be adopted where the greater interests of the Church require such a course of action.

Suspension

If the Church has to suspend someone (including a person's Membership), these are helpful guidelines to consider:

- ✓ State the problem
- ✓ Indicate what the regulations are
- ✓ Confirm the suspension
- ✓ State what is needed to lift the suspension
- ✓ Clarify what you want to achieve out of this
- ✓ State when the situation will be reviewed.

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Deal Pentecostal Church strongly believes that all attendees should be treated courteously and with respect. Deal Pentecostal Church will not tolerate any harassment or bullying of attendees and will take all reasonable steps to provide a Place of Worship free from harassment and bullying based upon age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief.

Harassment

Harassment means 'Unwanted conduct which has the purpose or the effect of violating the other's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.' Examples of harassment (this list is not exhaustive) include verbal abuse, unwanted teasing, suggestive remarks about dress or other personal attributes. Conduct can amount to harassment even if the person did not intend to offend. Something intended as 'office banter' may offend another person.

Bullying

Bullying is a form of sustained psychological abuse which makes a person feel worthless. Examples of bullying are constant demeaning of someone, humiliating someone in front of others and endless criticism.

Procedure

An attendee who is suffering harassment or bullying is encouraged to speak to one of the Trustees or Safeguarding Coordinators. The allegations will be treated in confidence.

Deal Pentecostal Church will investigate the allegations. As far as possible the complaints will remain anonymous, although it might be necessary to give some reference to the complaints when obtaining witness statements or other evidence.

The attendee will be invited to a meeting at which the findings from the investigation will be discussed. Action will be taken to stop the harassment or bullying. The attendee will be offered support to overcome the impact of the harassment or bullying that s/he has suffered.

Legal notes

Disturbance of a Religious Service or building *(Ecclesiastical Courts Jurisdiction Act 1860)*

Changes to legislation: Ecclesiastical Courts Jurisdiction Act 1860. Section 2 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 05 April 2021. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations.

Penalty on persons found guilty of making a disturbance in churches, chapels, churchyards, or burial grounds.

Any person who shall be guilty of riotous, violent, or indecent behaviour in England or Ireland in any cathedral church, parish chapel of the Church of England, or in any chapel of any religious denomination, or in England in any places of religious worship duly certified under the provisions of the Places of Worship Registration Act 1855, whether the celebration of Divine service or at any other time, or in any churchyard or burial ground, or who shall molest, let, disturb, vex, or trouble, or by any other unlawful means disquiet or misuse any preacher duly authorized to preach therein, or any clergyman in holy orders ministering or celebrating any sacrament, or any divine service, rite, or office, in any cathedral, church, or chapel, or in any churchyard or burial ground, shall, on conviction thereof by a magistrates' court, be liable to a fine not exceeding level 1 on the standard scale or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two months.

Suspension Letter Templates:

Dear

This letter is in response to your visits to the meeting place of Deal Pentecostal Church on {dates}. On both of these occasions, you chose to behave in a threatening manner towards staff, individuals on the volunteer team, and members of the congregation. Treating any member of, or visitor to, the church, in the way that has been described when you were present on those days is unacceptable and we would not want to see a repetition.

Your further and continued attendance at Deal Pentecostal Church will, from this point forward, be conditional on your behaviour towards members and visitors. Any reoccurrence of threatening behaviour, or any other action deemed to be injurious to the church, its members and visitors, will result in an immediate and total banning of yourself, {name}, from Deal Pentecostal Church premises, and may also result in your actions being reported to the police.

Whilst you are in attendance at Deal Pentecostal Church, it is expected and required that:

1. you participate appropriately in public worship
2. you follow any and all requests made by the leadership and stewarding team
3. you refrain from contacting any minors (those under the age of 18)

If you are unable to do so, then it would be inappropriate for you to continue attending our meetings.

This is not a decision that has been taken lightly, but is one that we are prepared and ready to enforce if necessary in order to ensure the safety of all people who wish to access the services that we currently offer to the community.

We are hopeful that your behaviour alters significantly and that it will not be necessary to for us to request that you no longer attend Deal Pentecostal Church.

Dear….

In our previous correspondence dated {???}, we made clear the standard of behaviour expected of yourself whilst attending Deal Pentecostal Church. Sadly, we must now inform you that you have not adhered to this standard, and have continued to display threatening, confrontational or disruptive behaviour.

As a consequence of your actions, we must now inform you that you are banned from the premises of Deal Pentecostal Church from this point forward, and will not be permitted to enter the building at any time or for any reason. Any attempt to breach this ban may be regarded as trespass, and may be reported to the police.

We regret that we have had to pursue this course of action, but believe that it is necessary to protect the safety and wellbeing of our staff, members and visitors.

As you were informed on {date}, due to the number of spurious texts and emails I received from you, all your digital communication to me has been blocked and therefore I am unable to receive any of your texts, electronic messages or emails.

Dear….

Following our letter of suspension given to you on {date}, we have now added a further restriction on your suspension by banning you from the premises of Deal Pentecostal Church.

Your disruptive visit to our Service on {date} caused a great deal of distress to everyone present. On this and other occasions, your behaviour towards the Church leadership and members of the congregation has been what we consider to be falling far short of our expectations of a Church Member and even the accepted rules of Christian conduct.

As a consequence of your actions, we must now inform you that, for the period of your suspension, you are banned from the premises of Deal Pentecostal Church (including the car park) and will not be permitted to enter the building at any time or for any reason other than the lawful casting of your vote when the building is used as a Polling Station. Any attempt to breach this ban may be regarded as trespass and will be reported to the police.

This decision has not been taken lightly, but is one that we consider necessary in order to ensure the wellbeing and safety of our congregation and to allow them to attend public worship on our premises without being intimidated or harassed.

Dear….

In our letter to you dated {date}, we told you that your Church membership was suspended for 6 months and that we would review the matter after 4 months. Sadly, we are not aware of any positive change in your erratic behaviour and so we have extended the suspension of your Church membership until further notice.

The conditions of your Church membership suspension remain—you are banned from the premises of Deal Pentecostal Church (including the car park) and so you are not permitted to enter the building at any time or for any reason other than the lawful casting of your vote when the building is used as a Polling Station. Any attempt to breach this ban may be regarded as trespass and will be reported to the police.

We strongly advise you to focus on stabilising your behaviour and restoring your relationships and recommend that you seek professional help (your GP will be able to advise you about the most appropriate help).

We trust that God will guide us all during this difficult time as we recognise His sovereignty in our lives and seek to do His will by acting in accordance with Romans 13:1-2.

Assuring you of our continued prayers for you and your family.

Yours sincerely

Dear….

It is with great sadness that I am writing to you on behalf of the leadership of Deal Pentecostal Church.

As mentioned in our letter of Suspension dated {Date}, it is implicit in the membership of our Church that members accept the responsibilities and privileges of membership. These responsibilities and privileges include:

- ✓ Taking an active part in the work and worship of the Church according to their ability and circumstances.
- ✓ Relating into the Church's system of Pastoral care.
- ✓ Prayerfully contributing to the unity, encouragement and fellowship of the Church.
- ✓ Showing a Scriptural regard for those in positions of leadership.
- ✓ Being prepared to live by the accepted rules of Christian conduct.

Over the last 18 months, your behaviour has continued to become more erratic, falling far short of our expectations of a Church Member and the accepted standard of Christian conduct. You have persistently spread distorted propaganda by using inflammatory and derogatory language to spread misinformation. You have also attempted to encourage people to act contrary to public health guidance issued by the UK Government by spreading this information through social media platforms and other means. You have not shown any remorse for repeatedly spreading misinformation that is based on mis-representation and deception.

In line with Titus 3:10-11, we believe that we have no other option than to terminate your Membership of Deal Pentecostal Church. When you come to your senses and renounce your deception, we would consider receiving you back into the congregation if we believe that you are truly sorry for the hurt and division you have caused this family of Believers here.

I know that I speak on behalf of all our congregation when I say, please, please return to your first love and restore your relationships with your own family and also with your extended church family."

We trust that God will guide us all during this difficult time as we recognise His sovereignty in our lives and seek to do His will by acting in accordance with Romans 13:2.

Assuring you of our continued prayers for you and your family.