



Norfolk and Suffolk Animal Trust (NASAT)

Policy on Bullying Involving Volunteers, Management and Trustees

Approved by: Board of Trustees

Date Approved: 25.10.2025

Next Review Due: 25.10.2026

1. Purpose

Norfolk and Suffolk Animal Trust (NASAT) is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for everyone involved in its work. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

This policy outlines NASAT's approach to preventing, identifying, and addressing bullying involving volunteers, members of management, and trustees. It ensures that concerns are handled fairly, promptly, and with appropriate confidentiality.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Volunteers
- Members of management
- Trustees

It covers bullying behaviour occurring:

- In the workplace or at any NASAT site
 - During NASAT activities or events
 - In communications (including email, phone, messaging, and social media)
 - In any context where an individual is representing or acting on behalf of NASAT
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3. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is unwanted behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated, degraded, humiliated, or offended. It may be persistent or a one-off incident and can be carried out by an individual or group.

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal abuse, insults, or offensive remarks
- Spreading rumours or malicious gossip
- Excluding individuals or isolating them deliberately
- Undermining or deliberately blocking someone's work
- Abuse of power or position
- Cyberbullying, including inappropriate messages or posts online

Bullying may be obvious or subtle and can occur in person or through digital communication.

4. Principles

NASAT will ensure that:

- All individuals are treated with dignity and respect.
 - Bullying concerns are taken seriously and addressed promptly.
 - Complaints are handled fairly, consistently, and without bias.
 - Confidentiality is maintained, with information shared on a need-to-know basis.
 - Individuals raising concerns in good faith are protected from victimisation or retaliation.
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5. Reporting Bullying

5.1 Raising a Concern

Anyone who believes they have experienced or witnessed bullying is encouraged to report it as soon as possible.

Concerns should be raised in writing where possible, including:

- Details of the behaviour or incident
- Dates, times, and locations
- Individuals involved or witnesses
- Any supporting evidence

Reports can be made to:

Trustee Team

Norfolk and Suffolk Animal Trust

Email: nasattrusteeteam@hotmail.com

If the concern involves a trustee or member of management, it will be handled by individuals not directly involved to ensure impartiality.

6. Process for Handling Concerns

6.1 Acknowledgement

All reports will be acknowledged within 10 working days.

6.2 Initial Assessment

The trustees will assess whether:

- The concern falls within the scope of this policy
 - There is sufficient information to proceed
 - Informal resolution may be appropriate
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6.3 Investigation

Where appropriate, a formal investigation will be conducted by an impartial trustee or an external investigator.

All parties involved will be given the opportunity to present their account.

6.4 Outcome

Following investigation, a written outcome will be provided, which may include:

- Whether the complaint was upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld
- Any actions to be taken (e.g. mediation, training, behavioural agreements, or disciplinary action)

Responses will normally be issued within 30 working days, unless an extension is required.

6.5 Appeals

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request an appeal within 10 working days.

The appeal will be reviewed by individuals not previously involved, and the decision will be final.

7. Informal Resolution

In some cases, concerns may be resolved informally, for example through:

- Mediation
- Facilitated discussion
- Agreed behavioural changes

Informal resolution will only be used where appropriate and with the agreement of all parties.

8. Responsibilities

All individuals covered by this policy are responsible for:

- Treating others with respect and professionalism
- Not engaging in bullying behaviour
- Reporting concerns where appropriate

Trustees and management have additional responsibilities to:

- Lead by example
 - Act promptly on concerns
 - Ensure a safe and supportive environment
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9. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All concerns will be handled with appropriate confidentiality and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Information will be shared strictly on a need-to-know basis.

10. Malicious or Vexatious Complaints

NASAT will not tolerate complaints that are deliberately false or made in bad faith.

Such cases may result in appropriate action being taken.

11. Monitoring and Review

The Board of Trustees will review anonymised summaries of bullying concerns periodically to identify trends and improve practices.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required.

12. Contact for Advice

If you are unsure whether behaviour constitutes bullying or how to raise a concern, you may seek advice from:

Trustee Team

Email: nasattrusteeteam@hotmail.com