

ROEHAMPTON GARDEN SOCIETY

BEHAVIOUR POLICY: a code for social cohesion

The RGS provides allotments to residents of the London Borough of Wandsworth, working in conjunction with Wandsworth Council and its agents. Allotments are provided to eligible individuals regardless of age, ability, education, ethnicity or religion.

The Society is committed to providing a safe environment for its members in which they can: (a) achieve the maximum enjoyment from gardening; (b) learn about horticulture in a friendly and supportive environment; (c) enjoy a simple, healthy, outdoor lifestyle; (d) be free from harassment, discrimination, physical or mental abuse; and, (e) be treated with dignity and respect.

Every member of the RGS is expected to comply with the terms of this Code. Depending on the circumstances, appropriate action will be taken against any member who violates its terms. Such action may include a verbal or written reprimand and, in the last resort, termination of RGS membership and termination or non-renewal of the allotment tenancy.

Although the Code is specifically written for members of the RGS, it also applies to members' guests, contractors, consultants and others who may be assigned temporarily to perform work or services for the RGS.

If a member believes they have been bullied or harassed by anyone or that the code has been otherwise contravened at their allotment site, they are asked to follow the RGS Complaints Procedure.

Objectives

The Code is intended as a resource for guidance for all of our members. However, it would be impossible for the Code to cover every potential situation that may arise from day to day on the sites. Members are asked, therefore, in any given situation, to use good judgement and to ask for help if they are ever unsure about the right course of action to take. For instance, a member can submit a question or raise a concern of a suspected violation of the Code or any other RGS policy through their Site Secretary and/or the Chair of the RGS according to the RGS Complaints Procedure¹.

Reporting in 'good faith' means that the member is coming forward honestly with information that they believe to be true even if, following investigation, it turns out that they were mistaken. It is better to raise a potential problem than to delay and risk harm to themselves or to others.

Retaliation against anyone who, in good faith, reports or participates in an investigation of a possible violation of our Code, Policy or the law, including members, committee members or site secretaries is prohibited.

It is of the utmost importance that all members acknowledge the responsibilities of our site secretaries and other officers of the RGS who are acting on a voluntary basis to maintain the conditions of our sites for all concerned. In particular, they should be treated with civility and

¹ www.roehamptonallotments.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/RGS-Complaints-Procedure.pdf

Correspondence should be sent to rqs.sw15@gmail.com or by post to The Chair, Roehampton Garden Society, The Pleasance, London SW15 5HF

respect whilst in the performance of their duties without fear of obstruction or abuse. ("Tenancy Agreement section 3 rules 4 and 6").

THEFTS AND / OR DAMAGE TO PROPERTY MUST ALSO BE REPORTED TO THE POLICE IF AN INSURANCE CLAIM IS TO BE MADE

Legal compliance

The RGS, in enforcing this code, is complying with U.K. anti-discrimination and harassment laws and regulations:

- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

The Code

1. Harassment

It is an offence for a member of the Society to pursue a course of action which amounts to harassment of another individual, and that they know, or ought to know, amounts to harassment. Under the Act the definition of harassment is behaviour which causes alarm or distress and can be verbal or non-verbal².

2. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of unlawful discrimination and is prohibited under the Policy. Sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or other verbal, written, graphic (including that posted on Social Media) or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

3. Discrimination

These characteristics are legally protected from unjust or unfair discrimination

- age
- gender reassignment
- marital status or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

There is similar legal protection from discrimination if:

- he/she is associated with someone who has one or more protected characteristics, for example, a family member or friend;
- he/she has complained about discrimination or supported someone else's claim.

² The following are examples of harassment and are intended for guidance only; they are not exhaustive when determining whether there has been a violation of this Policy: verbal harassment including comments that are offensive or unwelcome regarding a person's national origin, race, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, body, disability or appearance, epithets, slurs and negative stereotyping; non-verbal harassment including distribution, display or discussion of any written or graphic material (including that posted on Social Media) that ridicules, denigrates, insults, belittles or shows hostility, aversion or disrespect toward an individual because of national origin, race, colour, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, appearance, disability, sexual identity or other protected status.

4. Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviours are defined as actions that harm or lack consideration for the well-being of others. These behaviours can also be defined as any type of conduct that violates the basic rights of another person and any behaviour that is considered to be disruptive to others in society.

Anti-social behaviour can appear in various ways which includes, but is not limited to, intentional aggression as well as covert and overt hostility, noise nuisance, bullying, assault, theft, physical threats, actual damage to property and/or plots, dangerous and/or violent behaviour or drunkenness.

5. Drugs and Alcohol

The RGS believes that substance misuse is incompatible with the safety of our members of our sites and it is not permitted. Possessing or distributing or growing illegal drugs on our sites are prohibited by our Policy because such actions are in contravention of the law. Consumption of alcohol is not prohibited but it is recommended that members use moderation and never drink in a way that leads to impaired judgement or inappropriate behaviour³.

³ Alcohol misuse can endanger the safety of the user and of others and can lead to a violation of the law. If a member or the site secretary has reasonable suspicion to believe that another member's use of alcohol may adversely affect the member's safety or the safety of others on the allotment, the concerned member should contact the site secretary who may request that the member involved leave the site. A reasonable suspicion may be based on objective symptoms such as the member's appearance, behaviour, or speech.