

The IRTS Anti-Bullying Policy

v1.1.0 - 7th April 2026

Bullying and harassment of members, whether by other members or officials of the Society, is an unacceptable matter, and one that is not always easily recognised. The policy detailed below has been designed to assist in both the identification of incidents of bullying and harassment, and in dealing with such incidents once a complaint has been received.

The ethics and ethos of the Society.

The objects of the Society are to :

- Promote the study of radio communications and its practice between amateurs and experimenters.
- Represent the interests of its members both nationally and internationally.
- Facilitate and encourage radio experimentation, to obtain the maximum liberty of action consistent with safeguarding the interests of all concerned.
- Facilitate the exchange of information and ideas on this subject among its members and with other interested parties.
- Participate in other organisations having similar objectives.

The President, Committee, Officers, members and volunteers of the IRTS shall conduct their activities and duties:

- In a manner which recognises their accountability to the membership
- With integrity and honesty
- In a friendly, progressive, open, supportive, professional, and communicative manner
- In a manner which embraces the principles of sustainability, equality, inclusion and diversity

Definition of bullying and harassment as it relates to the Society.

Bullying behaviour can be described as the repeated and intentional use of power, or a position of power, or aggression by one or more persons to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights and needs of another individual or group. Someone can be the target of bullying behaviour by being physically or verbally harmed at any time and via a variety of methods, for example: online contact using social media sites, email, text, other messaging services, on-air comments, or in publications.

Types of bullying behaviour

Cyber: involves the use of technology via texting, messaging, photographs, social media, email etc.; a message may only be posted once, however it becomes bullying behaviour because of the repeated viewings.

Sealioning: is a type of trolling or harassment that consists of pursuing people with persistent requests for evidence or repeated questions, while maintaining a pretence of civility and sincerity. It may take the form of "incessant, bad-faith invitations to engage in debate"

Exclusion: this may take several forms; the bullying behaviour may be less obvious than someone simply being left out of an activity. For example: a group may appear to involve someone but then regularly choose to exclude them within the group activity; a group pass on misinformation so someone gets wrong messages about an activity, turning up too early/late or in the wrong location etc.

Verbal: involves something someone says to another person, e.g. gossiping, telling lies or calling someone names, etc.; this can include the tone used when speaking to someone e.g. sarcastically or shouting.

Bullying will usually involve several types of behaviour and the issues may, when viewed as individual incidents, seem petty or inconsequential. However, for the person on the receiving end the bullying behaviour is a hurtful series of happenings. It is important to have the knowledge of the different types of behaviour to better deal with issues of bullying in the Society. Often, identifying bullying behaviour is about being observant to the behaviours of others. This helps too in differentiating between bullying behaviour and banter, i.e. to observe if the behaviour is a two way communication as between friends or peer individuals where there is a balance of power between those involved; or if the behaviour is directed one way with the influence and power being one sided.

The effects of bullying :

Bullying has the negative effect of alienating people, leaving them feeling that their contribution is not valued. This behaviour can be destructive to the society as a whole; often people just look the other way instead of dealing with the issue, eventually leaving as it is not a healthy environment to be around. As a Society it is our core function to be inclusive of diversity and to welcome people in, encourage their development and to promote the growth of amateur radio. It should be an enjoyable and a proactive environment.

Recording of instances of bullying :

The victim of the perceived bullying behaviour should keep a diary or a log of the incidences including times, dates, places, circumstances, and type of bullying experienced.

Investigation :

Reports of abuse must be dealt with in an unbiased and a fair manner and may warrant the setting up of a neutral, temporary, confidential hearings subcommittee for the purpose of investigation. The membership of the subcommittee needs to be agreeable to both parties, should either party be uncomfortable with the committee selection.

Disciplinary procedure :

After a full investigation by the subcommittee, the Committee may act under Society Rule 8.1 that prescribes a process for expelling a member.

Appeal :

All appeals to the decision of the Committee or subcommittee can be made under rule 29.1.

Reporting procedure :

Instances of bullying and harassment should be sent in confidence to either irts_secretary@irts.ie or president@irts.ie where they will be treated in confidence and with sympathy. If you are uncomfortable with this process, or if your concern regards the potential recipients of the email, bring your concern to the attention of a local Committee representative who will confidentially speak on your behalf.

Every club affiliated with the IRTS should retain copies of the Anti-Bullying Policy document.

