Bullying & Harassment Policy

(adopted by the board on 11/25/25)

Purpose:

To ensure a safe, respectful living environment for all members, staff, Board members, and guests at Peace Village Housing Cooperative. Peace Village endeavors to resolve member conduct issues in a manner that respects both the rights of the member accused of violating this policy, and the member who feels victimized by the alleged policy violation.

Scope:

Applies to all individuals—members, staff, Board members, and guests—whether on Peace Village property or while participating in cooperative-related activities off-site.

Prohibited Conduct:

Bullying: Repeated harmful behavior intended to intimidate, degrade, or humiliate.
Harassment: Repeated unwelcome verbal, physical, written, or electronic conduct creating a hostile or offensive environment, including discriminatory behaviors based on protected Characteristics.

Abuse of Authority: Using a position of power to threaten, coerce, or intimidate others.

Examples: Conduct that is prohibited by this policy includes, but is not limited to:

- Threats, intimidation, or coercion
- Unwarranted invasion of privacy or misuse of information
- Repeated unwanted communication (text, verbal and/or email) despite requests to stop
  contact
- Shouting or swearing at people in common areas.
- Offensive and/or defamatory emails, text messages, or social media content.
- Contact with and/or filming of minors without parental consent.
- Unwanted physical contact, such as touching, pinching, pushing, and grabbing.
- Physical assaults including physical assaults of a sexual nature.
- Unwelcome sexual advances, propositions or other sexual comments including jokes of a sexual nature, and comments about a person's sexuality or sexual experience.
- Display or circulation of suggestive material or material with racial overtones.
- Use of disparaging language for racial groups, age groups, disabled persons, or any other protected categories under Federal and State fair housing laws.
- Racial or ethnic slurs and other negative comments about a person's religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender/gender identity, disability, or medical condition.

Overview:

The general process for handling reports of conduct prohibited by this policy is:

1. Documentation and reporting of the incident(s) to the Board.

2. Preliminary assessment of the report to determine whether the alleged conduct is prohibited under this policy.
3. Investigation of the reported incident(s).
4. An adjudication hearing in which the Board, or a delegated subcommittee of the Board,
determines whether a policy violation occurred and, if so, the appropriate remedy.
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1. Reporting process for complaints under this policy:
Individuals may report incidents of bullying, harassment, or abuse of authority to the Board. Reports must be made in writing, using the appropriate form. All reports must include the following information:

- Individuals involved (name(s) of complainant(s), and name(s) of those alleged to have engaged in prohibited conduct)
- Date, time, location of the incident
- Description of the behavior that is prohibited by this policy
- Witnesses (if any)
- Effects of the prohibited conduct on the complainant
- Any prior steps taken to address the matter (if comfortable)

Reports must be made in a timely manner. Reports that are made more than 30 days after an offending incident will only be investigated under extenuating circumstances.

Once a report is made, any individual named as a party to the reported incident, or who otherwise has a conflict of interest, must excuse themselves from any further involvement in the handling of the report (except as a complainant, respondent, or witness).

2. Preliminary assessment:
Once a report is delivered to the Board, a preliminary assessment is made to determine whether the conduct alleged in the report is prohibited under this policy. It is not a finding of fact.
The Board will make a preliminary assessment by a poll after each Board member has reviewed the complaint. The poll may be conducted by ballot, electronically, or by any other means acceptable to the Board. If a majority decision cannot be reached because one or more Board members are recused, a poll result of at least 50% in favor will proceed to a formal investigation of the complaint.

If it is determined that what has been alleged is not conduct prohibited under this policy, the complainant will be promptly informed. Whenever possible, the complainant will be advised of any other means that are available to address their concerns.
If it is determined that what has been alleged is conduct prohibited under this policy, the Board will initiate a formal investigation.

3. Investigation procedures:
The Board will appoint two co-op members to investigate the complaint. The Board may appoint

investigators in a regular board meeting, in executive session, by email, or in a work session as long as the appointees are acceptable to a majority of the Board members entitled to participate in the decision. The Board will record the appointment of investigators in its minutes.
Once investigators have been appointed, the Board will provide them with copies of the complaint, and notify both the complainant and respondent of the investigation (including the names of the investigators).

The investigators will develop and implement an investigation plan. The investigation plan must include:

- The specific policies of which the respondent(s) are allegedly in violation (i.e., the prohibited conduct that is alleged).
- The incident(s) that are the grounds of the alleged policy violation.
- An interview with (or written statements from) both the complainant and the respondent
(unless waived in writing).

The investigation plan may also include:

- Interviews with other witnesses named by the complainant or the respondent (if any).
- Other types of evidence (if any), such as supporting documents, records of past behavior, etc.

The investigators will prepare an evidentiary report based on their findings within 30 days of being appointed as investigators. Upon completion of the investigation and delivery of an evidentiary report, each member serving as investigator will earn community service credit for 2 quarters (6 months).

4. Adjudication procedures:

The Board will appoint a committee to adjudicate the complaint. The committee will consist of three members in total, and must include at least one sitting Board member. No one may serve on the committee for a complaint which they are also investigating. Both the complainant and the respondent may identify to the Board any individual(s) who they prefer not adjudicate the complaint. However, the final decision remains with the Board.
The Board may appoint the adjudication committee in a regular board meeting, in executive session, by email, or in a work session as long as the committee is acceptable to the majority of the Board members entitled to participate in the appointments. The Board will record its appointments in its minutes.

The committee will hold an adjudication hearing within 15 days of receiving an evidentiary report from the appointed investigators. The hearing will be held in executive session. The adjudication hearing will proceed as follows:

- Reading of the original report from the complainant.
- Reading of the evidentiary report prepared by the investigators. This includes the statements provided to the investigators by the complainant and the respondent (if any).
- Deliberation

During deliberation, the committee will take two votes. A first vote will be taken to establish whether the alleged prohibited conduct occurred. If the committee determines that the allegations are founded, a separate vote will be taken to decide on the appropriate remedy.

Remedies may include, but are not limited to:

- Written warning
- Formal written violation notice and order to cease-and-desist the prohibited conduct
- Formal written violation notice and order to “cure” the policy violation
- Any other remedy permitted by the Bylaws

A finding that a violation occurred could result in probation or termination of membership according to the provisions of the Bylaws.

Notification and Enforcement:

Once the committee has made its decision, the chair of the committee will:
Notify the complainant and the respondent of the decision within 48 hours
Notify the Board and the Property Manager of the decision within 72 hours
Once notified of the decision, the Property Manager is responsible for implementing the decision (e.g. issuing a notice of violation, etc.)

Records:
The adjudication committee will keep minutes of all motions made and votes taken during the hearing. However, minutes are not kept during deliberations. The chair will file these minutes with the Board.

Any actions (including votes and poll results) taken by the Board that are relevant to a formal investigation must be recorded in the Board’s minutes. Specific information from an initial report and/or an evidentiary report are not recorded in any minutes.

The original report, as well as the full evidentiary report, will be maintained by the Property Manager with the co-op’s confidential records.

General:
All individuals are expected to provide truthful information under this policy. The submission of a materially false or bad-faith report of bullying, harassment, and/or abuse of authority shall be a violation of this policy.

Members must observe the Peace Village Conflict of Interest policy at all times. Any individual named as a party to a report under this policy must excuse themselves from participating in the assessment, investigation, and/or adjudication of that report. While complainant(s) and respondent(s) may request that others also excuse themselves from participating, the decision to do so will be left to the Board of Directors and/or appointed committee(s) as indicated.

Review:
It is the policy of Peace Village Housing Cooperative to annually review and update policy to reflect evolving legal requirements and cooperative values.

Sunset date: This policy will remain in effect until 5/25/26, at which point the board will review the process and affirm (re-adopt) it or revise it as needed.