

The Labour Party

Head Office

Southside, 105 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6QT
Labour Central, Kings Manor,
Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 6PA
0345 092 2299 | labour.org.uk/contact

Councillor Jo Bird,



17 February 2020

Ref: A674976

Case No: CN-4453

Reminder of Labour's Values and Lift of Administrative Suspension

Dear Councillor Bird,

As you know, the Labour Party has investigated allegations that your conduct has breached the Party's Rules. Members of the NEC Disputes Panel met on 14 February 2020 and considered your case.

The Panel found that your behaviour on this occasion did not amount to a breach of the Party's Rules. However, they considered it appropriate to remind you of the high standards of conduct the Party expects of its members. For the avoidance of doubt, you are no longer administratively suspended and there are no restrictions placed on your membership at this time.

The Labour Party believes that we must create for all of us a community where we live together freely, in a spirit of solidarity, tolerance and respect. To this end we work for a just society which delivers people from the tyranny of poverty, prejudice and the abuse of power.

Labour is the party of equality and strongly believes that no one should feel discriminated against or harassed due to their race, religion or any other protected characteristic, whether inside the party or in wider society. Labour is an anti-racist party, committed to combatting and campaigning against all forms of racism, including antisemitism and Islamophobia. We must ensure that the party is a welcoming home to members of all communities, with no place for any prejudice or discrimination based on race, ethnicity or religion. These principals form part of the basis on which Labour seeks the trust of the people to govern.

All members have pledged to act in accordance with the spirit and the letter of these principles. Any behaviour or use of language which contravenes our values can undermine our ability to campaign against prejudice and injustice and is unacceptable conduct within the Labour Party.

The Party expects you, in common with all members, to engage in civil, measured discourse, especially on social media. I enclose a copy of the NEC Codes of Conduct on Antisemitism and Social Media as well as copy of the Members' Pledge. I urge you to read them carefully and bear them in mind whenever you are involved in Labour Party activities and in discussion and debate, online or offline, about political issues and ideas.

Yours Sincerely,
The Governance and Legal Unit
The Labour Party

c.c. North West Labour Party

The Labour Party's investigation process operates confidentially. That is vital to ensure fairness to you and the complainant, and to protect the rights of all concerned under the Data Protection Act 2018. We must therefore ask you to ensure that you keep all information and correspondence relating to this investigation private, and that you do not share it with third parties or the media (including social media). That includes any information you receive from the Party identifying the name of the person who has made a complaint about you, any witnesses, the allegations against you, and the names of Party staff dealing with the matter. If you fail to do so, the Party reserves the right to take action to protect confidentiality, and you may be liable to disciplinary action for breach of the Party's rules. The Party will not share information about the case publicly unless, as a result of a breach of confidentiality, it becomes necessary to correct inaccurate reports. In that case we will only release the minimum information necessary to make the correction. **The Party may also disclose information in order to comply with its safeguarding obligations.**

Rule 2.1.8

No member of the Party shall engage in conduct which in the opinion of the NEC is prejudicial, or in any act which in the opinion of the NEC is grossly detrimental to the Party. The NEC and NCC shall take account of any codes of conduct currently in force and shall regard any incident which in their view might reasonably be seen to demonstrate hostility or prejudice based on age; disability; gender reassignment or identity; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation as conduct prejudicial to the Party: these shall include but not be limited to incidents involving racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia or otherwise racist language, sentiments, stereotypes or actions, sexual harassment, bullying or any form of intimidation towards another person on the basis of a protected characteristic as determined by the NEC, wherever it occurs, as conduct prejudicial to the Party. The disclosure of confidential information relating to the Party or to any other member, unless the disclosure is duly authorised or made pursuant to a legal obligation, shall also be considered conduct prejudicial to the Party.

Code of Conduct: Antisemitism and other forms of racism

The Labour Party is an anti-racist party, committed to combating and campaigning against all forms of racism, including antisemitism and Islamophobia.

Labour will not tolerate racism in any form inside or outside the party. The Labour Party will ensure that the party is a welcoming home to members of all communities, with no place for any prejudice or discrimination based on race, ethnicity or religion.

The Labour Party welcomes all who share our aims and values, and encourages political debate and campaigns around the vital issues, policies and injustices of our time.

Any behaviour or use of language which targets or intimidates members of ethnic or religious communities, or incites racism, including antisemitism and Islamophobia, or undermines Labour's ability to campaign against any form of racism, is unacceptable conduct within the Labour Party.

Code of Conduct: Social Media Policy

A starting point for all our actions as members of a party and a movement is to treat all people with dignity and respect. This applies to all our dealings with people, offline and online. Everyone should feel able to take part in discussion about our party, country and world. We want to maximise this debate, including critical discussion, as long as it does not result in the exclusion of others.

Abusing someone online is just as serious as doing so face to face. We stand against all forms of abuse and will take action against those who commit it. Harassment, intimidation, hateful language and bullying are never acceptable, nor is any form of discrimination on the basis of gender, race, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

Any member found in breach of the policies will be dealt with according to the rules and procedures of the Labour Party.

We wish to build a diverse movement that reflects the whole of society, so should always consider how our actions and words may limit the confidence or otherwise exclude either those less knowledgeable than ourselves or those already under-represented in politics. Those with privilege,

whether due to their volume of experience, party position or status in society should have regard to how their actions may be felt by those in different circumstances to themselves.

It is perfectly possible to have vehement disagreements without descending into personal abuse, shaming people or exhibiting bullying behaviour. Forcefully made points and criticisms of the political views of others are totally legitimate, personal attacks are not. Debates amongst party members should be comradely, acknowledging that whatever our diverse views, we are one party with shared goals. Derogatory descriptions of the positions of others should be avoided.

Anonymous accounts or otherwise hiding one's identity for the purpose of abusing others is never permissible.

The use of sexualised language or imagery, and unwelcome sexual attention or advances are not acceptable, nor is the publishing of others' private information without their explicit permission.

We should not give voice to those who persistently engage in abuse and should avoid sharing their content, even when the item in question is unproblematic. Those who consistently abuse other or spread hate should be shunned and not engaged with in a way that ignores this behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to challenge abuse and to stand in solidarity with victims of it. We should attempt to educate and discourage abusers rather than responding in kind.

We encourage the reporting of abusive behaviour to the Labour Party, administrators of the relevant website or social media platform, and where appropriate, to the police. This is a collective responsibility and should not be limited to those who have been subjected to abuse.

Trolling, or otherwise disrupting the ability of others to debate is not acceptable, nor is consistently mentioning or making contact with others when this is unwelcome.

Principles for the Labour Party's use of Social Media

1. We are direct, confident and proud in what we have to say – we speak boldly and with clear intention.
2. We are clear about our position and our policies, and will give our members and supporters the language and tools to disseminate these.
3. Collectivism is at the heart of what we do. Our members and supporters are crucial to all our achievements and their contributions, from door knocking to online activism, are valued and acknowledged.
4. We seek to break down the wall that creates 'us' and 'them'. When we say 'we' that means the whole movement and those who share our values, not an exclusive group.
5. We want debate and discussion to flourish on our channels and will encourage feedback wherever appropriate.
6. We make legitimate criticisms based on policy and political actions, never making personal attacks.
7. We use accessible language and avoid jargon that could exclude or alienate.
8. We put the stories and experiences of the public first. We prioritise the issues that affect people in their everyday lives, rather than providing news for insiders.
9. We are inventive and innovative with our digital strategy and that means experimentation. We need people to be open-minded to change and encourage us to offer the best digital experience possible – even when that means trial and error.

10. We know that not everyone will agree with us. Constructive criticism is welcome, but we want to create a welcoming space for our supporters, so if comments become abusive we will report them.

Member's Pledge

I pledge to act within the spirit and rules of the Labour Party in my conduct both on and offline, with members and non-members and I stand against all forms of abuse.

I understand that if found to be in breach of the Labour Party policy on online and offline abuse, I will be subject to the rules and procedures of the Labour Party