
DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

Principles

The Company requires all employees to treat each other with dignity and respect and to understand that behaviour that they may find acceptable may not be regarded as such by others.

The policy is in place to allow the Company to deal with any form of harassment, bullying, intimidation or other inappropriate behaviour, which causes offence, whether intentional, or not. It should be read in conjunction with the Company's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

This policy relates to all forms of bullying and harassment, regardless of the basis or cause. However, it should be noted that in particular, the Equalities Act 2010 defines a number of protected characteristics including age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnerships.

Harassment and bullying can take a variety of different forms ranging from repeatedly ignoring a colleague or subjecting them to unwelcome attention, to intimidation, humiliation, ridicule or offence and may be verbal or in writing, via e-mail, text, telephone or on social media platforms. Behaviour that may appear trivial as a single incident can constitute harassment or bullying when repeated. It may not always be intentional but is always unacceptable.

Bullying is the exercise of power over another person through negative acts or behaviours that undermine them personally and/or professionally. Bullying can be threatening, insulting, offensive, abusive, and malicious or intimidating behaviour which places inappropriate pressure on the recipient or has the effect of isolating or excluding them. Bullying can take the form of shouting, sarcasm, derogatory remarks concerning job performance, appearance or constant criticism. Bullying can be carried out by an employee or groups of employees. Bullying is to be distinguished from the actions of a manager making reasonable (but perhaps unpopular) requests of their staff and the management of performance of staff. An assertive management style in itself does not constitute bullying, but where assertiveness gives way to aggression it is likely to become destructive rather than constructive and therefore deemed as bullying.

The Company will not accept harassment or bullying of any employee whether these acts are committed by other employees, workers or third parties. Nor will the Company accept any acts of harassment or bullying by employees against members of the public. All allegations and complaints will be investigated, and appropriate action taken. In the event that an employee has harassed or bullied another employee, then appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

The making of a false or malicious complaint of harassment or bullying will be regarded as a serious breach of procedures and the disciplinary procedure will be invoked against the complainant.

Responsibility of Managers

Managers must ensure that the workplace under their control is one in which everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. They should respond to complaints swiftly and sensitively and be made aware of behaviour which could cause offence, if necessary, reminding employees of expected standards. When faced with or notified of any unacceptable behaviour, managers should take appropriate action immediately.

Managers and Supervisors are expected to familiarise themselves with and apply the Company policy to ensure the Company procedure is known to all, in the event of an employee wishing to raise a complaint. Such complaints will be dealt with immediately, objectively and fairly.

Managers and Supervisors should encourage genuine concerns to be raised rather than be hidden and endeavour to eradicate victimisation and/or retaliation.

Responsibility of Employees

All employees have a personal responsibility not to harass or bully other members of staff, or to condone harassment or bullying by others. Harassment or bullying is misconduct and action may be taken under the disciplinary procedure against any employee found to have harassed or bullied an individual at work.

Employees should also be aware that they could be personally liable by law if they harass anyone at work.

All employees have a duty to assist in the creation of a safe working environment, where unacceptable behaviour is not tolerated. This may include challenging unacceptable behaviour, ensuring their own behaviour does not contribute to or collude with unacceptable behaviour, and cooperating fully in any investigation undertaken by the Company.

Harassment and Bullying Grievance Procedure

If you think that you are being harassed or bullied and this persists despite your requests for it to stop, then you should raise the matter with your line manager. If the complaint is against the line manager, then the matter should be discussed with either the Head of Department or another appropriate senior manager.

Informal

In some cases, it may be possible to rectify the problem informally. Sometimes people are not aware that their behaviour or actions are unwelcome, and an informal discussion can lead to a greater understanding and an agreement that the behaviour will cease.

If you feel that you are being subjected to harassment or bullying then you should, if possible, keep a record of the incident(s), including the date and time, the nature of the incident and the names of any witnesses. It is important that anyone who feels subjected to harassment or bullying raises the issue with an appropriate person at the time the incident occurs, in order that the matter can be dealt with swiftly and that further potential harassment is prevented.

If you feel able, you should raise the problem with the alleged harasser, either verbally or in writing, making it clear that their behaviour is offensive and unacceptable, and ask for it to stop.

Where a resolution is reached through the informal stage of the process, with both parties' agreement, a copy of the outcome should be given to both parties and a further copy placed on their personal files. An appropriate manager should make arrangements for ongoing monitoring of the situation. Where the matter is unresolved, or the behaviour or actions are repeated then a more formal procedure can be followed.

Formal

Every employee has the right to raise a complaint at a formal level either because of the matter not being resolved at the informal stage or where it is considered sufficiently serious to raise it at the formal level in the first instance. This includes where victimisation or harassment occurs as a result of raising a grievance under this policy.

If an employee wishes to make a formal complaint, they should report it in writing to their line manager or to an alternative appropriate senior manager or director if it is against their own manager and it has not been possible to resolve the issue at the informal level. Bullying and harassment is viewed by the

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Company as a valid reason for making a complaint under the **Company's Grievance and Resolution Procedure** and this procedure should be followed for all formal complaints.

Where a counter complaint is made by the alleged harasser or bully, this will be dealt with as part of the same investigation.

Any complaint of bullying or harassment by an employee of the Company which is upheld will result in appropriate remedial steps being taken. This may include disciplinary action, which could lead to dismissal, separation of the parties in the workplace, a behaviour improvement plan, training, or a written apology etc.



D Cartwright, Construction Director
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