

Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy

Ref: ANTIBUL Policy

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Introduction

The company has a zero-tolerance to bullying and harassment and takes reports of bullying very seriously. We encourage our employees to come forward with any concerns about workplace bullying be it about themselves or others.

All our employees have a right to work in a pleasant, amicable environment that is free from harassment and bullying and to lodge a complaint about such behaviour should it occur.

Our internal grievance procedure is designed to deal with such complaints, should they arise, in a professional manner. We encourage our employees to follow the procedure should they become concerned about a person's behaviour. All complaints will be treated seriously and dealt with promptly and with confidentiality.

Employees who make a complaint (both formal and informal) and others who provide evidence or information in connection to such complaints will not be victimised, discriminated against, harassed or bullied in retaliation for their actions. Discrimination is also a violation of our equality policy and the equality laws. The company will treat it as a misconduct which will vindicate termination of employment.

Statement

All employees must comply with policy and treat each other with dignity and respect. They must not themselves commit any acts of bullying or harassment against any person, such as their co-workers, potential employees, customers or suppliers. This behaviour will not be permitted or condoned and the company will treat this behaviour as a misconduct which may vindicate termination of employment.

All our employees should discourage harassment and bullying by making it clear that they find such behaviour unacceptable and by supporting co-workers who suffer such treatment. Any employee who is aware of any incident of harassment or bullying should alert a Manager, the HR Manager or a Director immediately to enable the company to deal with it.



Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct relating to equality. Harassment damages, or is done with the aim of damaging, an individual's dignity. It can also be done with the aim of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

There are many forms of harassment including, physical assault, making indecent gestures, verbal assault (e.g. making sexist/racist/homophobic remarks, and other derogatory comments etc), visual or written material containing derogatory words or images in forms of notes, pictures, emails etc. As well as this harassment also includes isolating a person by excluding them from work related social activities, refusing to help them or co-operate with them in other manners. Forcing a person to partake in religious, social or political activities is yet another form of harassment.

Sexual harassment is one of the most common reported forms of harassment, and Ecofficiency has a strict zero-tolerance policy to all forms of bullying/ harassment and bribery. Exchanging sexual favours (coerced or not) for a favour in return is a form of bribery and sexual harassment and is covered by the company's anti-bribery and anti-bullying and harassment policy. Disciplinary action will be taken against those caught to be breaching these policies.

Harassment is unlawful under the equality laws and sexual harassment laws where applicable. The issue can and will be treated as such by the company in violations of this policy.

Bullying

Bullying is similar to harassment in the sense that it is also offensive, hostile or even oppressive behaviour. The most prominent difference between the two is that bullying behaviour is often not linked to equality. Bullying can be done for a number of reasons stemming from low self-esteem, jealousy, revenge, insecurity and even a personal dislike or vendetta.

Bullying can greatly affect the victim's self-esteem, ability to perform, their overall health and creates low morale. While harassment is punishable by law bullying is a more complicated matter. While general bullying (e.g. name calling, derogative comments hostile behaviour etc) is not unlawful it is still a serious matter which the company does not take lightly.

The company's grievance procedure is in place to help support victims of bullying/ harassment by making reporting the matter as easy as possible as well as anonymous where desired.



Informal Procedure

Where possible employees should see if they can sort out the problem informally first before taking formal action. In line with the company's grievance policy the employee should raise their concerns with their line manager or the next most senior person if the grievance is about him/her. Both parties should keep a written record of the informal meeting and where the grievance has not been resolved or cannot be settled by this manner, the matter should then proceed to the formal grievance procedure.

Formal Procedure

Where the informal procedure did not yield the desired results or the matter was too complicated for the informal procedure employees can approach their Manager (or the HR Manager/ the next most senior person if the grievance is about the Manager) to start the formal grievance procedure.

As outlined in the company's grievance policy and procedure document the aggrieved employee will be asked to submit a written statement detailing the nature of the grievance to the Manager (or other aforementioned party) as soon as possible.

Upon receiving the written statement, the employee's manager will arrange for a formal meeting to be held in order to discuss the grievance. The formal meeting will be held usually no longer than 5 working days after the statement of grievance is received.

The meeting will take place after the Manager has had the opportunity to consider their response to the information. Before the meeting there will be a thorough investigation of the facts of the case. If the employee has requested anonymity the company will respect the wish and not break confidentiality with the employee.

The employee may be accompanied by another colleague of their choosing or another suitable representative if they make the request. The companion may not speak on the behalf of the employee however they can address the meeting, sum up the employees' case and confer with the employee during the meeting as well as offer moral/ emotional support if required.

The Company reserves the right to refuse to accept a companion whose presence may undermine the grievance process. The process can proceed without the employee's presence if they fail to turn up to the meeting. Where possible the employee should explain how they think the grievance could be resolved.

If a further investigation of the matter is required then the meeting should be adjourned to a later date before a decision is taken about how to deal with the employee's grievance.



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Following the meeting the manager (or other suitable persons) will then put in writing the outcome of the meeting and any action which may be undertaken to resolve the matter. The Manager will also inform the employee of their right to appeal the decision.

If necessary, the appeals process will be followed as outlined in the grievance policy.

Responsibility for this policy

Ultimate responsibility for the prevention of harassment and bullying rests with the Company's leadership. The Board of Directors of the Company has overall responsibility for ensuring this policy and its implementation comply with our legal and ethical obligations.

Managers at all levels are responsible for ensuring those reporting to them understand and comply with this policy and are given adequate training on it and the issues of harassment and bullying. It is the responsibility of the Managers to ensure that all their staff are made aware of how serious the issue is and that it will not be tolerated by the company as well as the consequences of these actions.

Signed: *Simon Raven*

Managing Director

May 2020

