



DIGNITY AT WORK

**Stonehill Avenue
Birstall
Leicestershire
LE4 4JG**

POLICY STATEMENT

The School seeks to provide a work environment in which all employees are treated with respect and dignity and that is free from harassment and bullying based upon age, disability, gender reassignment, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity. In this policy, these are known as the "protected characteristics".

Employees have a duty to co-operate with The School to make sure that this policy is effective in preventing harassment or bullying. Action will be taken under The School's disciplinary procedure against any employee who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful harassment, bullying or intimidation. Serious breaches of this dignity at work policy statement will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal. Employees should bear in mind that they can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful harassment. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

All employees are responsible for conducting themselves in accordance with this policy. The School will not condone or tolerate any form of harassment, bullying or intimidation, whether engaged in by employees or by outside third parties who do business with The School, such as clients, customers, contractors and suppliers.

You should draw the attention of your line manager to suspected cases of harassment, bullying or intimidation. You must not victimise or retaliate against an employee who has made allegations or complaints of harassment or who has provided information about such harassment. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct in accordance with The School's disciplinary procedure. You should support colleagues who suffer such treatment and are making a complaint.

The School will also take appropriate action against any third parties who are found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful harassment, bullying or intimidation against its employees.

This policy covers harassment, bullying and intimidation both in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, for example during business trips, at external training events or at work-related social events.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

These terms are used interchangeably by most people, and many definitions include bullying as a form of harassment. Harassment, in general terms is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women in the workplace. It may be related to age, sex, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation, nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident. The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying or harassment may be by an individual against an individual (perhaps by someone in a position of authority such as a manager or supervisor) or involve groups of people. It may be obvious or it may be insidious. Whatever form it takes, it is unwarranted and unwelcome to the individual.

Bullying and harassment are not necessarily face to face. They may also occur in written communications, email, phone, and automatic supervision methods such as computer recording of downtime from work or the number of calls handled if these are not applied to all workers.

Bullying and harassment make someone feel anxious and humiliated. Feelings of anger and frustration at being unable to cope may be triggered. Some people may try to retaliate in some way. Others may become frightened and demotivated. Stress, loss of self-confidence and self-esteem caused by harassment or bullying can lead to job insecurity, illness, absence from work, and even resignation. Almost always job performance is affected and relations in the workplace suffer.

An employee unlawfully harasses another employee if they engage in unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, and the conduct has the purpose or effect of violating the other employee's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that other employee.

An employee also unlawfully harasses another employee if they engage in unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, and the conduct has the purpose or effect of violating the other employee's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that other employee.

Finally, an employee unlawfully harasses another employee if they or a third party engage in unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or that is related to gender reassignment or sex, the conduct has the purpose or effect of violating the other employee's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that other employee, and because of that other employee's rejection of or submission to the conduct, they treat that other employee less favourably than they would treat them if they had not rejected, or submitted to, the conduct.

The unwanted conduct will still amount to harassment if it is based on the protected characteristic of a third party with whom the employee is associated and not on the employee's own protected characteristic, or if it was directed at someone other than the employee, or even at nobody in particular, but they witnessed it. In addition, harassment can include cases where the unwanted conduct occurs because it is perceived that an employee has a particular protected characteristic, when in fact they do not.

Conduct may be harassment whether or not the person intended to offend. Something intended as a "joke" or as "office banter" may offend another person. This is because different employees find different levels of behaviour acceptable and everyone has the right to decide for themselves what behaviour they find acceptable to them.

Behaviour which a reasonable person would realise would be likely to offend an employee will always constitute harassment without the need for the employee having to make it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable, for example, touching someone in a sexual way. With other forms of behaviour, it may not always be clear in advance that it will offend a particular employee, for example, office banter and jokes. In these cases, the behaviour will constitute harassment if the conduct continues after the employee has made it clear, by words or conduct, that such behaviour is unacceptable to him or her. A single incident can amount to harassment if it is sufficiently serious.

EXAMPLES:

Bullying and harassment may be verbal, non-verbal, written or physical. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include, but are not limited to, the following:

- unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, other conduct of a sexual nature
- subjection to obscene or other sexually suggestive or racist comments or gestures, or other derogatory comments or gestures related to a protected characteristic
- the offer of rewards for going along with sexual advances or threats for rejecting sexual advances
- jokes or pictures of a sexual, sexist or racial nature or which are otherwise derogatory in relation to a protected characteristic
- demeaning comments about an employee's appearance
- questions about an employee's sex life
- the use of nicknames related to a protected characteristic whether made orally or by e-mail
- picking on or ridiculing an employee because of a protected characteristic
- isolating an employee or excluding him or her from social activities or relevant work-related matters because of a protected characteristic.
- spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone by word or behaviour (particularly on the grounds of age, race, sex, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief)
- copying memos that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know
- ridiculing or demeaning someone - picking on them or setting them up to fail
- exclusion or victimisation
- unfair treatment
- overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position
- making threats or comments about job security without foundation

- deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism
- preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities.

REPORTING COMPLAINTS

All allegations of harassment, bullying or intimidation will be dealt with seriously, confidentially and speedily. The School will not ignore or treat lightly grievances or complaints of harassment from employees.

While The School encourages employees who believe they are being harassed or bullied to notify the offender (by words or by conduct) that his or her behaviour is unwelcome, The School also recognises that actual or perceived power and status disparities may make such confrontation impractical. In the event that such informal direct communication is either ineffective or impractical, or the situation is too serious to be dealt with informally, you should follow the procedure set out below.

If you wish to make a complaint of harassment, bullying or intimidation, whether against a fellow employee or a third party, such as a client, customer, contractor or supplier, you should follow the following steps:

1. First of all, report the incident of harassment to your line manager. If you do not wish to speak to your line manager, you can instead speak to an alternative manager or to a member of the Human Resources Department.
2. Such reports should be made promptly so that investigation may proceed and any action taken expeditiously.
3. All allegations of harassment will be taken seriously. The allegation will be promptly investigated and, as part of the investigatory process, you will be interviewed and asked to provide a written witness statement setting out the details of your complaint. Confidentiality will be maintained during the investigatory process to the extent that this is practical and appropriate in the circumstances. However, in order to effectively investigate an allegation, The School must be able to determine the scope of the investigation and the individuals who should be informed of or interviewed about the allegation. For example, the identity of the complainant and the nature of the allegations must be revealed to the alleged harasser so that he or she is able to fairly respond to the allegations. The School reserves the right to arrange for another manager to conduct the investigation other than the manager with whom you raised the matter.
4. Once the investigation has been completed, you will be informed in writing of the outcome and The School's conclusions and decision as soon as possible. The School is committed to taking appropriate action with respect to all complaints of harassment, which are upheld. If appropriate, disciplinary proceedings will be brought against the alleged harasser.
5. You will not be penalised for raising a complaint, even if it is not upheld, unless your complaint was both untrue and made in bad

faith.

6. If your complaint is upheld and the harasser remains in The School's employment, The School will take all reasonable steps to ensure that you do not have to continue working alongside him or her if you do not wish to do so. The options will be discussed with you.
7. If your complaint is not upheld, arrangements will be made for you and the alleged harasser to continue or resume working and to repair working relationships.

Alternatively, you may, if you wish, use The School's grievance procedure to make a complaint of harassment.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Any employee who is found to have harassed another employee in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action under The School's disciplinary procedure. Such behaviour may be treated as gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal. In addition, line managers who had knowledge that such harassment had occurred in their departments but who had taken no action to eliminate it will also be subject to disciplinary action under The School's disciplinary procedure.

TRAINING

The School will train all line managers in The School's policy on dignity at work and in helping them identify and deal effectively with harassment, bullying or intimidation. Line managers will be responsible for ensuring they actively promote dignity at work within the departments for which they are responsible.

The School will also provide training to all employees to help them understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to dignity at work and what they can do to create a work environment that is free from harassment, bullying and intimidation.