### ***EXAMPLE***

### **Bullying and Harassment Policy**

#### **Purpose**

Our company is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace, free from bullying and harassment. We operate a zero-tolerance approach towards any behaviour that constitutes bullying or harassment. This policy outlines expected standards of behaviour and provides procedures for reporting and addressing such incidents in the workplace. It complies with relevant UK legislation, including the **Equality Act 2010**, the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**, and the **Protection from Harassment Act 1997**.

#### **Scope**

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, visitors, and any other individuals working on behalf of the company. It covers behaviour that occurs in the workplace or any work-related setting, including business trips, work social events, and any form of work-related communication (e.g., emails, phone calls, or social media).

**1. Legal Framework**

This policy adheres to the following UK laws:

* **Equality Act 2010**: Protects individuals from harassment, victimisation, and discrimination based on protected characteristics, including age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and more.
* **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**: Imposes a duty on employers to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of their employees, which includes protection from bullying and harassment.
* **Protection from Harassment Act 1997**: Provides protection against harassment in various environments, including the workplace.
* **Employment Rights Act 1996**: Confirms employees' right to a safe working environment and protects against unfair dismissal related to bullying or harassment complaints.

**2. Definitions**

#### **Bullying**

Bullying is any unwanted behaviour that is offensive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting, or an abuse of power that undermines, humiliates, or harms another individual. While bullying is often persistent, it may also result from a single serious incident.

Examples of bullying include:

* Spreading malicious rumours or gossip
* Unjustified or excessive criticism
* Public humiliation or undermining
* Exclusion from work-related activities
* Coercive or threatening behaviour

#### **Harassment**

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic under the **Equality Act 2010** that violates a person’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. Harassment can occur based on race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion, or any other protected characteristic.

Examples of harassment include:

* Inappropriate jokes, comments, or gestures
* Unwelcome physical contact
* Displaying offensive materials
* Disparaging remarks related to a person’s identity, appearance, or beliefs

### **3. Employer Responsibilities**

The company has a responsibility to prevent bullying and harassment in the workplace and will:

* Foster a respectful and inclusive workplace culture.
* Take all reports of bullying and harassment seriously and act promptly.
* Ensure employees understand what constitutes unacceptable behaviour.
* Provide training and guidance to all employees, especially managers, on how to recognise and respond to bullying and harassment.
* Safeguard employees from retaliation for reporting incidents or cooperating in investigations.
* Offer appropriate support to anyone involved in the process.

### **4. Employee Responsibilities**

All employees are responsible for maintaining a respectful working environment and must:

* Treat colleagues, managers, contractors, and visitors with dignity and respect.
* Refrain from engaging in or condoning bullying or harassment.
* Report any incidents of bullying or harassment they experience or witness.
* Cooperate with any investigations related to bullying or harassment.

### **5. Reporting Bullying and Harassment**

Employees who experience or witness bullying or harassment should take the following steps:

#### **Step 1: Informal Resolution**

* Employees are encouraged to address the issue informally if they feel comfortable. This could involve speaking directly to the individual responsible for the behaviour, explaining that it is unwelcome, and asking them to stop.
* Employees may seek advice from their line manager, HR, or a trade union representative on how to approach the situation.
* If informal resolution is not possible or unsuccessful, formal action should be considered.

#### **Step 2: Formal Complaint**

* If the issue cannot be resolved informally, the employee should submit a formal written complaint to their line manager or HR. The complaint should detail the behaviour in question, including dates, times, locations, and any witnesses.
* The company will acknowledge the complaint and initiate an investigation as soon as possible.

### **6. Investigating Complaints**

Once a formal complaint is made, the company will undertake a fair and thorough investigation:

* **Appointing an Investigator**: A neutral investigator will be appointed to ensure impartiality.
* **Interviews**: The investigator will interview the parties involved and any witnesses. Both sides will have the opportunity to present their account of events.
* **Confidentiality**: The investigation will be handled with discretion, and information will be shared only with those directly involved.
* **Timeframe**: Investigations will be carried out in a timely manner, and all parties will be informed of the expected duration.
* **Accompaniment**: Both parties may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at any meetings relating to the investigation.

### **7. Outcomes**

At the conclusion of the investigation, appropriate action will be taken based on the findings:

* **No Action**: If the investigation does not uphold the complaint, no further action will be taken.
* **Mediation**: In some cases, mediation may be recommended to resolve issues between the individuals involved.
* **Disciplinary Action**: If the complaint is upheld, disciplinary action will be taken in line with the company’s Disciplinary Policy. This could range from a formal warning to dismissal, depending on the severity of the behaviour.
* **Appeals**: Both parties have the right to appeal the outcome. Appeals must be submitted in writing within [insert timeframe, e.g., 5 working days] of the decision.

### **8. Confidentiality**

All reports of bullying or harassment and any subsequent investigations will be handled confidentially. Information will only be shared with those directly involved in managing or investigating the issue. Any breach of confidentiality by any party may result in disciplinary action.

Records of investigations and outcomes will be securely stored and retained in line with the company’s data protection obligations under the **Data Protection Act 2018**.

### **9. Support and Wellbeing**

The company is committed to supporting all individuals involved in bullying or harassment cases. This may include access to counselling services, workplace adjustments, or temporary changes in duties. The company will ensure that all parties feel supported throughout the process.