

Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy





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Aspiration Training Limited is committed to ensuring equal opportunities and fair treatment in the workplace for its entire staff. One of the key aims of the policy is to enable the Company to provide a working environment in which all staff feel comfortable and in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

This policy covers harassment or bullying, which occurs at work and out of the workplace, such as on business trips or at work-related events or social functions. It covers bullying and harassment by staff (which may include consultants, contractors and agency workers) and also by third parties such as customers, suppliers or visitors to our premises.

Harassment or Bullying will not be tolerated at Aspiration Training Limited. The Company will treat all complaints of harassment seriously and will investigate them promptly, efficiently and in confidence. The main aim of this policy is to provide a framework for resolving complaints of harassment or bullying and for stopping any behaviour that is causing offence or distress.

1. What is harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment.

It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.

Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

Harassment may include, for example:

- Unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless);
- Offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content;
- Mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability.

A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment.

2. What is bullying?

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority, but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.

Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Bullying may include, by way of example:

- Physical or psychological threats;
- Overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision;
- Inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance;
- Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a worker's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to workers in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying on their own.

3. Right to report harassment/bullying

You have an absolute right to complain if you are treated in a manner that you believe constitutes harassment or bullying. This will include behaviour that has caused offence, humiliation, embarrassment or distress. Apart from complaints about the behaviour of colleagues, you have the right to complain if you believe that you have been bullied or harassed by a third party, for example a customer, client or supplier. Employees who raise a genuine complaint under this policy will under no circumstances be subjected to any unfavourable treatment or victimisation as a result of making a complaint.

Any employee who witnesses an incident that they believe to be the harassment or bullying of another member of staff should report the incident in confidence to his/her manager. The Company will take all such reports seriously and will treat the information in strict confidence as far as it is possible to do so.

3. How to raise a complaint

Before raising a formal complaint, you are encouraged in the first instance to talk directly and informally to the person who you believe is harassing you and explain clearly what aspect of the person's behaviour is unacceptable, or is causing offence, and request that it stop. It may be that the person whose conduct is causing offence is genuinely unaware that their behaviour is unwelcome or objectionable and that a direct approach can resolve the matter without the need for formal action. Where you would like support to make such an approach, you should contact your Line Manager.

If, however, you feel unable to take this course of action, or if you have already approached the person to no avail, or if the harassment is of a very serious nature, you may elect to raise a formal complaint using the Grievance Procedure.

In bringing a complaint of harassment/bullying, you should be prepared to state:

- The name of the person whose behaviour you believe amounts to harassment or bullying;
- The type of behaviour that is causing offence, together with specific examples if possible;
- Dates and times when incidents of harassment or bullying occurred, and where they occurred;

4. Protection and support for those involved

Managers will be responsive and supportive towards any worker who raises a genuine complaint of harassment or bullying.

The Company reserves the right, at its discretion, to suspend any employee who is under investigation for harassment or bullying for a temporary period whilst investigations are being carried out. Such suspension will be for as short a time as possible and will be on full pay.

Any employee accused of harassment or bullying will be informed of the exact nature of the complaint against them and afforded a full opportunity to challenge the allegations and put forward an explanation for their behaviour in a confidential interview, with a companion present if they wish. No employee will be presumed guilty following an allegation of harassment or bullying against them.

The Company regards all forms of harassment and bullying as serious misconduct, and any employee who is found to have harassed or bullied a colleague will be liable to disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal.

However, if it is established that an employee has made a deliberately false or malicious complaint against another person about harassment or bullying, disciplinary action will be taken against that employee.

Staff who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under the Company's Disciplinary Procedure.

The Company will maintain records of investigations into alleged incidents of harassment or bullying, the outcome of the investigations and any corrective or disciplinary action taken. These records will be maintained in confidence and in line with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

This Anti-Harassment and Bullying policy is not contractual and may be varied by the Company at any time.