



# Dignity at Work Policy

**Policy Author**  
HR Caddy Ltd

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## Introduction

Being valued, being listened to and being treated with respect are just some of the things that add up to a content, happy and dignified workplace. The Studio wishes its staff to work in a safe and healthy environment which is inclusive and fair and where each employee feels respected.

In accordance with these values the Company is committed to providing an environment in which all employees treat each other with dignity and respect, and where bullying, harassment and discrimination are known to be unacceptable. This Policy sets out the expectations placed on all members of the Company.

## Scope

This policy applies to all employees of The Studio in either a permanent, fixed term or temporary post.

The policy covers bullying and harassment in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, e.g. business trips and work-related social events.

## Supporting Principles

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Foster a positive culture for working which supports freedom of thought and expression within the law, and within a framework of respect for the rights of other people.
- Promote an enabling and inclusive environment where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect, free from bullying, harassment and discrimination.
- Ensure that occurrences of bullying, harassment and discrimination are taken seriously, and dealt with promptly and with due sensitivity.
- Set out the framework for raising, addressing and resolving concerns about individuals and/or organisational behaviour.

## What is harassment?

Harassment can be any unwanted attention or behaviour that a person finds objectionable or offensive, and which makes them feel threatened or uncomfortable, leading to a loss of dignity or self-respect. It may be persistent or an isolated incident. It can take many forms and may include, but not be limited to the following:

- Unnecessary and unwanted physical contact ranging from touching to serious sexual or physical assault
- Unfair treatment, which might include deliberate exclusion from conversations or events at work, for reasons based on a person's characteristics
- Comments which have the effect of isolating or humiliating a member of staff
- Derogatory or degrading comments
- Offensive, hostile, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power which is meant to undermine, humiliate or injure the person on the receiving end
- Unwelcome sexual advances

- Verbal abuse

### What is bullying?

Bullying is a more general form of harassment that is not based on race, sex or any other equality characteristic. As with harassment it can be defined as words, actions or other conduct which ridicules, intimidates or threatens and affects individual dignity and well-being. It is generally behaviour that can be identified as a misuse of power.

People affected by bullying often feel the matter appears trivial or that they may have difficulty in describing it. Bullying behaviour is largely identified not so much by what has actually been done, but rather by the effect that it has on the recipient. Examples of bullying could include:

- Persistently criticising unnecessarily. Although it is worth nothing that legitimate, constructive and fair criticism of an employee's performance or behaviour at work is not bullying.
- Shouting at colleagues in public or private.
- Offensive written or computer-generated material, including the use of email
- Deliberate isolation by ignoring or excluding a person.
- Withholding information or removing areas of responsibility without justification.
- Spreading malicious rumours.
- Asserting a position of seniority in an aggressive, abusive or offensive manner e.g. inappropriate or derogatory remarks in connection with performance of duties/responsibilities.
- Undermining a person's self-respect by treatment that denigrates, ridicules, intimidates, demeans or is physically abusive.
- Withholding important work-related information
- Intrusion by pestering, spying and stalking

### What is the impact of bullying and harassment?

Harassment and bullying can have very serious consequences for individuals. It may make people unhappy, causing them stress and making them feel anxious and humiliated. The loss of self-confidence and self-esteem caused by this can lead to absence from work and often resignation. At the very least job performance is affected and relations in the workplace suffer.

### Is it only classed as bullying or harassment if it happens face to face?

Put simply, no. Many people are uncomfortable with face-to-face confrontation so choose to do it via email or text. If done incorrectly this can result in bullying. Where possible do not have tense conversations via email, if you need a second opinion before sending an email the likelihood is it should not be sent, you could be bullying via email without being aware of it. Ask yourself before sending 'If I received that email would I feel it was unfair, humiliating, malicious, vindictive or intended to hurt' if you answer yes to any of these questions do not send it.

If a difficult email conversation is being held between you and a co-worker do not add anyone else into the 'cc' or 'bcc' field. If you are having an issue with one person, don't bring others into it without permission. That is unfair and potentially humiliating.

The same respect must also be shown during telephone calls. If you feel you are being bullied or harassed over the phone end the call immediately and report to your manager.

### **As a member of staff what are my responsibilities?**

All staff must treat each other with respect. There are bound to be occasional differences of opinion, conflicts and problems, these are part of working life. However, when the ongoing treatment of another person is unreasonable, offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening this is likely to be classed as workplace bullying or harassment and will not be tolerated.

**All staff** are required to promote dignity and respect by:

- Treating their colleagues with dignity and respect
- Being aware of how their own behaviour may affect others and changing it, if necessary - you can still cause offence even if you are "only joking"
- Taking a stand if they think inappropriate jokes or comments are being made
- Intervening, if possible, to stop harassment or bullying and giving support to recipients
- Reporting any incidents of bullying or harassment that they experience or witness and cooperating with Trust investigations into bullying and/or harassment.
- Making it clear to others when they find their behaviour unacceptable.
- Not bringing personal issues into the workplace e.g. disputes between colleagues outside of work.
- Adhering to the principles set out in this policy and setting a good example in their own attitudes and behaviour

### **As a manager what are my responsibilities?**

Managers must have the confidence and capability to manage, the plain fact is that effective people management is the most successful counter to bullying and harassment. Managers must promote dignity and respect by:

- Being clear about standards of behaviour expected of your staff and implementing the principles set out in this policy
- Ensuring that individuals are fully aware of their own responsibilities to others
- Setting a good example and being a good role model in your own attitude and behaviour
- Ensuring that there is a supportive working environment
- Intervening at an early stage to stop bullying or harassment, seeking advice from HR if needed
- Investigating thoroughly and appropriately any instances of harassment, discrimination and bullying and resolving them as quickly as possible.

**What do I do if I am feeling bullied, harassed or victimised?**

You could firstly try to sort out matters informally. The person may not know that his or her behaviour is unwelcome or upsetting. An informal discussion or even an email may help him or her to understand the effects of his or her behaviour and agree to change it. You can talk in confidence to your line manager or the HR department to get advice on how to handle this informally. If your concerns are about your manager, you should speak to their manager.

**I've tried to handle the situation informally, but this hasn't worked. What should I do?**

If you have not been able to resolve matters informally, or the situation is too serious to be dealt with informally, you can raise a grievance by using our Grievance Procedure. Your grievance must be in relation to an event, or series of events that has occurred in the previous three months. We may apply discretion on timescales in some circumstances.

The Company grievance policy sets out the process we will follow to ensure that your concerns are addressed fairly and consistently and as quickly as possible.

Your concerns will be investigated which may involve talking to you further about your grievance and to other members of staff who were witnesses, or who are involved in the grievance. Once the investigation is complete, a senior manager will meet with you to discuss your grievance and will provide you with a formal response in writing.

I have read and understood the Dignity at Work Policy June 2021

Signed.....

Printed.....

Dated.....