**Bullying and Harassment Policy**

**Change History**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Issue | Date | Summary of Changes | Initial |
| A | Mar 21 | Revised policy created by Birketts | **ED** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**Bullying & Harassment Policy**

**Contents**

1. GENERAL STATEMENT

2. INTRODUCTION

3. HARASSMENT

4. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

5. IF EMPLOYEES ARE HARASSED OR BULLIED

6. PROTECTION AND SUPPORT FOR THOSE INVOLVED

**1. General Statement**

1.1 Hethel Innovation Ltd (HIL) recognises that all employees have the right to work in an environment that is free from bullying and harassment. However, if instances do occur HIL undertakes that allegations of bullying and harassment will be dealt with seriously and confidentially and that employees will be protected against victimisation for making or being involved in a complaint.

1.2 The Harassment and Bullying Policy and Procedure has been developed:

* To encourage individuals to feel empowered to deal appropriately and at an early stage with all instances of bullying and harassment, and recognises that there is a need to develop and equip all employees with the skills and confidence required to resolve such issues.
* To encourage a climate in which the dignity and rights of each individual employee are recognised and protected and to make it clear to managers and employees that harassment, whether on sex, sexual orientation, racial, religious, disability, age or other grounds, is not acceptable to HIL.
* To enable any issues which when arise to be tackled quickly, effectively, sensitively and confidentially.

This Policy does not form part of an employee’s contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

1.3 HIL expects employees to adhere to this policy in line with HIL's Equal Opportunities Policy and obligations under equality legislation.

1.4 It is the responsibility of all employees to adhere to this Policy and Procedure.

Unacceptable or inappropriate behaviour demonstrated by Members of the Public, Contractors or Service Users towards employees of HIL will not be tolerated.

**2. Introduction**

2.1 Hethel Innovation Ltd (HIL) recognises that all of its employees have the right to be treated with dignity and as such bullying and harassment at work will not be tolerated or condoned. Employees who are bullied or harassed have the right to complain about such behaviour irrespective of the perpetrator. This procedure is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with sensitively, effectively and confidentially.

2.2 Most recipients of bullying or harassment simply want the behaviour to stop. Both informal and formal methods of resolving problems are available under this procedure in recognition of this.

2.3 It is recognised that by its nature bullying and harassment may make the normal channels for resolving problems difficult to use because of embarrassment, fears of not being taken seriously, fears of damage to reputation, fears of reprisal or the prospect of damaging the working environment.

**3. Harassment**

3.1 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. Forms of harassment may include:

* physical contact ranging from touching to serious assault
* verbal and written harassment through jokes, offensive language, gossip and slander, letters, etc
* any offensive manner of communication – whatever the medium
* patronising behaviour not used with other colleagues
* visual display posters, graffiti, obscene gestures
* isolation, exclusion or non co-operation at work
* coercion ranging from pressure for sexual favours to pressure to participate in political/religious groups
* intrusion by pestering, spying, following, etc
* isolation from social activities organised by colleagues

3.2 This is not an exhaustive list. A person may also 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.

**4. Definition of Bullying**

4.1 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.

4.2 Examples of bullying include (but are not limited to:

* recurring unjustified criticism;
* imposing penal sanctions without justification;
* detrimental changes to responsibilities, working arrangements, etc, without justification

4.3 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.

**5. If Employees are Harassed or Bullied**

5.1 Employees are encouraged to consider whether they feel able to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. They should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes them uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing, employees should speak to their line manager, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally. Where the informal process has not resolved the situation or is not appropriate, the matter will progress to the formal process. Employees are directed to HIL’s grievance procedure if this is the case.

5.2 HIL will investigate complaints in a timely and confidential manner. The investigation will be conducted by someone with appropriate experience and no prior involvement in the complaint, where possible. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused must only be disclosed on a "need to know" basis. HIL will consider whether any steps are necessary to manage any ongoing relationship between the employee and the person accused during the investigation.

5.3 Once the investigation is complete, HIL will inform the employee of the decision. If HIL considers that the employee has been harassed or bullied by an employee the matter will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure as a case of possible misconduct or gross misconduct. If the harasser or bully is a third party such as a customer or other visitor, HIL will consider what action would be appropriate to deal with the problem. Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider it.

**6. Protection and Support for Those Involved**

6.1 Employees 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 HIL’s Disciplinary Procedure.

6.2 Information about a complaint by or about an employee may be placed on the employee's personnel file, along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other documents compiled during the process.