

Respectful Workplace Corporate Policy

Company and Management Commitment

It is the commitment of this company and its management to ensure this place of work is free from negative, aggressive, and inappropriate behaviors, and that the environment is aimed at providing high quality products and services in an atmosphere of respect, collaboration, openness, safety and equality. All employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

All complaints of harassment or bullying behaviors will be taken seriously and followed through to resolution, and employees who file complaints will not be victimized for “whistle-blowing” or reporting others for their inappropriate behavior.

Scope

Protection from harassment and bullying behaviors extends to management, fellow employees, subordinates, clients, customers and other business contacts and expands beyond the place of work to off-site and work-related social events. All employees and managers have the right to dignity and respect in the workplace.

Nothing in this policy is meant to violate employees’ right to organize. The purpose of this policy is to prohibit workplace bullying.

Acceptable and Healthy Workplace Behaviors Defined

Acceptable and healthy workplace behaviors are any behaviors that promote respect, positivity and civility in our workplace. They include, but are not limited to *(it’s recommended that you ask your employees to provide this information to you, so that they have buy-in for the policy)*:

- Using respectful, supportive, and encouraging language in all interactions, no matter the subject of conversation
- Offering your thoughts or disagreements on an issue politely
- Listening to your peers with an open mind
- Being open to innovative and creative ideas, even if they seem impossible to achieve at first listen
- Giving peers direct, constructive feedback that is solution-oriented
- Expressing appreciation when a peer does something correctly and in a timely manner
- Recognizing the hard work of your fellow employees, peers and managers
- Respecting each other as adults and trusting their decision making abilities
- Approaching conflict with maturity and true desire for resolution, rather than as a fight or opportunity to belittle a co-worker
- Maintaining a positive attitude, even when you are having a bad day, with managers, peers, subordinates and customers

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Workplace Bullying Defined

Workplace bullying is defined as systematic aggressive communication, manipulation of work, and acts aimed at humiliating or degrading one or more individual that create an unhealthy and unprofessional power imbalance, result in psychological consequences for targets and witnesses of the behavior, and cost enormous monetary damage to an organization's bottom line.

Examples of bullying behaviors may include, but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate gestures; visual staring; harassment; behaviors that are threatening or intimidating; coercing others; or abusive, offensive and demeaning behaviors
- Excessive yelling, repeated emotional outbursts, berating others, using a harsh tone of voice
- Talking down to others or using degrading remarks or tone of voice
- Criticizing or pointing out mistakes to others in front of a group; using a condescending tone
- Social exclusion or ostracism, ignoring others, silent treatment
- Treating some less favorably than others
- Undermining another's work by giving impossible to meet deadlines or workloads
- Excessive monitoring of work or unnecessary micromanagement
- Arbitrary or punitive punishment without cause; inconsistent discipline
- Withholding pertinent work-related information; undermining another's work by not giving them enough information to do what is required of them
- Gossiping or spreading rumors
- Manipulating a person's job content; unwarranted removal of core responsibilities
- Blaming others for things out of their control
- Acting "out to get" others
- Making threats; using intimidating tactics
- Making humiliating or degrading remarks about a person online (i.e., cyberbullying)
- Any malicious behavior a reasonable person would find unprofessional, disturbing and harmful to their psychological health

These types of behaviors are well recognized as having damaging consequences for their recipients, the observers of the behavior, and the organization as a whole and are therefore not tolerated.

Management Responsibility

Management and others in positions of authority and workplace representatives have a particular responsibility to ensure that healthy and appropriate behaviors are being exhibited at all times and that complaints to the contrary are addressed speedily. Management will:

- Provide good examples by treating all with courtesy and respect

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- Promote awareness of the policy and complaint procedures
- Be vigilant for signs of inappropriate behaviors at work through observation and information seeking, and take action to resolve the behavior before it escalates
- Deal sensitively with employees involved in a complaint, whether as complainant or alleged aggressor
- Explain the procedures to be followed if a complaint of inappropriate behavior at work is made
- Ensure that an employee making a complaint is not victimized for doing so, and seek resolution of such behavior if it occurs
- Monitor and follow up the situation after a complaint is made so as to prevent recurrence of the behavior.

Employee Responsibility

Employees must contribute to achieving a work environment which does not tolerate harassment and bullying behavior at work. Employees should report what they see in the workplace as it relates to behaviors defined as unacceptable; employees are in a far better position than management to know what is happening with peers and co-workers.

Employees should also cooperate with preventative measures introduced by management, and recognize that a finding of bullying behaviors at work will be dealt with through appropriate disciplinary procedures. Equally, a finding of vexatious complaints will also be dealt with through appropriate disciplinary procedures.

Training Programs

As part of its commitment to encouraging positive and healthy behaviors, the company has established training programs for all employees and managers. Training is included as part of the new hire orientation, and thereafter annually as scheduled by the Company. Training will identify factors which contribute to a bully-free environment, familiarize participants with responsibilities under this policy, and provide steps to overcoming a bullying incident, including filing an adequate and informed report to the appropriate party.

Process for Investigation of Complaints

The aim and objectives of a formal complaint process include a thorough investigation of negative, aggressive, and inappropriate behaviors allegations, written documentation from all parties involved, and resolution in a timely manner. Resolution will include any number and combination of possibilities, depending upon the outcome of the complaint process (e.g., training, disciplinary actions, transfer of employees involved, etc).

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Any employee or manager seeking to file a complaint against an alleged aggressor should take special care to ensure the complaint is confined to and consists of precise details of each incident of negative, aggressive, and inappropriate behaviors, including dates, times, locations and any witnesses. Formal complaints should be filed with Human Resources (HR), and should be documented in writing.

The person complained against will be notified in writing by the HR that an allegation has been made against him or her, and assured of the organization's presumption of innocence at this juncture.

HR will act as an investigator, unless otherwise specified by management. The objective of the investigation is to ascertain whether or not the behaviors complained of occurred, and therefore will include interviewing the person complained of, witnesses, managers and any other party that may be involved with or had witness to the alleged behaviors. All interviews will be documented in writing in order to maintain clarity throughout the investigation. The investigation will be conducted thoroughly, objectively, with sensitivity and utmost confidentiality, and with due respect for the rights of both the complainant and the alleged aggressor. The investigation will be completed as quickly as possible.

Upon completion of the investigation, the investigator will submit a report to management or another party deemed appropriate at the outset of the complaint that will include the investigator's conclusions.

The employer will decide in light of the investigator's report and follow up comments by the parties what, if any, action will be taken. HR will inform the complainant and the person complained against in writing of the action plan, and each will have the opportunity to appeal the report and/or the action plan. Appeals should include a detailed outline of the reason for the appeal in writing, and should be submitted to and heard by another party that did not participate in the initial report or investigation as designated by management.

Where a complaint has been upheld, management will follow appropriate disciplinary procedures and decide what action in regards to the complaint is necessary. The employer will continue to keep the situation under review, and may provide counseling for the complainant where appropriate. Preventative measures will also be taken to ensure elimination of the hazard in the future and reduce effects of the prior exposure.

***Please email Catherine Mattice at Catherine@CivilityPartners.com
or call at 619-454-4489 with any questions.***

***This policy is not intended to serve as consulting services or legal advice. It is provided as a sample only.
As with all corporate policies you implement, your attorney should review and approve it.***