

## Anti-Harassment Policy

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1	Human Resources	Next review date November 2023	November 2021

## **1. Introduction**

This policy covers all of the SELDOC Group of Companies – since known as SELDOC or the Company.

It is the right of every member of staff and visitor to work and visit the organisation without fear of harassment or victimisation.

Harassment pollutes the working environment and can have a devastating effect on the health, confidence, morale and performance of those affected by it. It may also have a damaging effect on other employees not themselves the object of unwanted behaviour who are witness to it or who have knowledge of the behaviour. All employees are entitled to a working environment which respects their personal dignity, and which is free from such objectionable conduct.

Harassment is a disciplinary offence and it will normally be treated as gross misconduct.

This policy covers harassment or bullying which occurs both in and out of the workplace, such as on business trips or at events or work-related social functions. It covers bullying and harassment by staff and also by third parties such as customers, suppliers or visitors to our premises.

Employees must treat colleagues and others with dignity and respect and should always consider whether their words or conduct could be offensive, as even unintentional harassment is unacceptable.

We will take allegations of harassment or bullying seriously and address them promptly and confidentially where possible. Harassment or bullying by an employee will be treated as misconduct under our Disciplinary Procedure. In some cases, it may amount to gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and the Company may amend it at any time or depart from it where it considers appropriate.

### **Who is Covered by the Policy?**

This policy covers all individuals working for us or at any of our premises irrespective of their status, level or grade. It therefore includes all employees, managers, directors, officers, consultants, contractors, trainees, homeworkers, workers, casual and agency staff and volunteers (collectively referred to as staff in this policy).

### **What is Harassment?**

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

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 the victim's gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability, or age. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories

A single incident can amount to harassment if sufficiently grave.

Examples of harassment include:

- Insensitive jokes and pranks.
- Lewd comments about appearance.
- Unnecessary body contact.
- Displays of sexually offensive material, e.g. Pin-ups.
- Repeated instances of minor harassment acts.
- Requests for sexual favours.
- Speculation about a person's private life and or sexual activities.
- Threatened or actual violence.
- Threat of dismissal, loss of promotion, etc. for refusal of sexual favours.
- Bullying.

Bullying is defined as any form of physical or verbal attack and/or threat of such, or the abuse of position, in order to attack or undermine the confidence or ability of another, or to place another employee under unreasonable pressure or subjecting another to detrimental treatment, by either act or omission.

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 they create an offensive environment for him or her. Anyone who believes that he or she may have been the victim of harassment should raise the matter through the Company's grievance procedure.

### **Who is Responsible for this Policy?**

The director has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy but has delegated day-to-day responsibility for overseeing its implementation to your Manager.

All managers have a specific responsibility to operate within the boundaries of this policy, ensure that all staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and to take action when behaviour falls below its requirements. Managers will be given training in order that they may do so.

Staff should disclose any instances of harassment or bullying of which they become aware to their Manager, the Director or HR.

Questions about this policy and requests for training or information on dealing with bullying or harassment should be directed to HR.

It is the duty of every staff member of SELDOC and those visiting SELDOC premises to take responsibility for their behaviour and modify it if necessary, as harassment is not acceptable under any circumstances.

If incidents occur, every effort should be made to resolve them informally in the first instance, if this is possible and appropriate. As soon after the incident as possible, the staff member should inform the alleged harasser that the incident is not welcome and stop. This can be done face to face, via email or by a third party if you do not feel confident to do so.

SELDOC recognises that making a complaint of harassment may be a distressing experience and they may feel uncomfortable raising it with their line manager. Individuals can approach a more senior manager directly or through a third party.

Individuals wishing to make a complaint should raise the matter with the appropriate person within three months from the date the alleged incident took place.

### **Monitoring and Review of the Policy**

This policy is reviewed annually by the board and your Manager. Recommendations for any amendments are reported to the directors and/or your Manager. Following a formal investigation under this policy, the Manager and the investigator involved should consider whether this policy has been effective in addressing the issues and report any problems or suggestions for improvement to the Director.

The Director has responsibility for ensuring that any person who may be involved with investigations or administrative tasks carried out under this policy receive regular and appropriate training to assist them with these duties.