

Bullying & Harassment Policy

All members of staff are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect in their place of work. This means freedom from behaviour by colleagues that can be interpreted as bullying or harassment, and access to redress if such behaviour does arise. It also means standards of everyday behaviour that contribute to a working environment in which mutual respect and individual dignity are maintained.

Bullying and Harassment

Behaviour can constitute bullying or harassment where it violates the dignity of a member of staff on the grounds of their race, colour, ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, disability, or age, or where it creates an intimidating, hostile and degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Individual or accumulative acts can seriously undermine the dignity, confidence, and work satisfaction to such an extent that it has an effect on job performance, and general happiness both inside and outside work.

Conduct becomes harassment if it persists and it has been made clear that it is regarded as offensive by the recipient, although a single offensive act can amount to harassment if it is sufficiently serious.

Bullying and harassment can be further defined in the following ways:

Harassment based on race, colour or ethnic origin

Harassment based on race, colour or ethnic origin is conduct at work directed towards a colleague by another colleague or group of colleagues which is racist in nature, and which is regarded as unwelcome or offensive by the recipient.

The following are examples that illustrate such conduct, though this is not an exhaustive list:

- Jokes about race, colour or ethnic origin
- Use of offensive names
- References to colleagues by offensive racist descriptions
- Use of offensive or insensitive stereotypes
- Verbal abuse based on race, colour or ethnic origin
- Circulation, or display, of offensive material based on race, colour or ethnic origin.
- Detrimental behaviour because of a colleague's race, colour or ethnic origin.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is conduct directed towards a colleague by another colleague or group of colleagues which is of a sexual nature, or which is based on a colleague's gender, and which is regarded as unwelcome or offensive to the recipient.

The following are examples which illustrate such conduct, though this is not an exhaustive list:

- Unwanted physical contact
- Contact which is intimidating, or physically or verbally abusive
- Jokes that are based on sexual or gender issues
- Non-verbal conduct, such as staring or gestures
- Suggestions that sexual favours may further a persons career, or that refusal may hinder it
- Sexual advances, propositions, suggestions or pressure for sexual activity at or outside work

Harassment based on disability

Harassment based on disability is conduct directed towards a colleague by another colleague or group of colleagues which is based on the colleague's disability and which is unwelcome to the recipient.

The following are examples which illustrate such behaviour, though this is not an exhaustive list:

- Jokes about disability
- Use of offensive names
- Use of offensive or insensitive stereotypes
- Verbal abuse based on disability
- Circulation, or display, of offensive material based on disability
- Deliberate actions designed to hinder a colleague's ability to undertake his/her duties because of their disability

Harassment based on sexuality

Harassment based on sexuality is conduct directed towards a colleague by another colleague or group of colleagues which is based on the sexuality of the colleague and which is unwelcome by the recipient.

The following are examples which illustrate such behaviour, though this is not an exhaustive list:

- Jokes about sexuality
- Use of offensive names
- Use of offensive or insensitive stereotypes
- Verbal abuse based on sexuality
- Circulation, or display, of offensive material based on sexuality

Harassment based on age

Harassment based on age is conduct directed towards a colleague by another colleague or group of colleagues which is based on the age of the colleague and which is unwelcome by the recipient

- Jokes about age
- Use of offensive names
- Use of offensive or insensitive stereotypes
- Verbal abuse based on age
- Circulation, or display, of offensive material based on age

Bullying and harassment may not be based on the fact that a colleague belongs to a particular group, but simply because the individual has been singled out for such treatment. This may take the following forms, though again this is not intended as an exhaustive list:

- Limiting or withdrawing verbal communication
- Isolating a colleague by unfriendly behaviour
- Behaviour designed to belittle or produce anxiety in a colleague
- Unreasonable scrutiny of work
- Unreasonable criticism of work, and adopting double standards in expectations of work performance
- Unreasonable denial of leave and/or special leave requests
- Unreasonable denial of requests for flexible working
- Work or staff social activities that deliberately exclude a colleague
- Jokes or inappropriate humour at the expense of a colleague

Standards of Work Behaviour

- Courtesy towards colleagues
- Consideration and understanding of the work demands of colleagues
- Maintaining a temperate tone, and temperate language, in all verbal and written communication with colleagues
- Avoidance of the use of foul language
- Awareness of language and conduct which have the potential to offend a colleague
- Obtaining the express or implied permission of a colleague before adopting familiarity in conduct or language

What to do if you consider you are subject to bullying or harassment

The practice is committed to ensuring that there is no harassment or bullying in the workplace. Allegations of harassment will be treated as a disciplinary matter, although every situation will be considered on an individual basis and in accordance with the principles of the practice's grievance and disciplinary procedures, a copy of which is available from Dr Jeremy Breckon.

Your first step is to decide whether you can deal with the inappropriate behaviour informally, for example, if the act concerned is relatively minor, isolated or clearly unintentional. In these situations it is possible that the matter can be resolved immediately by letting your colleague know that the behaviour in question is unacceptable to you and should be avoided in future.

If you feel uncomfortable about raising the issue directly with your colleague, or if you consider the behaviour is more serious because it was deliberate, part of a persistent pattern, or serious in nature, or has been repeated despite having discussed a previous incident informally, then you should report the matter in the first instance to Dr Jeremy Breckon. If it is inappropriate to discuss the matter with him or if you are dissatisfied with his action, then you should seek advice, as appropriate, from

- Practice manager - Mrs Karen Medicott
- Another Dentist
- A trusted colleague

Adopted: 16 February 2011

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