



Save Youth Future Society
جمعية إنقاذ المستقبل الشبابي

Dignity at Work



Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy



Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all Save Youth Future Society employees/ volunteers are treated with dignity and respect and free from harassment or other forms of bullying at work. Special attention should be paid to the prohibition of sexual harassment.

Under this policy, Save Youth Future Society prohibits harassment and/or bullying by an employee against another employee, by an employee against a non-employee, and by a non-employee against an employee. Retaliation against an employee who has filed a harassment complaint or participates as a witness in the investigation of such a complaint is prohibited. Save Youth Future Society also prohibits frivolous and malicious harassment complaints.

Breach of this policy will be dealt with under Save Youth Future Society's disciplinary procedure and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal.

Basic Principles

- Save Youth Future Society is committed to providing an environment free of bullying and harassment, where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity, can contribute fully and have equal opportunities;
- Every staff member and non-staff member has a right to work in a harassment-free and respectful environment;
- Everyone working for Save Youth Future Society has a responsibility to sustain a respectful work environment by upholding the highest standards of conduct and applying all necessary confidentiality measures;
- Employees who observe or are made aware of sexual or other unlawful harassment or bullying in the workplace are obligated to report the incident;
- any reports of harassment or bullying will be treated seriously and sympathetically and will be investigated thoroughly and confidentially (wherever possible);
- Staff members have the right to choose an informal or formal dispute resolution process;
- Employees responsible for conduct which can be construed as harassment or bullying may be subject to appropriate administrative or disciplinary measures.

Workplace Harassment

Workplace harassment is any unwanted or undesirable conduct that puts down or shows hostility or an aversion toward another person at the workplace. It is an act done by any person at the workplace intending to make the other uncomfortable. Harassment may be by the employers, co-workers and/or volunteers.

Workplace harassment can be divided in:

A) Sexual Harassment: This is a form of harassment that consists of making unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors, or engaging in other verbal or physical acts of a sexual or sex-based nature where such conduct interferes with the employee's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

This may include (but is not restricted to):

- an unwelcome sexual advance
- a request for sexual favours
- unwelcome comments about someone's sex life or physical appearance
- leering and ogling
- sexually offensive comments, stories or jokes
- sexual propositions or continued requests for dates
- physical contact such as touching or fondling, or unnecessary brushing up against someone
- indecent assault or rape (these are criminal offences).

B) Other forms of harassment

Other forms of prohibited harassment can occur on the grounds of:

- **Gender:** Not all gender harassment is sexual harassment. An individual can be harassed because (s)he is a woman, man or because he or she transgresses gender roles, and so forth. The concept of gender harassment is meant to permit redress where a person is harassed on the basis of his or her gender but the conduct is not sexual or does not take place in a sexual context

- **Sexism:** Sexism involves carrying into effect one's prejudices, resulting in discrimination, inequity and/or exclusion. Sexism is understood as the negative valuing and discriminatory treatment of individuals and groups on the basis of their sex
- **Sexual orientation:** Harassment based on Sexual orientation occurs when a person or group repeatedly uses discriminatory remarks, behaviours and/or practices to show intolerance against a co-worker based on someone's perceived or actual gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or heterosexual orientation.
- **Race:** Racial harassment occurs when a person or group repeatedly uses discriminatory remarks, behaviours and/or practices to show racial intolerance against a co-worker based on their colour, descent, culture, language or religion
- **Age:** Age harassment involves unwelcome and offensive conduct in the workplace that is based on a person's age. Age harassment can include age-based jokes or comments, offensive cartoons, drawing, symbols, or gestures, and other verbal and physical conduct based on an individual's age.
- **Disability:** This can take the form of individuals being ignored, disparaged, ridiculed, or denied opportunities because of mistaken assumptions about their capabilities. In such cases, disability rather than ability has become the focus of attention. Such harassment can include inappropriate personal remarks, jokes, or inappropriate references to an individual's appearance.
- **Political beliefs:** This kind of harassment occurs when a person or group repeatedly uses discriminatory remarks, behaviours and/or practices to show intolerance against a co-worker based on his actual or alleged political beliefs and/or activities. No one should be allowed to create a threatening or hostile environment for others because of passionate political views.
- **Religion:** Religious harassment usually involves jokes, or other demeaning conduct based on a person's religion and religious observances of holidays or dress. Also, attempting to force an employee to participate or not participate in religious activities also constitutes religious harassment.
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Workplace Bullying

Workplace bullying is repeated “*unreasonable behaviour*” directed towards an employee or a group of employees that could 'mentally' hurt or isolate a person in the workplace. It usually involves repeated incidents or a pattern of behaviour that is intended to intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate a particular person or group of people, often in front of others. Sometimes, bullying can involve negative physical contact as well. Bullying is often an abuse of power by someone who is stronger either physically, verbally, mentally, socially, electronically, politically or financially. Bullying can range from managers to workers (downward), a worker to co-workers (sideways) and workers to managers (upwards)

Bullying and harassment are similar, yet different:

Harassment is similar to bullying because someone hurts another person through cruel, offensive and insulting behaviours. However, harassment is different from bullying in that it is a form of discrimination and targets individuals or groups based on their belonging to a certain class like gender, race, or ethnicity.

For a workplace bully, who or what the person is (s)he targets is arbitrary and not related to him/her belonging to any specific class and/or group.

Examples include:

- Spreading malicious rumours, gossip, or innuendo that is not true.
- Excluding or isolating someone socially.
- Intimidating a person.
- Undermining or deliberately impeding a person's work.
- Physically abusing or threatening abuse.
- Removing areas of responsibilities without cause.
- Constantly changing work guidelines.
- Establishing impossible deadlines that will set up the individual to fail.
- Withholding necessary information or purposefully giving the wrong information.
- Making jokes that are 'obviously offensive' by spoken word or e-mail.
- Intruding on a person's privacy by pestering, spying or stalking.

- Assigning unreasonable duties or workload which are unfavourable to one person (in a way that creates unnecessary pressure).
- Underwork - creating a feeling of uselessness.
- Yelling or using profanity.
- Criticising a person persistently or constantly.
- Belittling a person's opinions.
- Unwarranted (or undeserved) punishment.
- Blocking applications for training, leave or promotion.
- Tampering with a person's personal belongings or work equipment.

Consequences of Harassment in the Workplace

The impact and consequences of harassment will vary from person to person and will be influenced by the duration and severity of the offensive behaviour, but people generally react to harassment by exhibiting symptoms of increasing distress.

Individuals will frequently experience some or all of these responses to harassment:

- **Emotional instability:** anguish, discouragement, frustration, feelings of helplessness, self-blame, a loss of self-esteem, of ambition, of motivation.
- **Physical health problems:** tiredness, headaches, lack of sleep, loss of appetite, intestinal and other physical discomforts.
- **Mental health problems:** Isolation, withdrawal, depression, fear of coming to work, professional burn-out, suicidal thoughts.
- **Loss of credibility:** reputation destroyed, victim's professionalism questioned.
- **Job loss:** disability leave, resignation or dismissal.
- **Incapacity to go back to regular work:** abandoning the job market.

As the examples above show, harassment in the workplace can even lead to an untimely end to a career.

Harassment in the workplace will also have negative repercussions on the organization, such as:

- **Reduced productivity**—increasing preoccupation with the offensive conduct, combined with reduced self-confidence and a tendency to engage others in the situation
- **Performance errors**

- **Increased absenteeism**—strategies to avoid the offensive behaviour can result in increased sick time and stress leaves of employees
- **Turnover**—with feelings of powerlessness and loss of faith in the organization, individuals will leave
- **Negative impact on public image**—either formally through the media or informally through word-of mouth, individuals will tell others of their experiences
- **Financial costs**- Costs of formal harassment investigations, severance payments, and compensation awards
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Prevention

Prevention is the best tool to eliminate harassment in the workplace. Therefore, priority shall also be given to the early detection of harassment and swift action to stop it. Prevention of harassment is a shared individual/organizational responsibility.

Employees should, therefore, report any and all incidents of harassment in the workplace, especially before it becomes severe or pervasive. The management is committed to resolving all instances of harassment as soon as it becomes aware of them, even if there are no formal complaints. Sanctions could be imposed against a manager who knowingly tolerates harassment once he/she has become aware of it

Role of employees/volunteers:

- Be respectful at all times to colleagues
- Ensure a working environment free of intimidation, hostility, offence and any form of harassment, sexual harassment and/or abuse of authority.
- Familiarize and understand the different policies implemented by Save Youth Future Society
- Be aware of the various options and internal channels available to them for addressing harassment, sexual harassment or abuse of authority
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour/objectionable conduct when it happens and refuse to participate in that behaviour;

- Make their objections known to the alleged harasser or another appropriate person, such as their direct supervisor;
- Report inappropriate behaviour/objectionable conduct to someone in authority, such as the the direct supervisor;
- Cooperate and share openly and honestly in workplace investigations

Role of Managers:

- Lead by example and act respectfully in dealings with employees and other persons;
- Monitor the workplace and watch for signs that harassment and discrimination may be taking place;
- Encourage early and open dialogue before inappropriate behaviour escalates;
- Address instances of harassment and discrimination as soon as they are known, even in the absence of a complaint;
- Receive complaints and provide suggested options for appropriate courses of action in a timely manner;
- Address all harassment and discrimination situations appropriately and ensure others act accordingly;
- Participate in learning opportunities on the prevention, early intervention, and resolution of harassment and discrimination;
- Ensure employees are aware of the policy and procedures for preventing and addressing harassment and discrimination
- Monitor situations where complaints have been made even after corrective measures have been taken and ensure that individuals are not subject to retaliation for their involvement in a harassment and discrimination; and
- Follow-up to ensure the recommended actions are implemented within a reasonable time period.

Role of Save Youth Future Society:

- Implement a strong policy explicitly prohibiting harassment, including a description of disciplinary consequences that will be applied
- Through education and awareness, Save Youth Future Society will inform all employees of the Harassment and Discrimination-Free Workplace policy and promote a respectful workplace.

- Ensure that every complaint is taken seriously and investigated as soon as possible
- Avoid making credibility judgments or reaching conclusions before all facts have been gathered

Employees are less likely to report bullying/harassment if they:

- Don't recognise it.
- Lack knowledge about harassment/bullying behaviours and their affects.
- Unsure about procedure.
- Don't know where to seek support.
- Fear retribution including losing employment.
- Feel intimidated or embarrassed.
- Believe this behaviour is part of the workplace culture and feel nothing will change.
- Opportunities for promotion in the organisation may be affected.

Complaint Procedure

Any employee who believes that he or she has been a victim of bullying, (sexual) harassment and/or retaliation prohibited by this policy, or any employee who has witnessed such act, should take immediate action in accordance with the procedure set forth below.

First

If possible, it is recommended to:

- Keep a diary of all incidents – records of dates, times, any witnesses, your feelings, etc. Keep copies of anything that is relevant, for instance annual reports, letters, memos, notes of any meetings that relate to your ability to do your job. Bullying and harassment often reveal themselves through patterns of behaviour and frequency of incidents. Keep records and inform your employer of any medical help you seek.
- Tell the person to stop whatever it is they are doing that is causing you distress, otherwise they may be unaware of the effect of their actions. If you find it

Steps:

difficult to tell the person yourself, you may wish to get someone else – a colleague, manager, friend– to act on your behalf.

- If you cannot confront the bully, consider writing a memo to them to make it clear what it is you object to in their behaviour. Keep copies of this and any reply.
- Be firm, not aggressive. Be positive and calm. Stick to the facts.
- Be prepared to describe what happened even if you find it embarrassing
- If the offensive behaviour continues despite these actions or if it is not possible for the offended employee to deal with the situation, he/she may resort to any of the following actions or to a combination of them.

An employee may file a harassment complaint by contacting his/her direct line-manager. In case the complaint involves the line-manager the employee should report to the Executive Director. The complaint may be verbal or in writing. The employee should be prepared to provide details such as what happened; when it happened; where it happened; how often and who else was present (if applicable). Complaints should be made as soon as possible but no later than within one year of the last incident of perceived harassment, unless there are circumstances that prevented the employee from doing so.

The line-manager/Executive Director will inform the person accused -in writing-that a harassment complaint has been made against him/her. The letter will also provide details of the allegations that have been made against him or her. Every effort will be made to resolve harassment complaints within 10 working days.

Mediation

Wherever appropriate and possible, the parties to the harassment complaint will be offered mediation prior to proceeding with a harassment investigation. Mediation is voluntary and confidential. It is intended to assist the parties to arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution to the harassment complaint. The mediator will be a neutral person, agreed upon by both parties. The mediator will not be involved in investigating

the complaint. Each party to the complaint has the right to be accompanied and assisted during mediation sessions by a person of their choosing.

Investigation

If mediation is inappropriate or does not resolve the issue, a harassment investigation will be conducted. All investigations will be handled by an individual who has the necessary training and experience. In some cases, an external consultant may be engaged for this purpose.

The investigator will interview the person who made the complaint, the person the complaint was made against and any witnesses that have been identified. All people who are interviewed will have the right to review their statement, as recorded by the investigator, to ensure its accuracy.

The investigator will prepare a report that will include:

- Description of the allegations;
- Response of the person the complaint was made against;
- Summary of information learned from witnesses (if applicable); and
- Decision about whether, on a balance of probabilities, harassment did occur.

This report will be submitted to the Executive Director and the board of directors. Both parties to the complaint will be given a copy.

Retaliation

Save Youth Future Society expressly prohibits retaliation against another employee or individual who has complained of bullying or (sexual) harassment, cooperated with the investigation of a complaint, or acted as a witness during the investigation of a complaint. Any employee who retaliates against another employee or individual in violation of this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Save Youth Future Society will not condone any form of retaliation against an employee or individual who has made a good-faith complaint of sexual or other forms of harassment.

Note: Save Youth Future Society has the right to investigate any conduct that violates this policy, even in the absence of a complaint, and take remedial action where appropriate.

Sanctions

If a harassment complaint is substantiated, the board of Directors will decide what action is appropriate.

- Staff members whose actions or behaviours are proven to constitute harassment are subject to disciplinary measures in application to the internal staff handbook.
- Disciplinary measures will depend on the gravity of the case. Such factors as the type of harassment, its impact on the person harassed, the existence of a hierarchical relationship and the prior behaviour of the harasser shall be taken into account
- Any retaliation or threats against those who make harassment complaints or assist in the investigation shall be subject to disciplinary measures.