



# BSI Respect at Work Policy

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## **1. Introduction**

The British Standards Institution, together with its subsidiaries ("BSI") has developed a Group Compliance Framework consisting of policies, processes, and procedures supported by both management and technical controls appropriate to the risk profile of the organisation.

The BSI Respect at Work Policy ("Policy") has been established to act as a guidance in creating and maintaining a safe working environment free of harassment and bullying where colleagues are treated with respect and dignity.

## **2. Purpose**

BSI is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment. This includes providing an environment free from harassment, bullying, victimisation/retaliation, or any other unacceptable behaviour.

This policy is designed to give guidance on the behaviours expected to ensure a working environment is established where everyone is treated, and treats others, with respect and dignity. It also provides information about the support available for dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

The aims of this policy are to:

- promote appropriate behaviour and to ensure respect and dignity at work for all;
- advise what types of behaviour are not acceptable;
- advise what support is available to those who feel bullied, harassed or are the subject of other unacceptable behaviour;
- advise what steps individuals can take if they feel they are not being treated with respect and dignity.

## **3. Scope and Application**

This policy applies to all Employees, Contractors, and temporary/agency staff ("Personnel"). Aspects of this policy may need to be applied in different ways to cater for those who are not employees.

This policy applies both in the workplace and in other business-related settings, such as business trips or social events organised by, or for BSI, both on or off BSI premises This policy also applies where personnel have concerns about the behaviour of contractors, suppliers, and associates of BSI working on or off our premises.

All personnel should be aware of their responsibilities under this policy and could be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination. Any act of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against a member of Personnel is a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with as appropriate under BSI's disciplinary procedure.

This policy is not part of any contract of employment and does not create contractual rights or obligations. It may be amended by BSI at any time.

#### **4. Unacceptable Behaviours**

Unacceptable behaviours (including but not limited to bullying, harassment, and victimisation/retaliation – see below), may involve actions, words or physical gestures that could reasonably be perceived to be the cause of another person’s distress or discomfort. This may be between individuals or involve a group of people.

Unacceptable behaviour does not have to be face-to-face, and may take many forms such as written, telephone, video conferencing, email communications, or through social media.

BSI expects everyone to be treated with respect and dignity by all those they encounter when working, including those they engage with externally. If a third party who is not an employee, a contractor, or temporary/agency staff (for example, a Client, Supplier, or visitor) behaves in an unacceptable manner, this should be reported to your line manager, or if you would prefer not to discuss it with them you may instead wish to seek assistance from People Team.

Unacceptable behaviours can lead to the following:

- poor morale and poor employee relations.
- loss of respect for managers and supervisors.
- poor performance.
- ill-health and absence.
- resignations.
- damage to our reputation.
- legal claims.

Unacceptable behaviour will be treated as misconduct and in serious cases may be gross misconduct likely to result in dismissal. It may also be a criminal offence.

Unacceptable behaviour is characterised by:

- behaviours that are unwanted and unwelcome.
- behaviours which have the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s or group’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person or group of people.

- in all the circumstances, including the recipient's perception, it is reasonable for the behaviour to have that effect and be regarded as unacceptable.

Unacceptable behaviour can take a number of forms. Examples include the following:

#### **4.1 Harassment**

Harassment encompasses many different types of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. It can occur as an isolated incident, many sporadic incidents, or as ongoing behaviour.

Harassment related to characteristics protected locally in law can constitute unlawful discrimination. Examples of such characteristics, depending on country, might include age, disability, gender identity or expression, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, national or ethnic origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

A single incident of unwanted or offensive behaviour towards another individual can amount to harassment.

Non exhaustive examples of harassment include:

- using humour that ridicules another person or group of people, for example telling jokes that are related to the perceived effects of age or that are sexist, racist or about religion;
- mimicking or belittling an individual, for example because of a disability;
- sending offensive text messages;
- verbal abuse such as threats, insults or derogatory nicknames;
- displaying or circulating abusive or offensive materials, including on noticeboards, whiteboards, in emails, on internet bulletin boards and on social networking sites.

#### **4.2 Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is defined as behaviour characterized by the making of unwelcome and inappropriate sexual remarks or physical advances in a workplace or other professional or social situation.

Unwanted conduct may consist of acts, requests, spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

Non exhaustive examples of sexual harassment include:

- displaying sexually suggestive or pornographic objects, correspondence or pictures;
- unwelcome sexual comments, jokes or pranks;

- unwanted physical contact such as unnecessary touching, groping, patting, pinching, brushing against another individual's body;
- persistent pressure to meet socially;
- non-verbal behaviour such as staring, leering, or gestures;
- threats or demands that a person submit to sexual requests as a condition of continued employment or to avoid some other loss and offers of employment-related benefits in return for sexual favours.

### **4.3 Bullying**

Bullying is unacceptable behaviour that is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting, involving an abuse or misuse of power which makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable and which undermines self-confidence and may cause suffering and stress. 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.

Bullying is commonly (but not exclusively) repeated or persistent inappropriate behaviour, whether verbal, physical, psychological or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to respect and dignity at work.

Non exhaustive examples of bullying include:

- shouting at, being sarcastic towards, ridiculing or demeaning others;
- making physical or psychological threats;
- overbearing or intimidating levels of supervision and making inappropriate and/or derogatory remarks about a worker's performance;
- ridiculing or humiliating an individual, especially in front of others;
- picking on someone where there is a common problem or setting them up to fail;
- making threats or comments about someone's job security without good reason;
- isolation or deliberate exclusion in the workplace or from workplace social events;
- abuse of authority or power by those in positions of seniority.

#### **4.4 Cyber-Bullying**

Cyber bullying is the use of information and communications technology to support bullying. It is deliberate and hostile attempts to hurt, upset or embarrass another person.

Non exhaustive examples of cyber bullying include:

- offensive emails;
- email threats, including emails that appear to be inoffensive, but the implied meaning behind it constitutes bullying. For example, a manager using email to bombard an employee with more work than they can handle, and not treating other employees in the same way;
- posting defamatory gossip on blogs and social networking sites. It is possible that a person does not immediately experience the bullying directly because they are unaware of what is being posted about them;
- threats or offensive comments by SMS text messages on mobile phones, web-based messenger platforms such as WhatsApp, Skype and Microsoft Teams;
- posting private and personal details about someone online.

More information about appropriate and inappropriate use of information and communications technology can be found in BSI's Social Media Policy and Use of IT at BSI Policy.

#### **4.5 Victimisation and Retaliation**

Victimisation occurs when a person is mistreated or suffers a detriment because they have made, intend to make, or have supported a complaint of discrimination or harassment, or have helped another person to make a complaint.

Similarly, retaliation is when someone penalises another person for:

- reporting what they believe in good faith to be harassment and/or a violation of this policy;
- expressing an intent to report what they believe in good faith to be harassment and/or a violation of this policy;
- assisting another employee in an effort to report harassment and/or a violation of this policy; or
- participating in any investigation under this policy.

BSI takes a zero tolerance approach to victimisation/retaliation. In some jurisdictions, victimisation and/or retaliation are unlawful.

#### **4.6 Other Behaviours**

Other conduct, which ridicules, threatens, intimidates or is physically or physiologically abusive to an individual or group is covered under this policy. If personnel are found to be mistreating their colleagues, the organization will take appropriate action to stop the behaviour.

If a complaint brought under the Respect at Work Policy is judged to be vexatious or malicious, disciplinary action may be taken against the complainant. However, disciplinary action will not be taken if a complaint made in good faith is judged to be unfounded.

#### **4.7 What does not constitute unacceptable behaviour?**

For the avoidance of doubt and for the purposes of this policy, invoking BSI procedures connected to areas such as conduct, capability or discipline where such procedures are applied reasonably and appropriately will not constitute unacceptable behaviour.

It is important to note that behaviour that is considered bullying or in some other way unacceptable by one person may be considered acceptable by another. For instance, legitimate, constructive and fair feedback on performance or behaviour at work is not bullying.

Isolated incidents of unreasonable behaviour such as abruptness, sharpness or rudeness whilst unacceptable, will generally not be considered to amount to bullying. However, individuals may want to let the other person know how their behaviour has made them feel in order to avoid a repeat of such behaviour. If the behaviour does continue over a period of time this may be considered to be bullying, harassment or in some other way unacceptable.

### **5. Duties, Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **5.1 All Personnel**

All personnel are responsible for their own behaviour and for ensuring their conduct is in line with the standards set out in this policy, and with values stated within BSI's Code of Business Ethics. They are expected to:

- set a positive example by treating others with respect;
- not accept behaviour that may be offensive to themselves or to others, and take positive action to make sure that they report it;
- be supportive of colleagues who may be subject to bullying, harassment, victimisation/retaliation or other unacceptable behaviour;
- be aware of this policy and comply with it;
- report incidents of bullying, harassment, victimisation/retaliation or other unacceptable behaviour to a senior manager, even if they are not the victim.



## **5.2 Senior Leaders and Managers**

All managers have a responsibility to implement this policy and to bring it to the attention of colleagues in their business area, in order to establish and maintain a work environment which protects and promotes respect and dignity at work and is free from harassment, bullying, victimisation/retaliation or other unacceptable behaviour.

They are expected to:

- set a positive example by treating others with respect, setting and role modelling standards of acceptable behaviour and protect the dignity of all personnel and other individuals;
- provide advice, information and support that protects the dignity of personnel;
- promote a working environment where harassment, bullying, victimization/retaliation and other behaviour are not tolerated
- tackle and, where possible, resolve incidents of harassment, bullying, victimisation/retaliation or other unacceptable behaviour;
- treat each complaint seriously and sympathetically and with an open mind, and deal with it promptly and effectively;
- consult with the People Team at any time for advice and support, and follow the processes set down or referred to in this policy;
- where included in their job roles, review all policies and procedures so that they are consistent with the principles of justice, fairness and respect for employees and the organization.

## **5.3 People Team**

The People Team have a responsibility to ensure that this policy is followed and applied fairly and consistently. Their duties include:

- advising and providing support for anyone involved in incidents of harassment, bullying, victimisation/retaliation or other unacceptable behaviour in the course of their employment;
- advising and supporting managers in the application of this policy;
- ensuring the effective implementation of this policy;
- monitoring incidents of harassment, bullying, victimisation/retaliation and other unacceptable behaviour and initiating appropriate action;
- reviewing and amending this policy as necessary, in partnership with the Corporate Compliance Manager.

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## **6. Seeking a Resolution**

### **6.1 Mediation**

Whether or not your complaint has been upheld, we will consider how best to manage the ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned. Where available, it may be appropriate to arrange some form of mediation. Mediation is a completely voluntary and confidential form of alternative dispute resolution. It involves an independent, impartial person (usually one who has been trained as a mediator) helping two or more individuals or groups to reach a solution that is acceptable to everyone. If it is decided that mediation is available and appropriate and should be arranged, the mediator will contact the individuals involved to explain the process.

### **6.2 Informal Approach**

If you think you are being harassed, bullied, victimised/retaliated against or are being subjected to other unacceptable behaviour, consider whether you feel able to raise this through an informal route by informing the individual(s) responsible that you find the behaviour in question to be unwanted and that you want it to stop. It is possible that the person causing the problem may not realise that their behaviour is unwelcome or causing distress and the situation could be resolved simply by communicating this.

It may be difficult for you to speak with the individual directly, in which case you could seek support from your manager. Should the issue be with your manager — or if you would prefer not to discuss it with them — you may instead wish to seek assistance from People Team.

If you decide to try and resolve the problem informally, it is a good idea to keep notes or a diary of the incidents of harassment, bullying, victimising or other unacceptable behaviour and your attempts to resolve matters. If this does not resolve matters, these may help us investigate should you decide to take things further.

If you choose the informal approach, you may not want BSI to take any action. Although we will normally follow your wishes, if we believe that the welfare, health or safety of others may be at risk or for other overriding reasons, we may decide to look into things further. This may involve approaching the alleged bully or harasser.

If a third party (someone who is not employed by BSI) subjects you to harassment, bullying, victimisation/retaliation or other unacceptable behaviour, you should report this. We will do what we reasonably can to prevent it happening again. If you see this happening to a colleague you should also report it.

### **6.3 Formal Process**

If a resolution cannot be reached through the informal approach or if an informal approach is inappropriate, you should make a formal complaint in accordance with your local Grievance Policy or complaints procedure. The decision to pursue a formal complaint generally rests with the employee, but in certain circumstances management may progress a complaint independently from the original complainant (for example, where the behaviour complained about constitutes a serious breach of the law or BSI Policy).

## **7. Speak Up**

It is up to everyone to speak up against harassment, bullying, victimisation, retaliation, and any unacceptable behaviour. Doing so can make it clear that it is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

In the first instance, we want you to feel confident in raising any concerns or grievances with your line manager, the People Team, Group Legal or Compliance and Ethics Team. But we realise sometimes you may not feel comfortable doing this or want to remain anonymous. BSI has partnered with Safecall to provide an independent externally hosted reporting line "SpeakUp" where you may raise your concerns anonymously and be assured that they will be fully addressed. All reports are treated with the utmost confidentiality by independent staff. For further information on raising concerns and access to our Speak Up reporting line, please visit the page below:

<https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/about-bsi/ethics-and-compliance>

## **8. Protection and Support**

Anyone who is concerned about harassment, bullying, victimisation/retaliation or other unacceptable behaviour can ask for support from their line manager or a senior colleague. If you would prefer to talk to someone outside of your team, you can get help and advice from the People Team (HR)

This support is available to those who think that they are experiencing, they believe they have witnessed, or they have been accused of harassment, bullying, victimisation/retaliation or other unacceptable behaviour.

Good working relationships are important to creating a culture of respect and dignity. BSI is committed to encouraging good, honest, open communication at all levels in work teams.

We recognise that individuals may find it difficult to raise complaints about the unacceptable behaviours referred to in this policy. To encourage individuals to come forward with their concerns without fear, and for BSI to truly embed the intentions of this policy, we will uphold a strict zero tolerance approach to victimisation/retaliation - it is against the organisation's policy (and may be unlawful) for anyone to victimise or retaliate against another for his or her participation in a complaint or investigation process and it will not be tolerated.

**Anyone who feels that they have been victimised or retaliated against should inform their manager and/or the People Team (HR) as soon as possible.**

## **9. Protecting Confidentiality**

Allegations about harassment, bullying, victimisation/retaliation or any other unacceptable behaviour can raise strong feelings and are always serious, which is why both the organization and the accuser(s) have an obligation to maintain confidentiality as far as possible. This applies at every stage, including the investigation and the result. If you make a complaint and fail to maintain proper confidentiality at any time during the process, or you are interviewed in connection with someone else's complaint and likewise fail to maintain confidentiality, you will have breached this policy.

All persons to whom a complaint is made or who learn of a complaint as part of an investigation by the organization must do everything reasonably possible to keep the complaint confidential in order to preserve the integrity of the investigation while it is ongoing, to ensure fairness to all involved, and to protect the privacy of those who have brought complaints or who are accused of such misconduct.

Disclosure of information learned through the complaint process and the investigation will be limited to disclosures that are necessary for the organization to fulfil its obligations to investigate and take prompt action to end the unwanted behaviour. Although we seek to protect confidentiality as far as possible, nothing in this policy is to be construed as a guarantee of absolute confidentiality or is intended to curtail an individual's rights under the law to discuss work-related matters.

Information about a complaint by or about any Personnel will be kept on file, along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other document compiled during the process. BSI treats personal data collected during this process in accordance with its Privacy Policy.

## **10. Exception Process**

Any deviation from this policy must be documented, together with clear reasons for such deviation, in the exception log and reported to the Corporate Compliance Team and Head of Division or Function who will seek approval from the Group Leadership Team. Failure to comply with this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, or termination of engagement.

## **11. Contact Information**

Questions relating to the content of this policy should be addressed to People Team. Personnel may also raise concerns or report instances of potential non-compliance with this policy by contacting The Compliance and Ethics team.

## **12. Review**

This policy is reviewed on a regular basis. Personnel will be notified of any changes to the policy via BSI's intranet.