



**Equity in Opportunities, Anti-Bullying and
Anti-Harassment Policy**

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This procedure reflects legislation and official guidance at the time it was last reviewed. Any changes in legislation will take precedence over anything printed in this policy. Where other policies are referred to, they can be viewed at the Policy Library

1 Introduction

The RSN recognises the benefits of having a diverse community of employees and students. To this end, the RSN is working towards building and maintaining an inclusive environment which promotes equality, values diversity and respects the rights and dignity of all.

This Policy must be read in conjunction with the Equalities, Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Procedure and Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

This policy is supported by the following other policies and procedures (in the Employee Handbook):

- (a) Grievance Procedure.
- (b) Disciplinary Procedure.
- (c) Flexible Working Procedure.
- (d) Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Shared Parental Leave Policies.
- (e) Parental Leave Policy.
- (f) Time Off for Dependants Policy.
- (g) Data Protection Policy.

2 Policy Statement

The RSN believes in the principles of social justice, acknowledges that discrimination affects people in complex ways and is committed to challenging all forms of inequality. RSN aims to ensure that individuals are treated fairly.

3 RSN Equal Opportunities Statement

The RSN is an equal opportunity employer and is fully committed to a policy of treating all of our employees and job applicants equally in all aspects of employment including: recruitment and selection, promotion, transfer, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, other terms of employment, discipline, selection for redundancy and dismissal.

We will take all reasonable steps to employ, train and promote employees on the basis of their experience, abilities and qualifications, without regard to race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, age, marriage and civil partnership or disability. In this Policy these are known as the "Protected Characteristics".

We will appoint, train, develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability alone. We will also take all reasonable steps to provide a work environment in which all employees are treated with respect and dignity and that is free of harassment based upon any of the Protected Characteristics. We will not condone any form of harassment, whether engaged in by employees or by outside third parties who do business with us, such as clients, customers, contractors and suppliers.

4 Discrimination

You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people, including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts or when wearing a work uniform), and on work-related trips or events including social events. The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- Direct discrimination – when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a Protected Characteristic.
- Associative discrimination or discrimination by association – direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic.
- Discrimination by perception – direct discrimination against someone because it is thought that they possess a particular Protected Characteristic even if they do not actually possess it.
- Indirect discrimination - occurs where an individual's employment is subject to an unjustified provision criterion or practice which e.g. one sex or race or nationality or age group finds more difficult to meet, although on the face of it the provision, criterion or practice is 'neutral'.
- Harassment – unwanted conduct related to a relevant Protected Characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. You may complain of such offensive behaviour even if it is not directed towards you personally.
- Victimisation – when an employee is treated less favourably because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance about unlawful discrimination or are suspected of doing so.
- Disability discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified unfavourable treatment because of something arising in consequence of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

5 Recruitment

The recruitment process will be conducted in such a way as to result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job in terms of relevant abilities and qualifications. We are committed to applying our equal opportunities policy statement at all stages of recruitment and selection.

5.1 Training, transfer and promotion

We will take such measures as may be necessary to ensure the proper training, supervision and instruction for all line managers in order to familiarise them with our policy on equal opportunities, and in order to help them identify discriminatory acts or practices and to ensure that they promote equal opportunity within the departments for which they are responsible. The training will also enable line managers to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.

We will also provide training to all employees to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the equal opportunities and anti-harassment policies and what they can do to create a work environment that is free of bullying and harassment.

5.2 Terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services

All terms of employment, benefits, facilities and service will be reviewed from time to time, in order to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of one or more of the Protected Characteristics.

5.3 Equal pay and equality of terms

We are committed to equal pay in employment. We believe our male and female employees should receive equal pay for like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. In order to achieve this, we will endeavour to maintain a pay system that is transparent, free from bias and based on objective criteria.

6. Disabilities

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

7. Bullying and Harassment

We are committed to providing a working environment free from harassment and bullying and ensuring all staff are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect. This includes harassment or bullying which occurs at work and out of the workplace, such as on business trips or at work-related events or social functions.

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment. 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 a Protected Characteristic. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

Harassment may include (this is a non-exhaustive list), for example:

- (a) unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- (b) unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless);
- (c) offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content;
- (d) mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability.

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 the jokes create an offensive environment.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. 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 can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Bullying may include (this is a non-exhaustive list), by way of example:

- (a) physical or psychological threats;
- (b) overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision;
- (c) inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance;

Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a worker's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to workers in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying on their own.

8. Breaches of this Policy

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or Anti-Bullying & Anti-Harassment Procedure. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

You must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.