

Citation

Discrimination and harassment policy

templates



No matter how well you communicate your business' policies, any workplace is at risk of discrimination or harassment rearing their ugly heads.

If you come across such behaviour, it's imperative you take appropriate action to ensure the perpetrating employee is fully aware their actions are not acceptable. It's also key to ensuring your business stays on the right side of the law, and maintains a positive working culture.

Below, we've written two templates - one is a script for a formal harassment policy, and the other for discrimination - to help instil your 'anti' stance from the off.

Template 1: Harassment policy

[Company name] will not tolerate any form of harassment or bullying.

The purpose of this policy is to inform employees of the type of behaviour that is totally unacceptable and to explain what solutions there are to employees who may suffer from harassment or bullying.

[Company name] intends to provide a neutral working environment in which no one feels threatened or intimidated.

Harassment is a discriminatory act and is also a criminal offence. It is very difficult to define as it can take many forms, but in the main it takes the form of unwanted behaviour by one employee towards another, for example:

- Patronising or belittling comments
- Comments about appearance/body/clothes
- Leering or staring at a person's body
- Unwelcome sexual invitations or pressure
- Promises or threats, concerning employment or conditions, in exchange for sexual favours
- Displaying offensive or sexually explicit material
- Touching, caressing, hugging or indecent assault.

Bullying can be difficult to define. Some obvious examples include:

- Threats of or actual physical violence
- Jokes about an employee that are either unpleasant, over-repeated or both
- Impractical or unfair workloads.

Template 2: Discrimination policy

[Company name] recognises that discrimination is not only unacceptable, it is also unlawful.

[Company name]'s aim is to ensure that no job applicant or employee is discriminated against, directly or indirectly, on any unlawful grounds.

By including this policy in the Employee Handbook, all employees are made aware that the Company will act in accordance with all statutory requirements and take into account any relevant codes of practice.

All job applicants will be considered solely on their ability to do the job. Interview questions will not be of a discriminatory nature.

All promotions will be made on merit in line with the principles of the policy.

Employees who have a disability will receive the necessary help, within reason, to enable them to carry out their normal duties effectively.

This policy will be assessed at regular intervals to ensure that equality of opportunity is afforded to all employees.

Dealing with complaints

If you receive a discrimination or harassment complaint, it's essential you make the employee responsible aware that their behaviour is offensive to you and others. This'll hopefully deter them from becoming a repeat offender.

First things first, objectively, independently and promptly investigate the complaint. The outcome of your investigation might steer the direction you take with regards to action.

How formal do you need to be?

If you decide that action's needed, the approach you take will vary on a case-by-case basis. If appropriate to the case, you might want to take a softer, more informal approach to your action. Sometimes, simply having a word with the employee responsible is enough for them to understand their behaviour was inappropriate and cease said behaviour right away.

Alternatively, Acas also suggests offering counselling and mediation to resolve the dispute.

Formal

If the softly, softly approach fails or is not appropriate, you'll probably treat the complaint as a disciplinary issue. As with any situation that escalates to a disciplinary procedure, it's vital to follow a fair procedure - this means treating both parties fairly.



Please remember the test is that the behaviour is UNWELCOME, UNINVITED AND UNRECIPROCATED.

This document is not a guarantee of compliance. Its purpose is to give the recipient a greater understanding of their responsibilities in relation to Health & Safety or HR and Employment Law.

Citation holds no liability for any findings provided or actions taken as a result of this document.