

Mosspark Group

Standard Operating Procedure

Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy

Companies associated with this document:

Dundas Chemical Company (Mosspark) Ltd
Caledonian Proteins
Caledonian Pet Foods Ltd
Oakbank Waste Management Ltd
Oakbank Plant Hire Ltd
Dundas Transport Ltd

Policy Statement

The Mossspark Group committed to providing a working environment free from harassment and bullying and ensuring all staff are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect. We recognise that harassment or bullying can occur both in and outside the workplace, such as on business trips or at work-related events or social functions.

Harassment, bullying or victimisation of any member of staff, or anyone they come into contact with during the course of their work, can be unlawful and will not be tolerated. We will take active steps to help prevent the harassment, bullying and victimisation of all staff. Anyone who is a victim of, or witness to, harassment, bullying or victimisation is encouraged to report it in accordance with this policy or under our Sexual harassment policy where it relates to conduct of a sexual nature. This will enable us to take appropriate action and provide support. Harassment, bullying and victimisation can result in legal liability for both the business and the perpetrator, whether they work for us, or are a third-party outside of our control. Harassment, bullying and victimisation may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

As an employer we will continue to:

- consider the risks of sexual harassment occurring in the course of the working relationship
- consider what steps we could take to reduce those risks and prevent sexual harassment of our staff
- consider which of those steps would be reasonable to take
- implement those reasonable steps

1. About this policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out a framework for line managers to deal with any harassment, bullying or victimisation that occurs by staff (which may include consultants, contractors and agency workers) and also by third parties such as customers, suppliers or visitors to our premises. Unlawful harassment that involves conduct of a sexual nature will be dealt with under our Sexual harassment policy.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or contract to provide services, and we may amend it at any time.

2. Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to all employees, officers, consultants, self-employed contractors, casual workers, agency workers, volunteers and those on work experience.

3. Employee Responsibilities

The organisation requires its employees to behave appropriately and professionally at all times during the working day, and this may extend to events outside of working hours which are classed as work-related such as social events. Employees should not engage in discriminatory, harassing or aggressive behaviour towards any other person at any time.

Any form of harassment or victimisation may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal if it is committed:

- in a work situation
- during any situation related to work, such as a social event
- against a colleague or other person connected to the employer outside of a work situation, including on social media
- against anyone outside of a work situation where the incident is relevant to their suitability to carry out the role.

4. Employer Responsibilities

The organisation will be responsible for ensuring all members of staff, including seniors and those within management positions, understand the rules and policies relating to the prevention of harassing and bullying behaviour at work and during work-related social events. We will promote a professional and positive workplace whereby managers are alert and proactively identify areas of risk and incidents of harassment, sexual harassment and bullying.

Where an incident is witnessed, or a complaint is made under this policy, the organisation will take prompt action to deal with this matter. All incidents will be deemed serious and dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner.

5. What is Harassment?

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 unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or that is related to gender reassignment or sex, in the past.

Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Unlawful harassment that involves conduct of a sexual nature is dealt with in our Sexual harassment policy. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

Harassment may include, for example:

- racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist jokes, or derogatory or stereotypical remarks about a particular ethnic or religious group, religion or belief, or gender;
- disclosing or threatening to disclose someone's sexual orientation or gender identity against their wishes;
- offensive emails, text messages or social media content;
- mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability;
- unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- continued suggestions for social activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome;

- sending or displaying material that is pornographic or that some people may find offensive (including emails, text messages, video clips and images sent by mobile phone or posted on the internet);
- unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless).

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.

Victimisation includes subjecting a person to a detriment because they have done, or are suspected of doing or intending to do, any of the following protected acts:

- Bringing proceedings under the Equality Act 2010.
- Giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the Equality Act 2010.
- Doing any other thing for the purposes of or in connection with the Equality Act 2010.
- Alleging that a person has contravened the Equality Act 2010.

Victimisation may include, for example:

- Denying someone an opportunity because it is suspected that they intend to make a complaint about harassment.
- Excluding someone because they have raised a grievance about harassment.
- Failing to promote someone because they accompanied another staff member to a grievance meeting.
- Dismissing someone because they gave evidence on behalf of another staff member at an employment tribunal hearing.

Harassment and victimisation are unlawful and will not be tolerated. They may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal if they are committed:

- In a work situation.
- During any situation related to work, such as at a social event with colleagues.
- Against a colleague or other person connected to us outside of a work situation, including on social media.
- Against anyone outside of a work situation where the incident is relevant to your suitability to carry out your role.

We will take into account any aggravating factors, such as abuse of power over a more junior colleague, when deciding the appropriate disciplinary action to take.

If any harassment or victimisation of staff occurs, we will take steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again. Action may include updating relevant policies, providing further staff training and taking disciplinary action against the perpetrator.

Third-party harassment occurs where a person is harassed or sexually harassed by someone who does not work for, and who is not an agent of, the same employer, but with whom they have come into contact during the course of their employment. Third-party harassment could include, for example, derogatory comments about a person's age, disability, pregnancy, colour, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation from a client, customer or

supplier visiting the employer's premises, or where a person is visiting a client, customer or supplier's premises or other location in the course of their employment.

Third-party harassment can result in legal liability and will not be tolerated. All staff are encouraged to report any third-party harassment they are a victim of, or witness, in accordance with this policy.

Any harassment by a member of staff against a third-party may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

We will take active steps to try to prevent third-party harassment of staff. Action may include warning notices to customers or website statements.

If any third-party harassment of staff occurs, we will take steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again. Action may include warning the harasser about their behaviour, banning them from our premises, reporting any criminal acts to the police, and sharing information with other branches of the business.

6. What is bullying?

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 may include overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision or inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance. However, 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.

7. If you are being harassed or bullied: informal steps

If you are being harassed or bullied, consider whether you feel able to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. You should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult, you should speak to your line manager or the HR Department, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally. If you feel unable to speak to your line manager because the complaint concerns them, you should speak informally to the HR Department. If this does not resolve the issue, you should follow the formal procedure below.

If you are not certain whether an incident or series of incidents amounts to bullying or harassment, you should initially contact your line manager or the HR Department informally for confidential advice.

If informal steps are not appropriate, or have been unsuccessful, you should follow the formal procedure set out below.

8. Raising a formal complaint

If you wish to make a formal complaint about bullying or harassment, you should submit it in writing to your line manager. If the matter concerns your line manager, you should submit it to the HR Department.

Your written complaint should set out full details of the conduct in question, including the name of the harasser or bully, the nature of the harassment or bullying, the date(s) and time(s) at which it occurred, the names of any witnesses and any action that has been taken so far to attempt to stop it from occurring.

If you wish to make a formal complaint about victimisation, you should submit it in writing to your line manager. If the matter concerns your line manager, you should submit it to the HR Department.

Your written complaint should set out full details of the conduct in question, including the name of the person or persons you believe have victimised you, the reason you believe you have been victimised, the nature of the victimisation, the date(s) and time(s) at which it occurred, the names of any witnesses and any action that has been taken so far to attempt to stop it from occurring.

As a general principle, the decision whether to progress a complaint is up to you. However, we have a duty to protect all staff and may pursue the matter independently if, in all the circumstances, we consider it appropriate to do so.

9. If you witness harassment or victimisation

Staff who witness harassment or victimisation are encouraged to take appropriate steps to address it. Depending on the circumstances, this could include:

- Intervening where you feel able to do so.
- Supporting the victim to report it or reporting it on their behalf.
- Reporting the incident where you feel there may be a continuing risk if you do not report it.
- Cooperating in any investigation into the incident.

All witnesses will be provided with appropriate support and will be protected from victimisation.

10. Formal investigations

We will investigate complaints in a timely, respectful and confidential manner. Individuals not involved in the complaint or the investigation should not be told about it.

We will arrange a meeting with you, usually within one week of receiving your complaint, so that you can give your account of events. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or a trade union representative of your choice, who must respect the confidentiality of the investigation.

Where your complaint is about an employee, we may consider suspending them on full pay or making other temporary changes to working arrangements pending the outcome of the investigation, if circumstances require. The investigator will also meet with the alleged

harasser or bully to hear their account of events. They have a right to be told the details of the allegations against them, so that they can respond.

Where your complaint is about someone other than an employee, such as a customer, supplier or visitor, we will consider what action may be appropriate to protect you and anyone involved pending the outcome of the investigation, bearing in mind the reasonable needs of the business and the rights of that person. Where appropriate, we will attempt to discuss the matter with the third party.

We will also seriously consider any request that you make for changes to your own working arrangements during the investigation. For example, you may ask for changes to your duties or working hours to avoid or minimise contact with the alleged harasser or bully. It may be necessary to interview witnesses to any of the incidents mentioned in your complaint. If so, the importance of confidentiality will be emphasised to them.

At the end of the investigation, we will arrange a meeting with you in order to discuss the outcome and what action, if any, should be taken. You have the right to bring a colleague or a trade union representative to the meeting.

11. Action following the investigation

If the manager considers that there is a case to answer and the harasser or bully is an employee, the matter will be dealt with as a case of possible misconduct or gross misconduct under our Disciplinary Procedure. Our investigation into your complaint may be put on hold pending the outcome of the Disciplinary Procedure. Where the disciplinary outcome is that harassment or bullying occurred, prompt action will be taken to address it. If the harasser or bully is a third party, such as a customer or other visitor, we will consider what action would be appropriate to deal with the problem.

Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage the ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned. It may be appropriate to arrange some form of mediation and/or counselling, or to change the duties, working location or reporting lines of one or both parties.

Any staff member who deliberately provides false information or otherwise acts in bad faith as part of an investigation may be subject to action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

12. Appeals

If you are not satisfied with the outcome you may appeal in writing to your line manager or the HR Department or person named in outcome letter, stating your full grounds of appeal, within one week of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you.

We will hold an appeal meeting, normally within one week of receiving your written appeal. Where practicable, the appeal hearing will be conducted by a manager or representative who has not been previously involved in the case. They may ask anyone previously involved to be present. You have the right to bring a colleague or trade union representative to the meeting.

We will confirm our final decision in writing, usually within one week of the appeal hearing. This is the end of the procedure and there is no further appeal.

13. Protection and support for those involved

Staff who make complaints, report that they have witnessed wrongdoing, or who participate in good faith in any investigation, must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

If you believe you have suffered any such treatment you should inform your line manager **OR** the HR Department. If the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure or this procedure if appropriate.

We offer access to confidential counselling, which is available through the Westfield Health service for anyone affected by, or accused of, bullying or harassment. The helpline number is 08000920987.

Support and guidance can also be obtained from the following external services:

- The Equality Advisory and Support Service (www.equalityadvisoryservice.com).
- Protect (www.protect-advice.org.uk)
- Victim support (www.victimsupport.org.uk)

14. Reporting outcomes, confidentiality and record-keeping

Confidentiality is an important part of the procedures provided under this policy. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused must only be disclosed on a "need to know" basis. Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Where appropriate and possible, where a complaint is upheld, we will advise the complainant of the action that has been taken to address their specific complaint and any measures put in place to prevent a similar event happening again.

Information about a complaint by or about a staff member may be placed on their personnel file, along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other documents compiled during the process. These will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.