



**V**ersatile Wood  
Flooring Ltd

## Harassment and Bullying

Versatile Wood Flooring is committed to promoting equality, diversity and an inclusive and supportive environment for all staff and affirms the rights of individuals to be treated fairly and with respect.

Sexual, racial and other forms of personal harassment and bullying can seriously harm working and social conditions all staff. Any incidents of harassment will be regarded extremely seriously and can be grounds for disciplinary action which may include dismissal.

We will take action to stop any harassment or bullying from taking place. We will offer all staff support and guidance to help them take action to stop the harassment or Management may take action on their behalf. In serious cases, it may involve a formal investigation through the disciplinary procedures, however, in the majority of cases a resolution will be sought by less formal routes. Any action taken will be agreed with the complainant, and those involved will be kept informed throughout the process. A timescale will also be agreed which will take into account the need to resolve the situation as soon as possible, whilst taking into account the circumstances.

### WHAT IS HARASSMENT?

Personal harassment takes many forms. It is any behaviour which is unacceptable to the recipient and which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Any behaviour which shows lack of respect and which creates an atmosphere in which people feel uncomfortable and unwelcome can constitute harassment.

Differences of attitude and culture or misinterpretation of social signals can mean that what is perceived as harassment by one person may not seem so to another.

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

#### This could be:

- any behaviour which patronises, intimidates or offends, e.g. remarks, looks, jokes or offensive language.

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- any behaviour which makes people feel viewed as sexual objects and which causes offence, even if unintended.
- provocative suggestions, propositioning people
- the display of pornographic, semi-pornographic or suggestive material, electronic or paper
- deliberate, potentially objectionable physical contact to which the person has not consented or had the opportunity to object to.
- threats of failure, or promises of success or other rewards in exchange for sexual favours.

This policy applies equally to harassment occurring between people of the same gender, of women by men or of men by women.

## **RACIAL HARASSMENT**

### **This could be:**

- any behaviour which causes discomfort, intimidates or offends or which incites others to do so. For example, derogatory names, insults, racist jokes or ridiculing cultural difference.
- the display or circulation of offensive material, including racist graffiti, electronic mail or information published through the Internet.
- verbal abuse and threats of physical attack.

## **PERSONAL HARASSMENT**

**This could be:** behaviour which makes direct or indirect reference to disability or impairment - and thus causes discomfort, patronises, insults or offends people with a physical, sensory or mental disability

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- behaviour which makes direct or indirect reference to religion or culture thereby causing discomfort or offence
- repeated gibes in reference to personal traits, appearance or sexual orientation
- invasion of privacy or practical jokes causing physical or psychological distress
- pressure to become involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour
- messages to or about a person, including electronic mail, that are offensive, insulting or cause discomfort

## **BULLYING**

Bullying is the misuse of power or position to persistently criticise and condemn; to openly humiliate and undermine an individual's ability until this person becomes so fearful that their confidence crumbles and they lose belief in themselves. These attacks on the individual are normally sudden, irrational, unpredictable and usually unfair.

Bullying could include:

- verbal and/or physical intimidation - threats, shouting, derisory remarks, often in front of others
- ostracism, or conversely, excessive supervision
- undermining of the individual's position by changing work objectives/guidelines without consultation, taking credit for the target's work, deriding the target's work to supervisors, etc
- removing areas of responsibility and giving people menial or trivial tasks to do instead
- withholding information
- spreading malicious rumours
- persistent criticism

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- messages, including electronic mail, that are threatening, derisory or defamatory

### Actions

If any member of staff feels they are being bullied they should:

- If at all possible, make it clear to the person causing offence that such behaviour is unacceptable to you.
- If you feel unable to confront the person directly, or if talking to them has no effect seek a confidential interview with a Manager or Director

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