

## DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

### Policy Statement:

At the McSence Group you are entitled to enjoy the working environment (including social events organised through or by the Company), free of any form of abuse, bullying or harassment. You should not yourself be subject to, or subject others to, unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, either verbal or physical abuse, bullying or harassment. Verbal conduct includes suggestive remarks or gestures, offensive comments and jokes. Physical conduct includes practical jokes, offensively touching and brushing against another employee's body, and any form of assault.

**All Employees:** This policy applies to all persons working for or on our behalf of the McSence Group of Companies which includes the subsidiary companies - *McSence Communication Ltd, McSence Ltd, McSence Services Ltd & McSence Workspace Ltd* in any capacity including but not limited to:

- All employees at all levels, prospective employees, agency workers, seconded workers, temporary workers, contractors/sub-contractors, clients, agents, external consultants, volunteers, members of the public, group's supply chain, third-party representatives and/or business partners who will be referred to in our Group policies as "all employees".

**The Workplace:** This policy applies to all persons working for or on our behalf of the McSence Group of Companies in any capacity at the workplace(s) as defined below which includes but not limited to:

- McSence Premises, Offices, Units, Business Park, Client's Premises, External Meeting Places, Customers' Homes, Gardens, Sheltered Housing, Whilst On-Call, On-Duty, Emergency Cover, Working from Home including On-Line Meetings, Whilst Driving in Company Time, Working Public Areas (café's, trains, coffee shops, buses etc) and will be referred to throughout this policy as "the workplace".

**Purpose:** At its simplest level, such behaviour clearly becomes harassment when it is not welcomed by an individual and is considered by that individual to be personally offensive. Harassment can take many forms. It can be physical, written or verbal and can include derogatory or discriminatory statements and any act or image that causes the recipient humiliation or interferes with their work performance. Less obvious examples include calendar pictures, e-mailed jokes or pictures, daily newspapers or glossy magazines with provocative pictures and images/screensavers, which are felt to be offensive in the eyes of the person viewing them.

**Behaviour Outside the Company:** The Company will be concerned about an employee's behaviour outside of work if it is clear that, as a result of their behaviour, their ability to do their job effectively, or to maintain good working relationships, has been seriously impaired, or the Company has been brought into disrepute. This following list is not exhaustive and serves only to give an indication of the type of behaviour which is deemed unacceptable. All such cases will be handled through the normal disciplinary procedure but may result in dismissal if you are no longer capable of carrying out your job effectively, or of maintaining satisfactory working relationships with colleagues, suppliers or customers. Examples of unacceptable behaviour, which may raise these concerns, include:

- Violence and fraud
- Harassment of fellow employees or customers
- Acts which could lead to imprisonment
- Acts which may be seen to have seriously damaged the commercial interests or reputation of the Company

**Being bullied:** Although there is no legal definition of bullying, it can be described as unwanted behaviour from a person or group that is either:

- offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting
- an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, or causes physical or emotional harm to someone

The bullying might:

- be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident
- happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or calls

- ✦ happen at work or in other work-related situations
- ✦ not always be obvious or noticed by others

Examples of bullying at work could include:

- ✦ someone has spread a malicious rumour about you
- ✦ someone keeps putting you down in meetings
- ✦ your boss keeps giving you a heavier workload than everyone else
- ✦ someone has put humiliating, offensive or threatening comments or photos on social media
- ✦ someone at the same or more junior level as you keeps undermining your authority

**Upward bullying:** Bullying can also happen from staff towards a more senior employee, a manager or an employer (this can be called 'upward bullying' or 'subordinate bullying').

It can be from one employee or group of employees.

Examples of upward bullying can include:

- ✦ showing continued disrespect
- ✦ refusing to complete tasks
- ✦ spreading rumours
- ✦ doing things to make you seem unskilled or unable to do your job properly

It can be difficult if you're in a senior role to realise you're experiencing bullying behaviour from your staff. It's important to consider the real reasons for the behaviour. For example, there might be a wider issue with the culture of the organisation. Employers and managers should work together to identify the cause of the issue and address it.

**When bullying might be classed as harassment:** Harassment is when bullying or unwanted behaviour is about any of the following 'protected characteristics' under discrimination law (Equality Act 2010):

- ✦ age
- ✦ disability
- ✦ gender reassignment
- ✦ race
- ✦ religion or belief
- ✦ sex
- ✦ sexual orientation

Harassment because of pregnancy or maternity is treated differently and could be direct discrimination.

**Dealing with Harassment:** There are two ways the recipient can deal with harassment, either informally or formally. Which approach is used will depend upon the nature and severity of the harassment as perceived by the person suffering the harassment and it is not necessary to have tried the informal approach before the formal route?

**Informal Route:** The person being harassed may consider any of the following informal approaches and in all cases, the recipient should record and monitor all incidents of harassment as they occur:

- ✦ Make a direct approach to the harasser asking that the behaviour be stopped. This could be made in person or in writing. You should explain that the behaviour complained of is unacceptable, unwelcome or embarrassing and is interfering with your work.
- ✦ Make a direct approach to the harasser accompanied by a colleague
- ✦ Ask a colleague to approach the harasser on your behalf
- ✦ Ask your Manager to deal with the problem on an informal basis
- ✦ If the harasser is the individual's Manager, then ask another senior Manager to deal with it informally

**Formal Route:** If the harassment cannot be resolved informally, or the person being harassed does not wish to deal with it informally, then the formal route can be taken. You should report the matter immediately. Under the formal procedure, the complainant and the alleged offender will be identified to the other party. The complaint will be thoroughly and impartially investigated. Each side will have the opportunity to put forward their case. The complaint should be made in the first instance to your Line Manager. An investigation will then be made into the allegations.

All allegations of harassment will be taken seriously and dealt with confidentially such that no employee will be victimised for making or being involved with the investigation of a complaint. Victimisation of a complainant is a disciplinary offence.

**Right to be Accompanied:** Employees may be accompanied to formal meetings by a workplace colleague or a trade union representative. At these meetings, this representative is entitled to:

- ✚ Contact and meet with the employee prior to the meeting/appeal
- ✚ Reasonable time to confer privately with the employee
- ✚ Address the meeting
- ✚ Representatives are not entitled to answer questions on behalf of the employee

It is the employee's responsibility to secure the attendance of any colleague or trade union representative, who has the right to decline to attend. The name of the accompanying person must be provided to a senior manager at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. In certain circumstances a senior manager or the employee's manager can object to the choice of workplace colleague or trade union representative if:

- ✚ There is a conflict of interest which may prejudice the discussion
- ✚ The accompanying person is a family member or close friend of the employee
- ✚ The geographical location of the meeting makes it unreasonable for the accompanying person to attend

**Remedies:** If the investigation of a complaint finds that there is evidence of harassment having taken place, then action will be taken against the person causing the harassment. This could involve disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal or transfer to a different work area.

**Dealing with Angry Customers:** At the McSence Group our aim is to have only happy customers and clients, but we also have to be realistic and realise that sometimes we are going to have to deal with an angry or abusive individual. Sometimes the anger may not be justified and sometimes it may not even be your fault, but if you are the person who will have to deal with the individual, we have guidelines to help which are outlined in this policy.

**Ownership:** Always try to take ownership for the call and where possible resolve the call yourself. Remain calm, take the details of the problem, repeat them back to the customer and try to find a mutually acceptable solution. If you cannot resolve the situation then you should pass it to your or another line manager as soon as possible. They may request to call the customer back as soon as possible however it may not always be possible for them to call back immediately and you may need to set the customer's expectation.

**Dealing with Abusive Customers:** If the individual is using abusive or threatening language, you can ask them to stop using it. If the customer continues to use abusive or threatening language, then you should advise the customer that if they continue then you may have to terminate the call. If the customer persists in using abusive or threatening language, you can give them one final warning that their call will be terminated. If the abusive or threatening language continues after three requests to stop then you can terminate the call. You must advise the customer of what you are doing and why e.g. 'I am terminating this call as I have already asked you on several occasions to stop swearing'. You cannot just hang up. If you do have to terminate a call, then you should advise your line manager immediately.

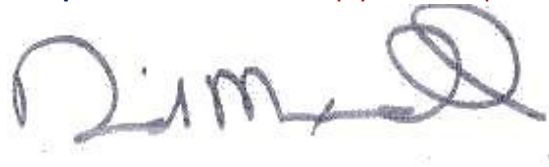
**Keeping Records:** In all cases, concise and accurate contact notes must be updated to the customer's record as soon as possible, preferably during the call. Remember that customers can, and do, ask to see the information that we hold on file. It is considered a disciplinary offence for any member of staff to add notes to or amend a customer's record in such a way as could be interpreted as offensive or deliberately inaccurate.

**Malicious Allegations:** Employees who are concerned that a colleague is exhibiting symptoms of an alcohol or drug related problem should notify their manager. These concerns will be treated on a strictly confidential basis. It will be considered inappropriate to make deliberately false accusations against another employee and the person making any such false claim may be subject to disciplinary action under this policy. Any allegations found to be false and malicious will be treated as a disciplinary offence and action will be taken against the person making the allegations.

---

**Company Intranet – Staff Zone:** All the McSence Groups policies, procedures, handbooks are available on-line to all employees on the McSence Group’s Staff Zone Intranet via our website [Login | McSence](#)

**Compliance:** Failure to comply with the provisions of this Policy may result in Disciplinary proceedings.



*McSence Group Signatory:*

**David Maxwell | Chief Executive**

**McSence Group - McSence Communication Ltd, McSence Ltd, McSence Services Ltd & McSence Workspace Ltd**

**T: 0131 454 1500 | E: [mail@mcsence.co.uk](mailto:mail@mcsence.co.uk) | W: [www.mcsence.co.uk](http://www.mcsence.co.uk) | FB: [www.facebook.com/McSenceGroup](http://www.facebook.com/McSenceGroup)**

*Policy Amendments & Revisions: This policy will be reviewed annually and, if necessary, revised in the light of legislative or organisational changes. Improvements will be made by learning from experience and the use of an established annual review. Should any amendments, revisions, or updates be made to this policy it is the responsibility of the Company Senior Management Team (SMT) to see that all relevant employees receive notice and training if necessary.*

POLICY