

Harassment and Bullying Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that every person who works for, or comes into contact with, JRRT is able to operate in a supportive and collaborative environment in which people value each other and are able to work together to their full potential free from harassment, bullying and other unacceptable forms of behaviour.

2. Who is responsible for this policy?

The Board of Directors has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy, but has delegated day-to-day responsibility for implementation to the Chief Executive.

3. Who does this policy apply to?

The expectations that all those we work with treat each other with dignity and respect apply to employees, the Board, consultants, contractors and advisors.

4. What is harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment may be persistent or an isolated incident.

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. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

5. 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.

6. Informal resolution

Resolving issues informally allows issues to be dealt with quickly and helps minimise damage to working relationships. An informal discussion will often help an individual to understand the effects of their behaviour and agree to change it.

If an employee feels they have been bullied or harassed or is unhappy with someone's behaviour towards them, the employee could:

- Approach the individual to explain the impact of their behaviour and ask for it to stop. This could be done face to face, by phone or in writing.
- Raise the matter with the Chief Executive who may facilitate an informal discussion to resolve the issue if this is deemed appropriate.
- Approach Chair or Vice Chair if the concern relates to the Chief Executive.

Both parties may wish to keep a record of what has taken place and managers should keep a record of dates, details and action taken.

7. Formal investigation and resolution

The employee can make a formal complaint. This should be in writing and include details of the conduct in question, the name of the person complained about, 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.

The complaint should be to the Chief Executive, or to the Chair or Vice Chair if the complaint involves the Chief Executive, who will try to achieve a solution where possible and respect the confidentiality of all concerned.

Bullying and harassment will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedures and are dealt with as matters of possible gross misconduct, the normal consequence of which will be dismissal without notice.

The investigator will also meet with the alleged harasser or bully to hear their account of events, so that they can respond.

Employees may be suspended while the alleged gross misconduct is being investigated, during which time, the normal pay rate will be paid. Anyone under investigation will be entitled to representation by a colleague or trade union representative.

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

Employees have a right of appeal. An appeal meeting will be arranged as soon as possible and conducted by one or more JRRT Directors.

8. Applying the policy beyond the workplace

a. Board members

Where the complaint is about conduct of a Board member, the Chair and Vice Chair will determine the appropriate process for investigating. If the Chair or Vice Chair is the subject of the complaint, then an additional Director should become involved to support the Chair or Vice Chair.

b. Consultants

JRRT's standard contract lists "acts of bullying, harassment or discrimination" as an example of gross misconduct. The clauses on termination of the Agreement enables JRRT to terminate if the Consultant commits any act of Gross Misconduct.

c. Grantees

Our guidance to applicants and grant offer letters will set out our expectation that grantees act with dignity and respect towards others and the high value JRRT places on building a supportive and collaborative environment across the grantee community in which organisations value each other and achieve their full potential free from harassment, bullying and other unacceptable forms of behaviour.

JRRT will insert a clause in grant offer letters stating that the policy should form part of our grant conditions.

d. Third parties

Where the complaint is about a supplier or other external party, we will consider what action may be appropriate to protect the individual and anyone involved pending the outcome of the investigation and 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. This policy will not require us to intervene with external organisations.

9. Supporting and protection for those involved

Individuals who perceive themselves as being bullied or harassed should seek appropriate support from the Employee Assistance Programme.

Counselling or mediation may be used where appropriate.

JRRT's Chief Executive can authorise payment for additional advice, counselling or support requested by one or both parties.

Retaliation or victimisation of an employee making a complaint in good faith [and unfounded allegations for malicious reasons] will be investigated and dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

10. Confidentiality and records

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. Information about a complaint by or about an employee may be placed on the employee's 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 privacy policy.

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