



Essex International College

Dignity Policy

Policy name	Dignity Policy
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Through its policies and in its day to day work, the College is committed to promoting equality and fairness and combating discrimination. This applies to everyone, regardless of gender, racial or ethnic background, disability, religion, sexual orientation or age and embraces the College's legal responsibilities.

Purpose and scope

The purpose of the dignity at work policy is to ensure a culture of working relationships in which everyone working for, or on behalf of Essex International college (EIC) is treated with dignity and respect, where harassment is known to be unacceptable and individuals have the confidence to deal with and challenge harassment or bullying without fear of ridicule or reprisals.

The policy and procedure apply to all EIC employees.

Policy

EIC is committed to tackling behaviour deemed inappropriate in working relationships. In most instances issues can be resolved informally. However, any complaint will be taken seriously and investigated swiftly. In certain circumstances, for example when the incident appears to be very serious or occurs repeatedly, the complainant is recommended to consult the Human Resources (HR) Director and the disciplinary procedure may be invoked.

Definitions

Harassment is unwanted conduct in working relationships affecting the dignity of employees. It is actions or comments that are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient or that create a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for a member of staff.

Harassment includes any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, for example, unwelcome sexual advances, touching, standing too close and the display of offensive materials.

Bullying can be defined as persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or malicious behaviour, abuse of power or sanctions which makes the recipient feel threatened, humiliated or vulnerable and which undermines self-confidence. Examples include shouting in public, persistent or unfair criticism, ostracising people, threats and instilling fear, inappropriate use of email, spreading malicious rumours, constantly undervaluing effort, withholding information, removing areas of responsibility and imposing inappropriate tasks.

Certain behaviour or actions may be acceptable to one individual while unacceptable to another. It is the deed and the impact on the recipient, which constitutes harassment. The recipient has a responsibility to make their colleague aware that they find it unacceptable and ideally to explain why.

Responsibilities

Everyone has a responsibility to behave in a way that is not offensive to others and to acknowledge that views and opinions held by others, and decisions made by managers and supervisors, may not always coincide with their own. Such differences are unlikely to constitute harassment.

It must be recognised that those in positions of authority have both a right and responsibility to discharge managerial duties. In so doing they may need to adopt a firm or assertive style, but they should take care not to demean, devalue or intimidate employees.

An employee found to be making mischievous or malicious complaints is likely to be subject to the disciplinary procedure.

Procedure

All complaints will be dealt with confidentially as far as possible. However, EIC has a duty of care to all employees and it may be necessary to investigate and take action regarding a complaint without the consent of the complainant.

Informal procedure

If the employee feels able to, then often the quickest and most effective means of dealing with an issue is to raise the matter informally with the person or persons concerned, explaining that their behaviour is offensive or unacceptable.

The employee should feel free to ask for support from their line manager or the Director of Human Resources at any time.

Formal procedure

The Grievance procedure should be used to bring a complaint against another employee where the informal procedure has been ineffective.

An employee should keep a written record of any incidents, such as what happened, when and where it occurred, whether there were any witnesses or names of others who have been treated in a similar way. It is also helpful to consider how the situation may be resolved.