



Dignity at Work Policy

We are committed to providing and promoting an inclusive working and learning environment where all our staff and students are treated fairly and with dignity and respect, in line with our University [Values](#) and as set out in our Charter.

The University will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, bullying or victimisation (unacceptable behaviour) by or against any member of our Cranfield community, or by a third party such as a supplier or visitor to the University.

About this policy

We are committed to providing all staff, students and wider members of our Cranfield community with a range of mechanisms for them to raise concerns, seek support and be listened to if they believe they are being or have been subjected to unacceptable behaviour while working, studying or participating in a Cranfield activity.

This policy therefore aims to:

- maintain the dignity of all members of the Cranfield Community
- ensure that differences are respected and valued
- demonstrate our commitment to diversity and inclusion
- embed our University [Values](#)
- set out the responsibilities of individual members of the University community in recognising and preventing harassment or bullying in (or associated with) the workplace
- outline and promote the support available and procedures to be followed if harassment or bullying occurs.

It has been developed in line with ACAS guidelines and covers work-related events (including social events) whether they are on or off our sites (including overseas), as well as the normal working environment and electronic communications (including social media platforms). It covers cases of harassment and bullying of staff by other members of the University and the harassment or bullying of students by staff. A [Dignity at study](#) policy is in place for students who have concerns or may have encountered harassment or bullying from other students.

Definitions

Bullying

Bullying is defined as: “Intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour and/or an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates or denigrates the person at the receiving end”.

It can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Non-verbal conduct includes postings on social media platforms.

Work-related bullying may include, but is not limited to:

- a) setting up someone to fail by giving them unachievable tasks, an unmanageable workload or impossible deadlines, or making unreasonable demands
- b) inappropriate monitoring of work or overbearing supervision
- c) giving someone too little work or work that is below their competence
- d) removing or reassigning a person's responsibilities without justification
- e) deliberately withholding training or resources from someone that are necessary for them to perform the role, or opportunities for advancement or promotion
- f) making inappropriate threats or hints about job security
- g) withdrawing or refusing reasonable support (further information on this can be found below under 'Line Manager responsibilities').

Cyber bullying and the use of social networking sites

Cyber bullying is a term used to refer to bullying through electronic media, usually via social networking sites, personal web pages, emails, text messages and internet presence including blogs such as Facebook, and all other social media, whether private, personal or public. In using all social media or posting online, all staff and students should consider the content, language and appropriateness of such communications.

The following guidance is relevant for both students and staff in relation to online behaviour:

- avoid using language which could be deemed to be offensive, threatening or humiliating to others in a face-to-face setting as the impact may be much the same or worse, as it may not be possible to delete the online information
- avoid forming or joining an online group that isolates or victimises fellow students or colleagues
- ensure that social networking sites are not used to access or share illegal content
- avoid defamatory comments in relation to staff, students, customers or suppliers of the University
- do not share confidential information regarding a University employee, student, customer or supplier.

Staff and students are encouraged to report incidences of inappropriate online behaviour. If alleged cyber bullying or harassment is reported, it will be dealt with in accordance with this policy and may lead to disciplinary action in the same way as incidents that take place in a face-to-face setting.

The University's Social Media policy can be found here: [Social media \(cranfield.ac.uk\)](https://www.cranfield.ac.uk/social-media)

Harassment

The Equality Act 2010 defines harassment as: "Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual".

Harassment will amount to unlawful discrimination if it relates to any of the protected characteristics.

Harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment/sexual misconduct), or it may be related to a protected characteristic such as age, disability, gender reassignment, gender expression or identity, pregnancy or maternity (including breastfeeding), race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Harassment/sexual misconduct may include, but is not limited to:

- a) unwanted physical conduct or 'horseplay', including touching, pinching, pushing, grabbing, brushing past someone, invading their personal space and more serious forms of physical or sexual assault
- b) unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless), and suggestions that sexual favours may further a career or that a refusal may hinder it

- c) continued suggestions for social activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome
- d) sending or displaying material that is pornographic or that some people may find offensive (including e-mails, text messages, video clips and images sent by mobile phone or posted on the internet)
- e) offensive or intimidating comments or gestures, or insensitive jokes or pranks
- f) mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability
- g) ignoring or shunning someone, for example, by deliberately excluding them from a conversation or a workplace social activity
- h) intrusion by pestering, spying or stalking.

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 it creates an offensive environment.

Harassment or bullying may consist of sporadic or persistent behaviour, although one single act may be considered sufficiently serious to warrant disciplinary action.

Specific examples of the harassment related to specific protected characteristics can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Discrimination and hate crime

Unlawful discrimination takes place when an individual or a group of people are treated less favourably than others based on a protected characteristic such as age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity (including treating a woman less favourably because they are breastfeeding), race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation and in relation to direct discrimination only, marriage and civil partnership.

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one of the protected characteristics set out above; this can include association with or a perception of a particular characteristic.

Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criteria or practice that puts people with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage compared with others who do not share that characteristic.

Crimes committed against someone because of their disability, transgender-identity, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation are classed as hate crimes and should be reported to the police.

Hate crimes can include:

- threatening behaviour
- assault
- robbery
- damage to property
- inciting others to commit hate crimes
- harassment
- online abuse.

Victimisation

Victimisation broadly refers to poor treatment directed towards someone who has made or is believed to have made or supported a complaint under the Equality Act. It is subjecting a person to a detriment because they have, in good faith, complained (whether formally or otherwise) that someone has been bullying or harassing them or someone else, or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint. This would include isolating someone because they have made a complaint or giving them a heavier or more difficult workload.

Provided that person has acted in good faith and genuinely believes that what they are saying is true, they have a right not to be victimised for making a complaint or doing anything in relation to a complaint of bullying or harassment and the University will take appropriate action to deal with any alleged victimisation, which may include disciplinary action against anyone found to have victimised another member of staff.

Making a complaint that you know to be untrue, or giving evidence that you know to be untrue, may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

Roles and responsibilities

Staff

All staff are expected to:

- treat colleagues and other members of the University community with dignity and respect and adhere to this policy, in line with our University [Values](#)
- value differences in others and the contribution they make
- report any suspected incidents of bullying, harassment, sexual misconduct or victimisation immediately to their line manager, their local HR team or a Dignity at Work Advisor (highlighted below)
- discourage inappropriate behaviour by making it clear that they find it inappropriate and by supporting colleagues who experience such behaviour and reporting incidents to enable the University to deal with it
- ensure that visitors/contractors they engage with do not encounter any inappropriate behaviour and that they comply with this policy themselves. Complaints of bullying or harassment by a contractor will be investigated and action taken may include severing links with them where the complaint is upheld
- have a right to complain if they believe they are being treated inappropriately, and to be assured complaints will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. The procedures under [Ordinance 29 'Resolution of Grievances'](#) should be referred to for Dignity at Work complaints.

Line managers

Line managers have a duty to implement this policy and to make every effort to ensure that bullying and harassment does not occur, particularly in the area they are responsible for. They should create a culture of respect, dignity and trust, and deal with any incidents in line with this policy.

Line managers:

- have a right to be treated with respect and dignity from the people they manage
- have a right to manage and monitor staff performance without fear of unfounded accusations of bullying or harassment
- should be responsive and supportive to any member of staff who makes an allegation of bullying or harassment, provide clear advice on the procedure to be adopted, maintain confidentiality and seek to ensure that there is no further problem of bullying, harassment or victimisation after a complaint has been resolved

- should lead by example by treating all staff with dignity and respect, listening and responding to their views and being realistic about objectives and work programmes
- should be alert to unacceptable behaviour and take appropriate action
- should ensure that staff know how to raise bullying or harassment problems and who is the [Dignity at Work Advisor for their School/PSU](#).

Staff may be suffering the effects of unacceptable behaviour without revealing it and feeling stressed, so it is important that managers aware of are some typical signs, notably:

- absenteeism, regular or prolonged sick leave
- increased turnover, reduced performance, a decline in productivity or quality of work output
- lack of respect for others, low morale or a change of atmosphere at work.

Staff should not interpret firm and fair management as bullying or harassment. Harassment or bullying is always unfair and may undermine someone's efforts to perform well, whereas assertive/legitimate management actions could include:

- setting fair but achievable objectives and performance measures
- monitoring performance levels against objectives
- providing constructive feedback when staff members are not performing at satisfactory levels or behaving inappropriately
- taking action where unsatisfactory work or levels of absence have been identified.

The University

The University regards all forms of bullying, harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination and victimisation as unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Conduct may be deemed to be unacceptable whether or not the person behaving in that way intends to cause offence. This applies to people who are not the subject of the harassment or bullying, but who may witness it and be offended by it.

We will ensure that adequate resources are made available to promote dignity in the workplace and to deal effectively with complaints of inappropriate behaviour. This includes ensuring that this policy is readily accessible to all members of staff and students and training is available for staff to understand their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

The University will support and train designated 'Dignity at Work Advisors' who will be available to any member of staff to offer confidential first line information and support on all Dignity at Work matters (see below for further information on Dignity at Work Advisors).

Informal resolution

Where possible, every effort should be made to resolve a complaint or issue informally. Often a person will not realise their behaviour is unwelcome or offensive, so an informal conversation may help them to understand the effect of their behaviour and prevent it reoccurring. If staff find it difficult to approach the other person directly (or raising it with their line manager), they can contact one of the following members of staff for confidential support, advice or assistance in the first instance:

- [Dignity at Work Advisors](#)
- [Trade Union representatives](#)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team
- [Local HR Teams](#)

If staff have been accused of inappropriate behaviour they may also seek support from above, but to avoid any conflict of interest, they will be directed to another person than the one advising the complainant.

Dignity at Work Advisors

Dignity at Work Advisors are volunteers who have been trained to provide staff with advice and guidance. An advisor can be contacted on a confidential basis at the informal stage.

Support may include:

- providing information on options available to the person seeking help
- advice on how to collate evidence to establish a complaint.

A list of advisors, their departments and contact details are available on the [intranet](#). There may be occasions where the Dignity at Work Advisor selected is unable to offer support. If this is the case, they will refer the member of staff to another Dignity at Work Advisor who will be able to assist.

It should be noted that the Dignity at Work Advisors do not normally conduct formal investigations.

Employee Assistance Programme

Bullying and harassment can have a detrimental impact on an individual's wellbeing. Staff who need further support can contact the University's [Employee Assistance Programme](#) (PAM Assist) which offers a free 24-hour helpline and can provide a confidential channel to discuss the issues they are experiencing around their wellbeing.

Mediation

Mediation is a voluntary process where the mediator helps two (or more) people in dispute to find a solution to the issue that they can both agree to. The mediator does not take sides or tell those in dispute what to do.

Mediation is a completely voluntary and confidential form of alternative dispute resolution. It involves an independent, impartial person helping two or more individuals or groups reach a solution that is acceptable to everyone. The mediator can talk to both sides separately or together.

Mediation can be a good way of dealing with bullying, discrimination or harassment situations depending upon the nature of the allegations.

Further advice on mediation is available from your local HR team.

Monitoring

While individuals will remain anonymous, we will monitor all reported incidents of bullying and harassment annually and will regularly review the effectiveness of this policy.

Further reference documents

- [University Diversity Strategy](#)
- [Dignity at study policy](#)
- [Student welfare handbook](#)
- [Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy](#)

Confidentiality

Evidence provided under this policy will be treated in a sensitive and confidential manner and information will be shared on a need-to-know basis, including as appropriate with the reported staff member.

Unnecessary disclosure of such allegations may result in disciplinary action.

As part of the investigatory process the identity of the individual(s) providing the evidence may have to be revealed and, as appropriate, they may be requested to make a statement and/or attend an investigatory interview.

All information received in relation to this policy will be stored and processed in line with applicable data protection legislation. To learn more about how we handle your data, please review our [Privacy Notice](#).

Appendix 1: Examples of harassment

Harassment can take place face-to-face, or in written form (e.g. by emails, or comments on social media sites). They may be heard or received directly by the intended person, or by others. Both such 'direct' and 'indirect' harassment are considered unacceptable behaviour.

Outlined below are some examples of harassment. Some, if occurring only once, may cause mild irritation but if repeated becomes harassing. Some on the other hand are clearly harassment even if they occur once. Nevertheless, all the forms of harassment are inappropriate for the University to maintain a culture of respect and dignity.

A.1 Sexual harassment/sexual misconduct

Sexual harassment/sexual misconduct is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature. It can happen to men, women and people of any gender or sexual orientation. It can be carried out by anyone of the same sex, opposite sex or anyone of any gender identity. It can be physical, verbal or non-verbal in nature and can occur between members of the same or opposite sex. It is for individuals to determine what behaviour is acceptable to them and what they regard as offensive. However, any behaviour that could make the recipient feel that they are viewed as a sexual object may cause offence even if offence was not intended.

Examples of sexual harassment/sexual misconduct include:

- unwelcome advances, attention, invitations, or propositions
- offensive or unwelcome sexist comments or behaviour
- unwanted or derogatory comments about dress or appearance
- making unwelcome comments, jokes or gestures emphasising the gender of an individual or a group that are of a sexual nature
- threats of academic failure or promises of promotion or training in exchange for sexual favours
- serious criminal behaviour such as indecent exposure, indecent or sexual assault or rape are extreme examples of sexual harassment/sexual misconduct
- emailing, texting or messaging sexual content
- displaying pornographic or sexual images on posters, calendars and cards
- having pornographic or sexual images on computers and phones
- unnecessary and unwanted physical contact.

What some people might consider as joking, 'banter' or part of their workplace culture can still be

sexual misconduct if the behaviour is of a sexual nature and it's unwanted.

A.2 Racial harassment

Racial harassment is an incident, or a series of incidents intended or likely to intimidate, offend or harm an individual or group because of their ethnic origin, colour, race, religion or nationality or cultural difference. A racist incident is any incident that is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person

Examples of racial harassment include:

- derogatory name-calling, insults, banter, taunts and racist jokes
- verbal abuse or threats
- the display of racist graffiti or images
- the transmission of racially offensive materials or statements via electronic or other means
- physical attack or threat of attack
- ridicule of an individual for cultural differences
- unnecessary comments or intrusive questioning about racial issues or racial origin

- open hostility, avoiding or refusing to work with an individual from a different racial group.

A.3 Disability harassment

Disability harassment is behaviour that makes direct or indirect insulting and offensive references to a person's disability.

Examples of disability harassment include:

- mockery, taunts or jokes regarding personal attributes or mental health
- offensive language or derogatory name-calling
- avoidance or refusal to work alongside a disabled person
- speaking to others rather than to the disabled person directly
- unwelcome discussion of the effects of disability on the individual's personal life
- excluding the disabled person from social events or meetings
- physical abuse or intimidation
- interfering with personal aids or equipment
- making assumptions about a person's ability to carry out certain types of work, based on their disability.

A.4 Harassment relating to sexual orientation

Harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation can be hostile or offensive acts or expressions by a person or group against another person or group because of their sexuality. Homophobia is a term used to describe hatred and rejection of gay, lesbian and homosexual people. It may be directed against individuals or groups of people who are, or are thought to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered.

Examples of harassment relating to sexual orientation include:

- unnecessary and degrading references to someone's sexual orientation, gender identity or their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity
- spreading rumours or gossip including speculating about someone's sexual orientation or gender identity, or outing them
- asking intrusive questions
- homophobic remarks, jokes, innuendo or gossip
- threats of disclosing sexuality of the individual
- expressing or acting on stereotypical assumptions
- display or transmission (including by electronic means) of offensive materials
- excluding people because they are bisexual, lesbian or gay
- offensive actions and physical attack
- using religious belief to justify anti-gay bullying and harassment.

A.5 Harassment relating to religion, belief or non-belief

Cranfield will not tolerate any form of religious harassment or discrimination against any faith group. Harassment may be defined as any hostile or offensive act or expression by a person or group against another person or group, based on their religion, belief (including a philosophical belief) or non-belief. It is imperative that behaviour towards others is at all times respectful and courteous, regardless of a person's religion, belief or non-belief and that the University's performance standards are adhered to.

Examples of harassment relating to religion, belief or non-belief may include the following:

- ridicule and offensive humour or jokes about a belief or non-belief
- abusive language, including racist or religious jokes and can include "banter"
- derogatory remarks or name calling

- exclusion from social activities or work-related events without justification
- display of or transmission (including by electronic means) of offensive materials
- (malicious) scorning of beliefs or non-belief
- proselytising
- physical attack or threats of attack
- the display of racially offensive written material.

On harassment relating to a specific religion, belief or non-belief, external guidance may be available e.g. the [IHRA definition of antisemitism](#) will be taken into account in any disciplinary case following a complaint or allegation of antisemitism.

A.6 Age harassment

Harassment on the grounds of age consists of hostile or offensive acts by a person or group against another person or group in relation to their age. It is recognised that younger or older workers may be harassed or bullied on account of their age.

Examples of age harassment include the following:

- ageist remarks, jokes
- negative or derogatory comments generalising about the age-group of the individual
- physical attack or threats of attack
- exclusion on the basis of age e.g. being too young or too old to participate in work-related events.

A.7 Harassment relating to gender reassignment

Transgender harassment is harassment on grounds that a person proposes to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment. Gender reassignment is the medical and social process whereby a person changes their birth sex to match their chosen gender identity.

A person harasses another if they engage in unwanted conduct related to gender reassignment, which has the purpose or effect of violating the other person's dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Examples of harassment relating to gender reassignment include the following:

- derogatory name-calling derogatory remarks, jokes, innuendo or gossip
- offensive transphobic comments or jokes
- asking intrusive questions
- threats of disclosing the gender identity of the individual
- deliberately using the incorrect pronoun to address the member of staff when you have been informed of the correct one.
- expressing or acting on stereotypical assumptions
- exclusion of trans staff from facilities
- display of or electronic transmission of offensive materials.

A.8 Other forms of harassment

There are other forms of harassment that do not constitute harassment on the grounds of the above but nevertheless can seriously affect the well-being of colleagues if they occur.

Examples of such behaviour include:

- intrusion into the individual's personal life by pestering, spying or stalking
- persistent pressures to become involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour
- persistent intimidating behaviour based on the individual's membership or non-membership of a trade union.

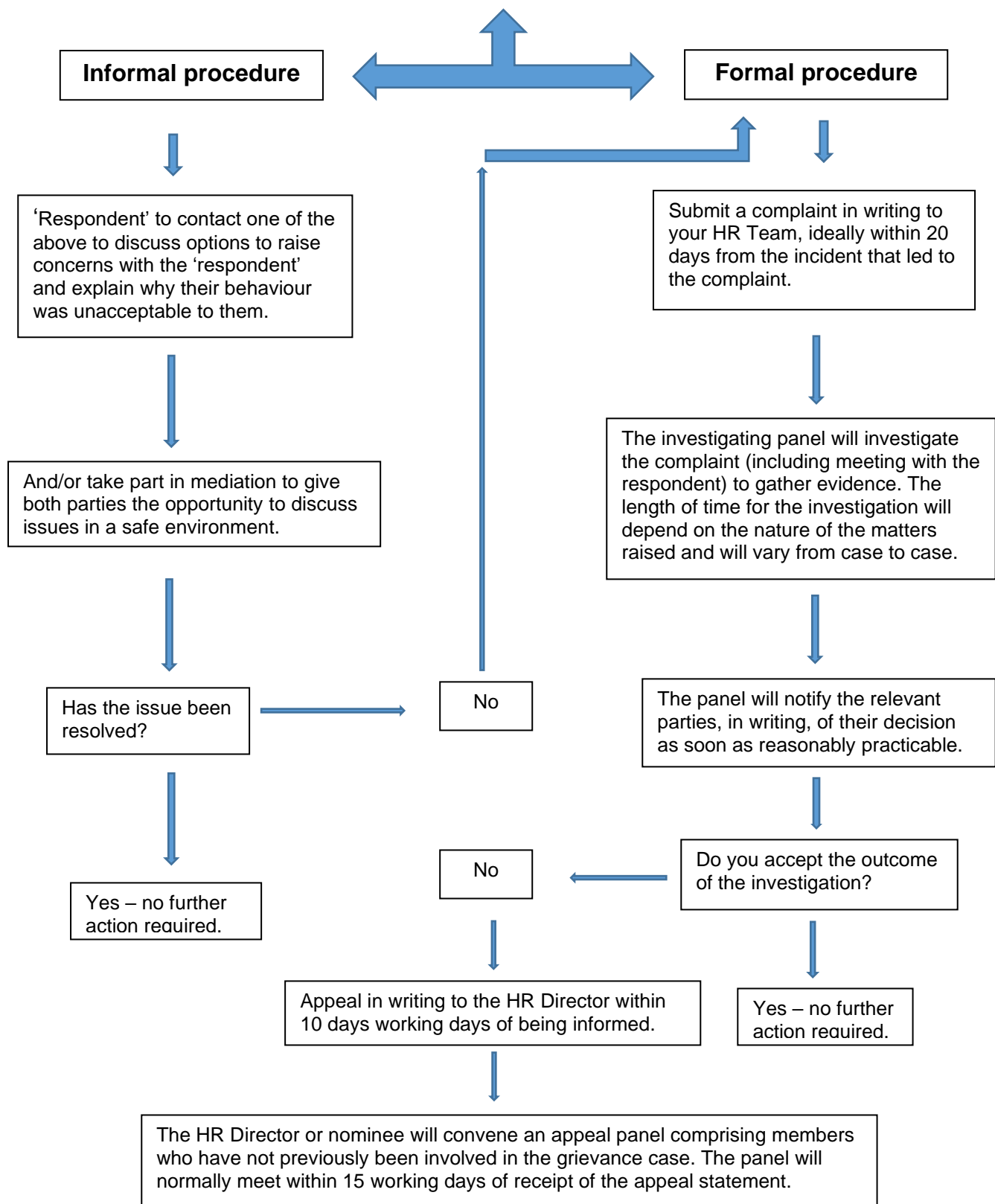
Any difficulty in defining what constitutes harassment should not deter staff from complaining of behaviour that causes them distress. Nor should anyone be deterred from making a complaint because of embarrassment or fear of intimidation or publicity.

Appendix 2: Dignity at Work process

To be read in conjunction with Ordinance 29 – the resolution of grievances

If you feel that you have experienced a Dignity at Work issue you can discuss your concerns and seek advice from:

- Your Local HR Team
- Dignity at Work Advisor
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Team
- Local Trade Union representative



Document control

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Version	Amendment	By	Date
V1	Policy updated	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Business Partner	April 2017
V2	Amendment to Appendix A (A.5) to include reference to IHRA definition of antisemitism	Head of Equality Diversity & Inclusion	December 2020
V3	Policy reviewed	Head of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	February 2021
V4	Policy reviewed to include sexual misconduct	Head of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	April 2022