

From time to time, issues arise in every employment that can cause friction in the workplace. These can arise from inter-personal differences, conflicts, misunderstandings and disagreements about the application of agreed terms and conditions of work.

Ideally, these should be resolved between the parties at local level. Good workplace level policies and procedures assist employers and employees to work together in resolving such issues. Some of most important are outlined below:

## Grievance and Disciplinary

A “grievance” is when an employee has a complaint about some aspect of their work. A “disciplinary” matter may arise when an employer has an issue with the employee’s work or behaviour.

It is in everyone’s best interest that good grievance and disciplinary procedures are in place and known to all. For employers, they ensure that discipline is maintained, and, for employees, they ensure that grievances are handled in a fair and consistent manner.

Grievance and disciplinary procedures should be in writing and in a format and language that is easily understood. Copies of the procedures should be given to all employees at the start of employment, and should be included in employee induction programmes and refresher training, as well as in trade union organised employee representative training. All

members of management, including supervisors and all employee representatives should be fully aware of such procedures and should follow them in all instances.

A Code of Practice on what such a policy should include and the procedures to be followed in dealing with grievances or applying procedures is available at [www.workplacerelations.ie/en/Good\\_Workplace\\_Relations/codes\\_practice/COP3](http://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/Good_Workplace_Relations/codes_practice/COP3).

## Bullying and Harassment

Employers have a duty of care to all employees to ensure they are safe at work and that their health, well-being, and ability to do their work effectively is not adversely affected by their work environment. Employers must take steps to ensure that bullying and harassment of any employee is not tolerated and dealt with appropriately when it occurs.

Examples of behaviour that may constitute bullying or harassment are:

- Purposely undermining someone,
- Targeting someone for special negative treatment at work or on social media,
- Attacking an individual’s reputation,
- Social exclusion or isolation,
- Repeated requests with impossible deadline or impossible tasks.

Further information on what can constitute bullying is available on [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie).

## Bullying and Harassment Policies

It is important that places of work have a Bullying and Harassment Policy that is known to all employees.

A Code of Practice on what such a policy should include and the procedures to be followed in dealing with a claim of bullying or harassment is may be obtained at [www.workplacerelations.ie/en/Good\\_Workplace\\_Relations/codes\\_practice/COP6](http://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/Good_Workplace_Relations/codes_practice/COP6).

## Health and Safety

Employers have a duty of care to all employees to ensure that they are protected from work-related injuries and ill-health. This can be done by ensuring that workplaces operate in line with health and safety law (e.g. protective clothing, equipment, safe environment, etc.), and that that appropriate regular training is provided to all employees.

This is underpinned by the requirement for all employers to have a comprehensive **Safety Statement** that should be given to all employees. Further information on what should be included in such a Statement is available on [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie).

## Equality

Employers have an obligation to ensure that employees are not discriminated against in the workplace. Examples of where workplace discrimination (i.e. treating one person in a less favourable way than another person) can arise include recruitment and promotion; equal pay; working conditions; training or experience; dismissal and harassment including sexual harassment.

Workplace discrimination may be based on any one or more of the following 9 grounds: Gender, Civil Status, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Age, Disability, Race, Membership of the Traveller Community.

## Making a complaint: The Workplace Relations Commission (WRC)

Where issues arising in the workplace are not resolved locally or where an employee wishes to pursue a complaint against the employer on a matter related to his or her employment, the WRC provides a range of services with a view to bringing the matter to resolution.

### The services include:

- Assistance to resolve breakdowns in working relationships,
- Mediation between employers and employees and/or their representatives to help employers and employees reach agreement in individual disputes,
- Adjudication where such agreement is not possible, and
- Conciliation between employers and employees and/or their representatives in collective disputes,

In addition, the WRC Inspection and Enforcement Division carries out inspections, examinations and investigations to ensure that employees receive their statutory entitlements, and to make sure that compliant employers are not operating at a competitive disadvantage.

## Further Information

For further information on all or any of the above please contact our Information and Customer Services at Lo-call 1890 808090 or look at our website [www.workplacerelations.ie](http://www.workplacerelations.ie).



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Workplace Relations Commission