



Respect, inclusion and belonging

1. Why this matters

We want an environment where everyone can contribute, feel valued and thrive!

At M Group we lead by example, championing inclusive leadership and fostering a culture of respect, belonging, and fairness. We have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, or victimisation. This document outlines the standards of conduct expected in and around the workplace and highlights the importance of looking out for one another.

This policy applies to all colleagues of M Group and our subsidiaries. This is not a contractual document and may be updated from time to time.

2. What we expect from you

Treat others how you wish to be treated.

At M Group, we expect everyone to

- Treat others with respect, dignity, and fairness
- Act in accordance with legal, ethical, and regulatory standards
- Avoid conflicts of interest and follow company procedures
- Handle confidential and personal data responsibly (see our Data Protection and GDPR policies)
- Promote a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment
- Challenge or report discrimination, bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, or victimisation
- Never discriminate, harass, or victimise others

Protected characteristics

Under the Equality Act 2010, individuals are protected from discrimination based on

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Definitions and examples of unacceptable behaviour

- **Bullying:** Ongoing offensive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting behaviour that undermines or injures another person.

Example: Repeatedly excluding someone from team activities or spreading malicious rumours.

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- **Harassment** - Unwanted conduct related to protected characteristics that violates someone's dignity or creates an offensive environment.
Example: Making jokes about someone's disability or religion.
- **Victimisation** - Unfair treatment for raising or supporting a complaint of bullying or harassment.
- **Sexual Harassment** - Unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. We have a duty to take **all** reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.
Examples: Unwanted touching, sexual comments, displaying sexual images, or coercion.

3. How we measure

We track equality and diversity with the same care as any business priority, using data, listening to our colleagues, and adjusting to create fairer outcomes

Going beyond

We regularly monitor and encourage a respectful work environment by

- **Beyond compliance** – we live to our values and not adopt a ‘tick box’ approach
- **Beyond recruitment** – we ensure our policies, practices and processes are fair
- **Beyond equality** – we treat everyone the same to achieve fairer, more open and equal outcomes
- **Beyond gender** – we'll ensure we are truly diverse, at all levels
- **Beyond blue-badge parking** – we make reasonable adjustments for our disabled colleagues
- **Beyond People teams** – we ask every team to play its part, for example by using diverse suppliers

Inclusion by design

We listen to, learn from and respond to the feedback our colleagues give us so our leadership, our behaviours and our cultures are more inclusive.

Sustainable change

We apply the same to inclusion as we do to any other business priority using evidence-based problem definitions, understanding root causes, implementing research-led solutions, tracking progress rigorously, and ensuring adequate resourcing.

The People function leaders will monitor and share the effectiveness of this policy through

- Key performance indicators (KPI's)
- Data from People opinion surveys, focus groups, and feedback sessions especially in relation to levels of inclusion and differences in engagement levels between diverse groups
- Progress updates on local action plans

Monitoring and accountability

We monitor and encourage a respectful work environment by

- Collecting and analysing diversity data
- Reporting annually on our respect, inclusion, and belonging activities
- Providing ongoing training and maintaining a network of inclusion champions

4. Support when you need it

If you're experiencing or have witnessed discrimination, bullying or harassment, confidential support is here

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If you experience or witness discrimination, bullying, or harassment

- Raise concerns with your manager or People team.
- Submit a grievance (see [Grievance Policy](#)).
- Contact the Whistleblowing line: 0800 890011, then dial 833 573 1738
mgroupspeakup.ethicspoint.com
- Access confidential support via the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). By phone: 0800 389 0285 or download their app – Search for the ‘Wisdom’ app on your Android or iOS device and enter our unique employer’s code **METL.MGROUP**

All concerns are handled promptly, sensitively, and confidentially. Support is available for both complainants and respondents, as well as anyone else who may be impacted during investigations.

5. Who’s responsible

Everyone plays a part - but our Executive Board leads the way, department heads drive change, and managers make it real every day

- **Executive Board** - Accountable for communicating, implementing, and reviewing this policy.
- **Department heads** - Drive continuous improvement in respect, inclusion and belonging.
- **Inclusion subject matter experts (SMEs)** - Provide expertise, oversee strategy, and monitor action plans.
- **Employee resource groups (ERGs)** - Maintain safe, inclusive environments and escalate insights.
- **Managers and leaders** - Model inclusive behaviours, make fair decisions, and promote inclusive teams.
- **All colleagues** - Uphold the standards set out in this policy.

6. Sexual harassment, bullying and harassment, and how we manage it

We’ll follow a clear, fair, and supportive procedure to encourage the reporting of potential or alleged sexual harassment, bullying and harassment in our workplace. We’ll deliver regular training sessions, so you have a comprehensive understanding of what they all are, and your role in addressing and preventing them.

We know the importance of regularly checking for and addressing any risks of bullying and harassment at work.

7. Leading by example

Treat others how you’d like to be treated

You’re well placed to pick up on any underlying tensions that could indicate potentially inappropriate behaviours or attitudes. These may include colleagues unwilling or reluctant to work together, heated exchanges or alleged favouritism.

Everyone is responsible for creating a respectful work environment – it’s down to all of us to set a good example and address any incidents promptly.

8. What should I do if I’m being bullied, harassed or sexually harassed?

There are a couple of available options

Informal procedure

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Wherever possible, allegations should be dealt with first on an informal basis. The person may not know their behaviour is unwelcome or upsetting, so an informal discussion may help them understand the effects of their behaviour and give them an opportunity to change it.

You may feel able to approach the person yourself, or with a witness. You can ask a member of our People team, a manager or colleague, whoever you're comfortable with. You should tell the person the behaviour you find offensive and unwelcome. Make it clear you would like it to stop immediately. If you feel more comfortable, you could state your concerns in writing to them.

Either way, you should **keep a note of the date and what was said and done**. This will be useful evidence if the unacceptable behaviour continues and you wish to make a formal complaint.

Formal procedure

If an informal approach doesn't resolve the issue, or you think the situation is too serious to be dealt with informally, you can make a formal complaint by using our [grievance procedure](#). The complaint should be made in writing and where possible state the following

- The name(s) of the harasser(s).
- The nature of the complaint.
- Dates and times when the incidents occurred.
- Any witnesses.
- If appropriate, details of any action taken by you to put a stop to the harassment i.e. informal discussions.

Grievances/criminal offence

In the case of grievances about bullying or harassment, the normal grievance procedure is modified so you can choose whether to raise your grievance with your manager or directly with the People team.

In very serious cases, a criminal offence may have been committed, and you may wish to report matters to the police.

How we'll deal with your complaint

All complaints will be investigated promptly and, if appropriate, disciplinary proceedings will be brought against the alleged harasser. You'll have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative of your choice at any meeting dealing with your grievance. You'll be kept informed of the general progress of the investigation and the outcome of any disciplinary proceedings. We'll decide on a balance of probabilities and after considering all available evidence, whether harassment or bullying has occurred.

We'll treat complaints of bullying and any kind of harassment sensitively and maintain confidentiality to the maximum extent possible.

Will I have to continue working with them?

Wherever possible, we'll ensure you and the alleged harasser are not required to work together while the complaint is under investigation. This could involve giving you the option of working from home or in another site/office. In a serious case, the alleged harasser may be suspended while an investigation and any disciplinary proceedings are underway.

If your complaint is upheld, and the person remains in our employment, where possible every effort will be made to ensure you don't have to continue to work alongside them, if you don't wish to do so. We'll discuss the options with you -these may include the transfer of the harasser or, if you wish, you may be able to transfer to another post.

If your complaint is not upheld, the People team will support you, the alleged harasser and your manager(s) in deciding for you both to continue working together and help repair working relationships or avoid having to continue working alongside each other. We'll also ensure you have the details of our [EAP provider](#).

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You have a right not to be victimised for making a complaint, even if the complaint is not upheld. However, making a complaint you know to be untrue may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

9. What happens if I'm accused of bullying or harassment?

We want to make sure you're treated fairly.

If someone approaches you informally about your behaviour, you shouldn't dismiss the complaint because you were 'only joking' or think they're being too sensitive.

Different people find different things acceptable, and everyone has the right to decide what behaviour is acceptable to them and have their feelings respected by others.

You may have offended someone without intending to. If that's the case, the person concerned may be content with an explanation and an apology. If you don't repeat the behaviour that caused offence, this may well be the end of the matter.

If a formal complaint is made about your behaviour, this will be fully investigated and we may bring disciplinary proceedings, if appropriate. We'll follow our [disciplinary procedure](#), and you'll have the rights set out in that procedure.

You'll also have the right to be informed of the allegations against you, and to put your side of the story forward. You may also be accompanied to formal meetings by a trade union representative or colleague of your choice.

We'll follow the right steps, based on how serious the allegation is. Complaints of bullying and harassment or sexual harassment will often be allegations of gross misconduct that, if proved, could lead to dismissal without notice.

What might be the outcome?

If the complaint is upheld, but you aren't dismissed, the company could decide to transfer you to another post and/or demote you. You may also be asked to attend a training course in a specific area.

If a complaint is made against you that isn't upheld and the company has good grounds for believing the complaint was not made in good faith, we may take disciplinary action against the person making the false complaint.

Certain kinds of bullying or harassment may break the law. If this happens, you could face legal action or criminal charges, separate from our company's own disciplinary process. You could be personally liable to pay compensation to the complainant if a successful claim in the employment tribunal or other courts was brought against you. Criminal proceedings could lead to conviction and criminal penalties.

10. How do I report a concern?

We want you to feel comfortable coming to us

You're accountable for reporting suspected or known misconduct to your managers. If you feel uncomfortable doing this, you can talk to the People Services team, or you can report misconduct confidentially and anonymously through our [People Services portal](#), or our [whistleblowing phone or online service](#).

Please contact your line manager, People Services or a member of the ENABLE network if you wish to find out more about this policy and procedure.

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