

FAL Equal opportunities, diversity and dignity in the workplace

Purpose and Scope

Forensic Archive Ltd (FAL) is an equal opportunities employer and embraces diversity in the workplace.

Any form of discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation is fundamentally unacceptable and breaches the Code of Conduct.

This policy applies to all employees of FAL. It does not form part of the contract of employment and may be reviewed and revised in line with changes in the law or due to business need. The Trade Union will be kept informed of any planned changes.

Statement of policy

Discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation of employees will not be tolerated in the workplace or in any environment where work related activities take place.

Discrimination is less favourable treatment of an employee on grounds prohibited by law i.e. gender, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity leave, sexual orientation, disability, race, colour, ethnic background, nationality, religion or belief, age, part time or fixed term working.

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of men and women in the workplace or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It may be related to a personal characteristic of the individual or another person, and may be persistent or an isolated incident. The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of an employee's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to employees in the course of their employment will not on their own amount to bullying.

Victimisation is treating someone less favourably than others because they have complained or intend to complain about discrimination, bullying or harassment or because they have given evidence or supported another person's complaint.

Equal opportunities monitoring and actions to promote diversity in the workplace

FAL is committed to preventing discrimination in recruitment, selection and all aspects of the employment relationship.

FAL will take appropriate steps to promote diversity and to reduce the likelihood of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation. This may include but is not limited to the use of mediation and making reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities.

Maintaining a positive working environment

Managers are expected to set a good example by their own behaviour and to ensure their teams know the standards of behaviour expected.

Employees are expected to treat colleagues with respect, be aware of how their behaviour may affect others and change it, if necessary. Employees must make it clear to others if they find their behaviour unacceptable and should intervene if appropriate to stop it. Discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation of another person should be reported to a manager.

Anyone making a complaint or giving evidence in relation to a complaint or anyone against whom a complaint is made under this policy must not be subject to victimisation.

Employees who make false or malicious reports will be subject to an investigation under the disciplinary policy and process. Anyone who makes a complaint or gives evidence in good faith should not feel concerned if an investigation shows that discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation did not in fact take place.

Resolving issues informally

If an employee has a complaint about a person they work with, wherever possible they should talk this over with the person concerned and / or their manager to agree a solution informally.

Where the problem relates to the employee's manager, the employee is encouraged to try to resolve this directly with the person concerned. Where this is not possible, for example because the issue is too sensitive, the employee is encouraged to discuss the problem informally with another manager. Employees may also seek advice from other sources such as their Trade Union representative.

If the unacceptable behaviour continues or is so serious that it is not appropriate to attempt to resolve the problem informally, the employee may make a complaint using the grievance policy and process.

Formal resolution via the grievance policy and process

The employee should state their grievance in writing to their manager, or if the complaint relates to their manager, to another, preferably more senior, manager.

Allegations will be investigated using the grievance process and, if there is evidence to suggest that there is a case to answer, will be dealt with under the FAL disciplinary policy and process.

If a FAL employee wishes to make a complaint under this policy about a person who is not a FAL employee but with whom they have come into contact during the course of their work, they should raise this with a manager, who will decide the appropriate course of action.

Wherever possible, FAL will ensure that the parties to a complaint are not required to work together during the investigation. In a serious case, the person against whom the complaint is made may be suspended from work for this period.

The outcome of the grievance process

Both parties will be informed of the outcome i.e. whether or not the grievance is upheld. If a grievance is not upheld because there is insufficient evidence, the parties will be told that this is the reason for this outcome.

If disciplinary action has been taken or is being considered against one party, the other party may be informed. Taking into account the circumstances of the particular case and maintaining a fair balance between the rights of the parties, further information about any penalty imposed may also be provided.

Where a complaint is upheld, relevant documents will be stored in the personnel file of the employee raising the grievance and also in the personnel file of the employee against whom the complaint was made. If a complaint is not upheld, no reference to it will be held on the personnel file of the employee against whom it was made. In this situation, the documents will be stored in a central confidential file maintained by HR Services.

Complaints about FAL employees by external parties

Alleged discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation by FAL employees in relation to other workers (for example agency workers or contractors), customers, suppliers, partners, visitors or others will be investigated and dealt with using the disciplinary policy and process.

Related documentation and processes

Grievance policy, process and standard letters

Sponsor and further assistance

This policy is sponsored by the Executive Director.

Please discuss any questions about this policy with your manager.

Version Control

Version 2 – last amended November 2022

Issue 3 - last amended June 2024