



# SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

<p><b>DEVELOPED FEBRUARY 2020</b></p> <p><b>ADOPTED : EXCO – 076.2/20 COUN-011.2/2020 12 NOVEMBER 2020</b></p>	<p><b>TO BE REVISED : JULY 2021</b></p>	<p><b>RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATION UNIT HUMAN RESOURCEES SERVICES</b></p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

## **TABLE CONTENT**

1. Policy Purpose	3
2. Policy Scope	3
3. Policy Definition	3-4
4. Legislative Framework	4
5. General policy Provision	4
5.1 Definition of Sexual	4-5
5.2 Guiding Principles	5-6
6. Policy Statement	6-7
7. Procedure	7
7.1 Advice and Assistance	7
7.2 Options to Resolve a Problem	7
7.2.1.1 Informal Procedure	7
7.2.1.2 Formal Procedure	7
7.3 Investigation and Disciplinary Action	8
7.4 Criminal and Civil charges	8
7.5 Dispute Resolution	8
7.6 Confidentiality	9
7.7 Formal Grievance Procedure	9
7.8 Record and Reporting	9
Sign off	9

## **1. Policy Purpose**

- 1.1.** The purpose of this policy is to provide the appropriate procedures and measures to prevent the occurrence of sexual harassment, as well as the appropriate procedures should this occur.
- 1.2.** This policy takes into account the Code of Good Practice on the handling of Sexual Harassment cases in the workplace.
- 1.3.** It provides appropriate procedures to deal with the problem and prevent its recurrence that will lead to the creation of a workplace that are free of sexual harassment, where the municipality and employees respect one another's integrity and dignity, their privacy, and their right to equity in the workplace.

## **2. Policy Scope**

- 2.1.** This policy is also applicable to employees including those that are contractual employed.
- 2.2.** Although this policy is intended to guide the municipality and its employees, the perpetrators and victims of sexual harassment may include, managers, supervisors, employees, job applicants, clients, suppliers, contractors and others having dealings with the municipality.
- 2.3.** Nothing in the above confers the authority on the municipality to take disciplinary action in respect of perpetrators that are non-employees.
- 2.4.** A non-employee who is a victim of sexual harassment may lodge a grievance with the municipality where the harassment has taken place in the workplace or in the course of the harasser's employment.

## **3. Policy Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy unless the context otherwise indicates:

- 3.1.** "Municipality" means Dr Beyers Naude Municipality.
- 3.2.** "Advance" means giving an active support to a person, cause or plan.
- 3.3.** "Associate" means a person or an organisation having partial rights or subordinate status whilst doing business with or for the Municipality.
- 3.4.** "Brushing" means grazing or touching in passing.
- 3.5.** "Coerces" means persuade or restrain an unwilling person by force.
- 3.6.** "Conduct" means behaviour in its moral respect.
- 3.7.** "Degrading" means causing a loss of self-respect.

- 3.8.** "Employee" shall mean to include a functionary and employee of an associate.
- 3.9.** "Functionary" means a person acting in an official capacity or in an organization.
- 3.10.** "Harassment" means annoying continually and repeatedly.
- 3.11.** "Indecent" means offending against recognised standards.
- 3.12.** "Intimidate" means to frighten, subdue or influence.
- 3.13.** "Offensive" means an aggressive action, forceful action in pursuit of course.
- 3.14.** "Patting" means a sign of affection by striking gently with the inner surface of the hand.
- 3.15.** "Suggestive" means conveying a suggestion of an indecent or improper remark.

#### **4. Legislative Framework**

This policy is based on *the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998, and the amendments on the Code of Good Practice on the handling of Sexual Harassment cases* and is established within the framework of the following legislation and policies:

- 4.1 Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act 66 of 1995) as amended from time to time.
- 4.2 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996.

#### **5. General Policy Provisions**

Any employee who utilizes this policy and the procedure outlined in the policy for reasons other than those highlighted in the policy e.g. falsely accusing a fellow employee/manager for personal reasons or vindictiveness, will be severely disciplined in line with the municipality's disciplinary policy. The following sections reflect the provisions of this policy.

##### **5.1. Definition of Sexual Harassment:**

- 5.1.1. Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. The unwanted nature of sexual harassment distinguishes it from behaviour that is welcome and mutual.
- 5.1.2. Sexual attention becomes sexual harassment if:
- 5.1.2.1. the behaviour is persisted in, although a single incident of harassment can constitute sexual harassment, and/or

- 5.1.2.2. the recipient has made it clear that the behaviour is considered offensive; and/or
  - 5.1.2.3. The perpetrator should have known that the behaviour is regarded as unacceptable.
- 5.1.3. Forms of Sexual Harassment may include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct, but is not limited to the examples listed as follows:
  - 5.1.3.1. Physical conduct of a sexual nature includes all unwanted physical contact, ranging from touching to sexual assault and rape, and includes a strip search by or in the presence of the opposite sex.
  - 5.1.3.2. Verbal forms of sexual harassment include unwelcome innuendoes, suggestions and hints, sexual advances, comments with sexual overtones, sex-related jokes or insults or unwelcome graphic comments about a person's body made in their presence or directed toward them, unwelcome and inappropriate enquiries about a person's sex life, and unwelcome whistling directed at a person or group of persons.
  - 5.1.3.3. Non-verbal forms of sexual harassment include unwelcome gestures, indecent exposure, and the unwelcome display of sexually explicit pictures and objects.
  - 5.1.3.4. Reverse harassment occurs where a, supervisor, member of management or co-employee, undertakes or attempts to influence the process of employment, promotion, training, discipline, dismissal, salary increment or other benefit of an employee or job applicant, in exchange for sexual favours.
  - 5.1.3.5. Sexual favouritism exists where a person who is in a position of authority rewards only those who respond to his/her sexual advances, whilst other deserving employees who do not submit themselves to any sexual advances are denied promotions, merit rating or salary increases.

## **5.2. Guiding Principles**

Employees should create and maintain a working environment in which the dignity of employees is respected. A climate in the workplace should also be created and maintained in which victims of sexual harassment will not feel that their grievances are ignored or trivialised, or fear reprisals. Implementing the following guidelines can assist in achieving these ends:

- 5.2.1. The municipality and its employees are required to refrain from committing acts of sexual harassment.
- 5.2.2. The municipality and its employees have a role to play in contributing towards creating and maintaining a working environment in which sexual

harassment is unacceptable. They should ensure that their standards of conduct do not cause offence and they should discourage unacceptable behaviour on the part of others.

5.2.3. The municipality and its employees should attempt to ensure that persons such as customers, suppliers, job applicants and others who have dealings with the organisations, are not subjected to sexual harassment by the municipality or its employees.

5.2.4. The municipality are required to take appropriate action in accordance with this policy, when instances of sexual harassment which occur within the workplace are brought to their attention.

5.3. This policy recognises the primacy of collective agreements regulating the handling of sexual harassment cases and is not intended as a substitute for disciplinary policies and procedures containing such measures, where these are the subject of collective agreements, or the outcome of joint decision-making by the municipality and a workplace forum.

5.4. However, collective agreements and policy statements should take cognisance of and be guided by the provisions of this policy.

## **6. Policy Statements**

As a first step in expressing concern and commitment to dealing with the problem of sexual harassment, the municipality should issue a policy statement which should provide that:

6.1. All employees, job applicants and other persons who have dealings with the municipality, have the right to be treated with dignity.

6.2. Sexual harassment in the workplace will not be permitted or condoned.

6.3. Persons who have been subjected to sexual harassment in the workplace have a right to raise a grievance about it should it occur, and appropriate action will be taken by the municipality.

6.4. Management should be placed under a positive duty to implement the policy and take disciplinary action against employees who do not comply with the policy.

6.5. A policy on sexual harassment should also explain the procedure which should be followed by employees who are victims of sexual harassment. The policy should also state that:

6.5.1. Allegations of sexual harassment will be dealt with seriously, expeditiously, sensitively and confidentially.

6.5.2. Employees will be protected against victimisation, retaliation for lodging grievances and from false accusations.

**6.6. Policy statements on sexual harassment should be communicated to all employees.**

## **7. Procedures**

The following procedures are applicable to this policy.

### **7.1. Advice and Assistance**

**7.1.1. Sexual harassment is a sensitive issue and a victim may feel unable to approach the perpetrator, lodge any formal grievance or turn to colleagues for support.**

**7.1.2. As far as is practical the municipality should designate a person outside of line management whom victims may approach for confidential advice. Such a person:**

**7.1.2.1. Could include persons employed by the municipality to perform inter alia such a function, a trade union representative or co-employee, or outside professionals.**

**7.1.2.2. Should have the appropriate skills and experience or be properly trained and given adequate resources.**

**7.1.2.3. Could be required to have counselling and relevant labour relations skills and be able to provide any advice on a confidential basis.**

### **7.2. Options to Resolve a Problem**

Employees should be advised that there are two options to resolve a problem relating to sexual harassment. Either an attempt can be made to resolve the problem in an informal way or a formal procedure can be embarked upon.

**7.2.1. The employee should be under no duress to accept one or the other option:**

#### **7.2.1.1. Informal Procedure**

**a. It may be sufficient for the employee concerned to have an opportunity where she/he can explain to the person engaging in the unwanted conduct that the behaviour in question is not welcome, that it offends them or makes them uncomfortable, and that it interferes with their work.**

**b. If the informal approach has not provided a satisfactory outcome, if the case is severe or if the conduct continues, it may be more appropriate to embark upon a formal procedure. Severe cases may include: sexual assault, rape, a strip search and quid pro quo harassment.**

#### **7.2.1.2. Formal Procedure**

Where a formal procedure has been chosen by the aggrieved, a formal procedure for resolving the grievance is available and attached hereto:

- a. Specify to whom the employee should lodge the grievance.
- b. Make reference to timeframes which allow the grievance to be dealt with expeditiously.
- c. Provide that if the case is not resolved satisfactorily, the issue can be dealt with in terms of the dispute procedures contained in item 10 of this policy.

### **7.3. Investigation and Disciplinary Action**

- 7.3.1. Care should be taken during any investigation of a grievance of sexual harassment that the aggrieved person is not disadvantaged, and that the position of other parties is not prejudiced if the grievance is found to be unwarranted.
  - 7.3.1.1. The Code of Good Practice regulating dismissal contained in Schedule 8 of the LRA reinforces the provisions of Chapter VIII of this Act and provides that an employee may be dismissed for serious misconduct or repeated offences.
  - 7.3.1.2. Serious incidents of sexual harassment or continued harassment after warnings are dismissible offences.
  - 7.3.1.3. The range of disciplinary sanctions to which employees will be liable should be clearly stated, and it should also be made clear that it will be a disciplinary offence to victimise or retaliate against an employee who in good faith lodges a grievance of sexual harassment.

### **7.4. Criminal and Civil Charges**

- 7.4.1. A victim of sexual assault has the right to press separate criminal and/or civil charges against an alleged perpetrator, and the legal rights of the victim are in no way limited by this policy.

### **7.5. Dispute Resolution**

- 7.5.1. Should a complaint of alleged sexual harassment not be satisfactorily resolved by the internal procedures set out above, either party may within 30 days of the dispute having arisen, refer the matter to the Bargaining Council for conciliation in accordance with the provisions of section 135 of the LRA.
- 7.5.2. Should the dispute remain unresolved, either party may refer the dispute to the Labour Court within 30 days of receipt of the certificate issued by the Commissioner in terms of section 135[5].



## 7.6. Confidentiality

- 7.6.1. The municipality must ensure that grievances about sexual harassment are investigated and handled in a manner that ensures that the identities of the persons involved are kept confidential.
- 7.6.2. In cases of sexual harassment, management, employees and the parties concerned must endeavour to ensure confidentiality in the disciplinary enquiry. Only appropriate members of management as well as the aggrieved person, representative, alleged perpetrator, witnesses and interpreter if required, must be present in the disciplinary enquiry.

## 7.7. Formal Grievance Procedure

- 7.7.1. Employee lodge completed Annexure A form to Manager or next reporting level.
- 7.7.2. Address grievance within 3 working days.
- 7.7.3. If no resolution, refer to Municipal Manager who should address grievance within 6 working days.
- 7.7.4. If there's no resolution, refer grievance to the Council/Bargaining Council.

## 8. Record and Reporting

- 8.1. Data relating to the process should be captured and analysed to determine trends to facilitate improvements. This information should be reported and evaluated by the municipality.

Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**DR E M RANKWANA**  
**MUNICIPAL MANAGER**

13 November 2020  
**DATE**

