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Equal Opportunities, Diversity & Dignity at Work Policy

Fire Queen Limited

Head Office: 23 – 37 Broadstone Road, Reddish, Stockport, Cheshire SK5 7AR

Save Money Today!

Combine Your Fire Extinguisher, Fire Alarm & Emergency Lighting System Maintenance



Fire Queen Limited | 23-37 Broadstone Road | Reddish | Stockport | Cheshire | SK5 7AR | Registered in England Company No. 1219302 | Inc The Fire Appliance Company

- ✓ Fire Extinguishers
- ✓ Fire Alarm & Emergency Lighting Systems
- ✓ Dry Riser Maintenance
- ✓ Fire Training
- ✓ Fire Risk Assessment

Policy Statement

Fire Queen Limited is an equal opportunity employer, with regards to meeting its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 & is fully committed to a policy of treating all of its employees & job applicants equally.

This policy & the measures to implement it have been devised on the basis of advice from the relevant bodies as well as in consultation with the Training & Enterprise Council.

The Company will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment & selection, promotion, transfer, opportunities for training, pay & benefits, other terms of employment, discipline, selection for redundancy & dismissal.

The Company will take all reasonable steps to employ, train & promote employees on the basis of their experience, abilities & qualifications without regard to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race (including colour, nationality & ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. In this policy, these are known as the “protected characteristics”.

The Company will also take all reasonable steps to provide a work environment in which all employees are treated with respect & dignity; free from harassment & bullying based upon age, disability, gender reassignment, race (including colour, nationality & ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. In this policy, these are known as the “anti-harassment protected characteristics”. All employees are responsible for conducting themselves in accordance with this policy. The Company will not condone or tolerate any form of harassment, whether engaged in by employees or by outside third parties who do business with the Company, such as clients, customers, contractors & suppliers.

Employees have a duty to co-operate with the Company to make sure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities & in preventing discrimination, harassment or bullying. Action will be taken under the Company’s disciplinary procedure against any employee who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation. Serious breaches of this equal opportunities & dignity at work statement will be treated as potential gross misconduct & could render the employee liable to summary dismissal. Employees should also bear in mind that they can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination or harassment. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

You should draw the attention of your team leader / manager to suspected discriminatory acts or practices or suspected cases of harassment or bullying. You must not victimise or retaliate against an employee who has made allegations or complaints of discrimination or harassment or who has provided information about such discrimination or harassment. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct in accordance with the Company’s disciplinary procedure. You should support colleagues who suffer such treatment & are making a complaint.

The Company will also take appropriate action against any third parties who are found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful harassment against its employees.

The company's long term aim is that the composition of our workforce should reflect that of the community.

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when, because of one of the protected characteristics, a job applicant or an employee is treated less favourably than other job applicants or employees are treated or would be treated.

The treatment will still amount to direct discrimination even if it is based on the protected characteristic of a third party with whom the job applicant or employee is associated & not on the job applicant's or employee's own protected characteristic. In addition, it can include cases where it is perceived that a job applicant or an employee has a particular protected characteristic when in fact they do not.

The Company will take all reasonable steps to eliminate direct discrimination in all aspects of employment.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination is treatment that may be equal in the sense that it applies to all job applicants or employees but which is discriminatory in its effect on, for example, one particular sex or racial group.

Indirect discrimination occurs when there is applied to the job applicant or employee a provision, criterion or practice (PCP) which is discriminatory in relation to a protected characteristic of the job applicant's or employee's. A PCP is discriminatory in relation to a protected characteristic of the job applicant's or employee's if:

- It is applied, or would be applied, to persons with whom the job applicant or employee does not share the protected characteristic.
- The PCP puts, or would put, persons with whom the job applicant or employee shares the protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage when compared with persons with whom the job applicant or employee does not share it.
- It puts, or would put, the job applicant or employee at that disadvantage, &
- It cannot be shown by the Company to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

The Company will take all reasonable steps to eliminate indirect discrimination in all aspects of employment.

Recruitment, Advertising & Selection

The recruitment process will be conducted in such a way as to result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job in terms of relevant experience, abilities & qualifications. The Company is committed to applying its equal opportunities policy statement at all stages of recruitment & selection.

Advertisements will aim to positively encourage applications from all suitably qualified & experienced people. When advertising job vacancies, in order to attract applications from all sections of the community, the Company will, as far as reasonably practicable:

1. Ensure advertisements are not confined to those areas or publications which would exclude or disproportionately reduce the numbers of applicants with a particular protected characteristic.
2. Avoid setting any unnecessary provisions or criteria which would exclude a higher proportion of applicants with a particular protected characteristic.

Where vacancies may be filled by promotion or transfer, they will be published to all eligible employees in such a way that they do not restrict applications from employees with a particular protected characteristic.

However, where, having regard to the nature & context of the work, having a particular protected characteristic is an occupational requirement & that occupational requirement is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, the Company will apply that requirement to the job role & this may therefore be specified in the advertisement.

The selection process will be carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels. All applications will be processed in the same way. The staff responsible for short-listing, interviewing & selecting candidates will be clearly informed of the selection criteria & of the need for their consistent application. Person specifications & job descriptions will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Wherever possible, all applicants will be interviewed by at least two interviewers & all questions asked of the applicants will relate to the requirements of the job. The selection of new staff will be based on the job requirements & the individual's suitability & ability to do, or to train for, the job in question.

With disabled job applicants, the Company will have regard to its duty to make reasonable adjustments to work provisions, criteria & practices or to physical features of work premises or to provide auxiliary aids or services in order to ensure that the disabled person is not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.

If it is necessary to assess whether personal circumstances will affect the performance of the job (for example, if the job involves unsociable hours or extensive travel), this will be discussed objectively, without detailed questions based on assumptions about any of the protected characteristics.

Training & Promotion

The Company will train all team leaders / managers in the Company's policy on equal opportunities & in helping them identify & deal effectively with discriminatory acts or practices or acts of harassment or bullying. They will be responsible for ensuring they actively promote equal opportunity within the departments for which they are responsible.

The Company will also provide training to all employees to help them understand their rights & responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities & dignity at work & what they can do to create a work environment that is free from discrimination, bullying & harassment.

Where a promotional system is in operation, it will not be discriminatory & it will be checked from time to time to assess how it is working in practice. When a group of workers who predominantly have a particular protected characteristic appear to be excluded from access to promotion, transfer & training & to other benefits, the promotional system will be reviewed to ensure there is no unlawful discrimination.

Terms of Employment, Benefits, Facilities & Services

All terms of employment, benefits, facilities & service will be reviewed from time to time, in order to ensure that there is no unlawful direct or indirect discrimination because of one or more of the protected characteristics.

Equal Pay

The Company is committed to equal pay in employment. It believes its male & female employees should receive equal pay for like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. In order to achieve this, the Company will endeavour to maintain a pay system that is transparent, free from bias & based on objective criteria.

Bullying & Harassment

This policy covers bullying & harassment in the workplace & in any work-related setting outside the workplace, for example, during business trips & at work-related social events.

Bullying is offensive or intimidating behaviour or an abuse or misuse of power which undermines or humiliates an employee.

An employee harasses another employee if they engage in unwanted conduct related to an anti-harassment protected characteristic, & the conduct has the purpose or effect of violating the other employee's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that other employee.

An employee also harasses another employee if they engage in unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, & the conduct has the purpose or effect of violating the other employee's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that other employee.

Finally, an employee harasses another employee if they or a third party engage in unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or that is related to gender reassignment or sex, the conduct has the purpose or effect of violating the other employee's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that other employee, & because of that other employee's rejection of or submission to the conduct, they treat that other employee less favourably than they would treat them if they had not rejected, or submitted to, the conduct.

The unwanted conduct will still amount to harassment if it is based on the anti-harassment protected characteristic of a third party with whom the employee is associated & not on the employee's own anti-harassment protected characteristic, or if it was directed at someone other than the employee, or even at nobody in particular, but they witnessed it. In addition, harassment can include cases where the unwanted conduct occurs because it is perceived that an employee has a particular anti-harassment protected characteristic, when in fact they do not.

Conduct may be harassment whether or not the person intended to offend. Something intended as a "joke" or as "office banter" may offend another person. This is because different employees find different levels of behaviour acceptable & everyone has the right to decide for themselves what behaviour they find acceptable to them.

Behaviour which a reasonable person would realise would be likely to offend an employee will always constitute harassment without the need for the employee having to make it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable, for example, touching someone in a sexual way. With other forms of behaviour, it may not always be clear in advance that it will offend a particular employee, for example, office banter & jokes. In these cases, the behaviour will constitute harassment if the conduct continues after the employee has made it clear, by words or conduct, that such behaviour is unacceptable to him or her. A single incident can amount to harassment if it is sufficiently serious.

Examples

Bullying & harassment may be verbal, non-verbal, written or physical. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, other conduct of a sexual nature.
- Subjection to obscene or other sexually suggestive or racist comments or gestures, or other derogatory comments or gestures related to an anti-harassment protected characteristic.
- The offer of rewards for going along with sexual advances or threats for rejecting sexual advances.
- Jokes or pictures of a sexual, sexist or racial nature or which are otherwise derogatory in relation to an anti-harassment protected characteristic.
- Demeaning comments about an employee's appearance.
- Questions about an employee's sex life
- The use of nick names related to an anti-harassment protected characteristic
- Picking on or ridiculing an employee because of an anti-harassment protected characteristic

- Isolating an employee or excluding him or her from social activities or relevant work-related matters because of an anti-harassment protected characteristic.

Reporting Complaints

All allegations of discrimination or harassment will be dealt with seriously, confidentially & speedily.

The Company will not ignore or treat lightly grievances or complaints of discrimination or harassment from employees.

If you wish to make a complaint of discrimination, you should use the Company's grievance procedure.

With cases of harassment, while the Company encourages employees who believe they are being harassed or bullied to notify the offender (by words or by conduct) that his or her behaviour is unwelcome, the Company also recognises that actual or perceived power & status disparities may make such confrontation impractical. In the event that such informal direct communication is either ineffective or impractical, or the situation is too serious to be dealt with informally, you should follow the procedure set out below.

If you wish to make a complaint of harassment, whether against a fellow employee or a third party, such as a client, customer, contractor or supplier, you should follow the following steps:

1. First of all, report the incident of harassment to the Accounts & HR Manager. If you do not wish to speak to this manager, you can instead speak to the General Manager.
2. Such reports should be made promptly so that investigation may proceed & any action taken expeditiously.
3. All allegations of harassment will be taken seriously. The allegation will be promptly investigated &, as part of the investigatory process, you will be interviewed & asked to provide a written witness statement setting out the details of your complaint. Confidentiality will be maintained during the investigatory process to the extent that this is practical & appropriate in the circumstances. However, in order to effectively investigate an allegation, the Company must be able to determine the scope of the investigation & the individuals who should be informed of or interviewed about the allegation. For example, the identity of the complainant & the nature of the allegations must be revealed to the alleged harasser so that he or she is able to fairly respond to the allegations. The Company reserves the right to arrange for another manager to conduct the investigation other than the manager with whom you raised the matter.
4. Once the investigation has been completed, you will be informed in writing of the outcome & the Company's conclusions & decision as soon as possible. The Company is committed to taking appropriate action with respect to all complaints of harassment which are upheld. If appropriate, disciplinary proceedings will be brought against the alleged harasser.
5. You will not be penalised for raising a complaint, even if it is not upheld, unless your complaint was both untrue & made in bad faith.

6. If your complaint is upheld & the harasser remains in the Company's employment, the Company will take all reasonable steps to ensure that you do not have to continue working alongside him or her if you do not wish to do so. The Company will discuss the options with you.
7. If your complaint is not upheld, arrangements will be made for you & the alleged harasser to continue or resume working & to repair working relationships.

Alternatively, you may, if you wish, use the Company's grievance procedure to make a complaint of harassment.

Any employee who is found to have discriminated against or harassed another employee in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action under the Company's disciplinary procedure. Such behaviour may be treated as gross misconduct & could render the employee liable to summary dismissal. In addition, team leaders / managers who had knowledge that such discrimination or harassment had occurred in their departments but who had taken no action to eliminate it will also be subject to disciplinary action under the Company's disciplinary procedure.

Monitoring Equal Opportunity, Diversity & Dignity at Work

The Company will regularly monitor the effects of selection decisions & personnel & pay practices & procedures in order to assess whether equal opportunity & dignity at work are being achieved. This will also involve considering any possible indirectly discriminatory effects of its working practices. If changes are required, the Company will implement them. The Company will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome substantial disadvantages caused by disability.