

# Policy on Harassment, Bullying & Discrimination

Original effective date: February 1994  
Last reviewed date: October 2022  
Policy family: Conduct and Ethics  
Owner: IBOD/Legal



## Scope:

**This policy applies to all Habitat for Humanity International entities, including headquarters, area offices, branches and consolidating entities. Legally independent national organizations and U.S. affiliated organizations are encouraged to adopt their own policies that incorporate the provisions of this policy or otherwise ensure that the intent of this policy is covered in the entity's existing policies.**

## 1. Purpose

Habitat for Humanity ("Habitat") expects all representatives to behave in ways that reinforce the Christian mission and founding principles of the organization and align with our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion as we live our mission. All board members, staff members, contractors, interns, AmeriCorps members, volunteers, donors and beneficiaries should be accorded respect and consideration, and all parties should feel that Habitat provides a safe and productive workplace.

## 2. Policy

Habitat, therefore, prohibits any actions or conduct that may discriminate against, harass, abuse or bully other individuals. Habitat does not tolerate any actions, words, jokes or comments based on an individual's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnic background, national origin, age, religion, disability, military or veteran status or other legally protected characteristic. Any comments or actions, therefore, that demean or are hurtful to people, particularly those of a certain sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnic background, national origin, age, religion or disability, are prohibited. Any such misconduct may result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate discharge.

Unacceptable behavior prohibited by this policy includes but is not limited to:

- Verbal harassment, bullying or abuse with sexual, racial, religious, ethnic or other similar characteristics covered by this policy.
- Unwelcome touching of an individual (e.g., patting, pinching, hugging, repeated brushing against another's body).
- Unwanted, suggestive behavior towards another person (including physical, verbal, body language, etc.)
- Requesting or demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied (by conduct or words) or overt threats concerning an individual's employment status or promises of preferential treatment.
- Persistent singling out of one person with conduct that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, humiliating, hostile, exclusionary, psychologically unsafe or offensive environment.
- Work interference, isolation or sabotage that prevents work from getting done.
- Displaying or distributing offensive posters, cartoons, photos, videos, drawings or other materials either in person or in electronic communications.
- Making derogatory statements or sexually suggestive comments or posts in any social media platform, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.
- Other persistent, malicious, unwelcome, severe or pervasive mistreatment that harms, intimidates, offends, degrades or humiliates another person.

If you feel that you have been harassed, bullied or discriminated against (either by a staff member or by any person whom you interact with in your Habitat role), then you should take immediate steps to address these issues. If you feel comfortable speaking directly to the person you feel is responsible for the harassment, bullying or discrimination, you may wish to consider this option as a first step. This approach gives those who may be unaware that their behavior was problematic fair warning that their actions are unwelcome and need to stop. If no change occurs, your personal approach provides further support to your complaint when you escalate your concerns to the next level.

If you do not feel comfortable addressing the person directly or if the offensive behavior continues, in spite of your efforts to discuss the behavior, you should contact your supervisor, your designated Global People Team (“GPT”) representative (e.g., the HR business partner directors or the chief people officer), or the [Habitat Ethics and Accountability Line](#). Please use one of these reporting methods at your earliest opportunity because Habitat cannot help address problems that we do not know about.

As a Habitat employee, you have a duty to report any conduct that you believe violates this policy, even if the offensive conduct is not directed at you. In addition, every Habitat employee has a duty to cooperate with any investigation relating to reported violations of this policy. Employees who refuse to cooperate or deliberately lie and/or hide information from an investigation may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

Habitat is committed to investigating all claims of harassment, bullying or discrimination promptly, thoroughly, and impartially. You may be requested to provide a written statement in support of your complaint, and you should be as detailed as possible in reporting your concerns, including specific incidents, timeline, background, the names of all individuals involved, and any witnesses, so that Habitat can conduct a complete investigation.

The confidentiality of information received during an investigation will be maintained to the greatest extent possible but cannot be guaranteed in every instance due to Habitat’s obligations to ensure a thorough and expedient investigation and take appropriate remedial action. Any questions about the confidentiality of information provided during an investigation should be directed to your GPT representative.

If Habitat’s investigation substantiates the complaint, appropriate corrective action will be taken to remedy the situation. For staff members, Habitat will take disciplinary action based upon the seriousness of the offense, which could range from a verbal or written warning up to termination of employment. For other Habitat stakeholders (e.g., donors, board members, volunteers, vendors, etc.), the remedial actions will also depend on the seriousness of the offense and may result in the termination of the stakeholder’s relationship with Habitat.

While an investigation is going on and after an investigation, Habitat will take appropriate steps to ensure that the person making the complaint is provided with an environment free of harassment, bullying or discrimination. This may include reassignment of involved personnel to comparable work assignments on a temporary or permanent basis.

Finally, Habitat strictly prohibits workplace retaliation and will not tolerate any actions that constitute retaliation against a person who makes a complaint or against anyone who participates in an investigation. Further details about our anti-retaliation position are available in the Habitat for Humanity [Whistleblower Policy](#).

### 3. Revision history

Date	Modification	Approved by
October 2018		SLT and IBOD
October/November 2022	Updated to align with Safeguarding policy, Habitat Ethics and Accountability Line and current processes.	Senior Leadership Team in October & IBOD in November