



**POLICY ON PREVENTION OF SEXUAL
HARASSMENT AT THE WORKPLACE**
(PARABLU SYSTEMS PRIVATE LIMITED)

1. INTRODUCTION

Parablu Systems Private Limited (hereinafter referred to as Company) is committed to maintaining a work environment where each individual feels respected and safe. This includes a work environment free of sexual harassment. Our Company is also committed to promote a work environment that is conducive to the professional growth of its employees and encourages equal opportunity.

In response to The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (hereinafter referred to as the Act) the Company has introduced a Sexual Harassment Policy (hereinafter referred to as Policy). This Policy is separate from and in addition to policies relating to anti - harassment or any such other policies.

This is a gender-neutral company policy and is applicable to all persons associated with us. All complaints will be treated seriously and fairly. The Company will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment and is committed to taking all necessary steps to ensure that safety and well-being of all employees and associates.

The existing Policy has been revised by incorporating the rules and procedures as mandated in the Act.

2. SCOPE

Workplace

Workplace is defined to include office premises and any place visited by the employee arising out of or during the course of employment. The Workplace includes:

- All offices or other premises where the Company's business is conducted
- Any other site away from the Company's premises where Company-related activities are performed (example, off-sites or company organized social events)
- Any social, business or other events related to the Company's work where any conduct or comments may have an adverse impact on the workplace or workplace relations
- Transportation provided by the Company to undertake a professional journey

Complainant

The Complainant refers to the individual filing the complaint. This includes anyone associated with the Company in a full-time/part-time capacity as a permanent or temporary employee, contractor, client, partner, consultant, vendor, intern volunteer or visitor.

Respondent

The Respondent refers to the individual against whose actions the complaint has been filed. Thus, referring to anyone associated with the Company in a full-time/part-time capacity as a permanent or temporary employee, contractor, consultant, vendor, intern or volunteer.

In a situation where the allegation of sexual harassment is made against a third party, the Company will work with the direct employer of the alleged offender to decide how the matter should be dealt with.

Internal Committee

The Company has instituted an Internal Committee (hereinafter referred to as IC or Committee), for redressal of sexual harassment complaints and for ensuring unbiased and time bound resolution of complaints. The IC shall comprise of as many members as the Company may nominate from time to time, provided that the IC shall consist of a minimum four (4) members and at least one-half of the total number of members shall be women.

The Internal Committee is responsible for conducting an inquiry into every formal written complaint of sexual harassment and making recommendations to the Company on the actions to be taken against the Respondent.

The names and contact details of the members of the Internal Committee are displayed on the notice board and included in this Policy as part of the Appendix.

Witness

Individuals who have been called upon by either the Complainant, Respondent or Committee to report their statements as part of the inquiry proceedings.

3. DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

During the inquiry into an incident, it is ***the impact or effect of the behavior on the Complainant and not the intent of the Respondent that is critical in the IC taking up the case.***

The following unwelcome acts or behaviors either occurring individually, as a combination of individual acts or collectively may constitute sexual harassment at the Workplace (whether directly or by implication):

- Physical contact and advances
- A demand or request for sexual favors
- Making sexually colored remarks
- Showing pornography
- Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature

Any of the following circumstances, among other circumstances, if they occur or are present in relation to, or connected with, any act or behavior of sexual harassment may amount to sexual harassment:

- Implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in employment
- Implied or explicit threat of detrimental treatment in employment
- Implied or explicit threat about the present or future employment status
- Interference with work or creating an intimidating, offensive or hostile work environment
- Humiliating treatment likely to affect health and safety

In addition to the above the following acts below are also considered sexual harassment in the Workplace. This includes but is not restricted to,

- Unwelcome sexual advances (verbal, written or physical)
- Sexually colored remarks, including but not limited to vulgar/indecent jokes; innuendos or taunts; letters, phone calls, text messages, e-mails with a sexual message or sexually suggestive gestures
- Showing pornographic content or the like

- Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or nonverbal sexually-oriented conduct, including but not limited to teasing, voyeurism, physical confinement.
- Unwelcome physical contact and advances such as touching, stalking, or sounds which might have implicit/explicit sexual connotation/overtone

Ignorance of this Policy will not be considered an excuse during an incident.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

All employees of the Company have a personal responsibility to ensure that their behavior is not contrary to this Policy. All employees are encouraged to reinforce the maintenance of a work environment free from sexual harassment.

i. Management & Team Managers' responsibilities

- Create and maintain a working environment in which all employees feel respected
- Be alert to any inappropriate conduct or comments
- Refer to the Committee in accordance with this Policy, when instances of sexual harassment which occur within the Workplace are brought to their attention

ii. Employees' responsibilities:

- Read and understand the Policy document
- Take reasonable care not to offend co-workers and associates through one's actions or behavior
- Take responsibility to discourage unwelcome conduct that is offensive, degrading or humiliating
- Know who is on the Committee
- Cooperate in the inquiry of complaints when called to do so
- Maintain confidentiality at all times in the event that you are involved in or have access to information related to any complaint that is raised

5. PROCEDURES FOR RESOLUTION, SETTLEMENT OR PROSECUTION OF ACTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Company is committed to providing a supportive environment in which the concerns of sexual harassment shall be resolved as follows:

(a) Written complaint

When an incident of sexual harassment occurs, a Complainant may make a written complaint to the Presiding Officer or any member of the Committee. The Complainant can file a physical copy of the complaint through a sealed envelope or send it through an email to ethics@parablu.com.

The complaint should be in writing and clearly include:

- The identity and designation of the Complainant, as well as the identity and designation of the Respondent against whom the complaint is being lodged;
- The dates, times and locations of the incident or incidents, since these are useful for speedy redressal;

- The identities, designations, and contact information of any other employee(s) who may have witnessed the incident (if any);
- Other relevant documented evidence (if available).

The complaint should be made, no later than three months from the date of the incident. If the incidents are continuous or have occurred more than once, then the complaint should be made within a period of three months since the most recent incident. The time period of three months for filing the written complaint may be extended by the Committee at its discretion for an additional three months if it is satisfied that the circumstances were such which prevented the Complainant from filing of the complaint within the period of three months. The reasons for extension will be recorded in writing by the Committee in its final report.

In the event that the Complainant is not able to file a written complaint, they may be assisted by co-workers, relatives, friends or any other person with knowledge of the incident with the written consent of the Complainant.

(b) Initial IC meeting

The IC will hold a meeting with the Complainant, as soon as practicable, but not later than seven (7) working days of receiving the complaint. At this meeting, the IC shall hear from the Complainant, record the allegations, and encourage the Complainant to submit any corroborative material with documentary proof, oral or written material etc. to substantiate the complaint.

© Statement of allegations to Respondent

Within seven (7) working days from the initial meeting, the IC shall forward a copy of complaint, or a statement of allegations to the Respondent and give the Respondent an opportunity to submit a written explanation.

(d) Written response from Respondent

The Respondent will receive a copy of the complaint within seven (7) working days of the complaint being lodged with the Committee. The Respondent will have an opportunity to submit a written response to the Committee or make an oral representation in response to the contents of the complaint within ten (10) working days of his/her receipt of the complaint.

(e) Internal Committee jurisdiction

In the event the Committee concludes that prima facie the complaint does not fall within the purview of Sexual Harassment, the Internal Committee will forward the complaint to the Company's Human Resources department so that they may look further into the complaint.

Once the complaint has been filed, the following courses of action may be taken:

5.A. Informal Redressal: Conciliation

The Complainant can communicate disapproval and objections immediately to the Respondent and request the Respondent to behave appropriately. If the harassment does not stop or if Complainant is not comfortable with addressing the Respondent directly, the Complainant may request the Committee to speak with the Respondent, so as to address the matter through the process of conciliation.

The possible corrective action in an Informal Redressal includes a verbal/written warning, counselling, or a gender workshop. Under the informal process, compensation cannot be granted to the Complainant.

The Internal Committee will maintain documentation of complaints that have been addressed through Informal Redressal.

5.B. Formal Resolution: Inquiry

If the Complainant is not comfortable with the informal resolution, a formal resolution or inquiry into the complaint will be conducted.

(a) Quorum

Quorum for the inquiry proceedings shall be three members of the Internal Committee including the Presiding Officer.

(b) Attendance at inquiry hearing

The Committee will provide a reasonable opportunity of being heard to both, the Complainant and the Respondent.

Both the Respondent and the Complainant (unless specifically exempted by the IC in writing) shall be required to attend every hearing that they have been called for. If either party fails to attend three consecutive hearings without sufficient cause, the IC may terminate the inquiry or pass an ex parte order with fifteen (15) days notice to the concerned party.

(c) Summoning Witnesses

While conducting the inquiry, the IC shall call upon such Witnesses as it may deem appropriate. The Complainant and the Respondent will have the right to submit a list of Witnesses. The Complainant and the Respondent will have the right to cross-examine Witnesses of the other. Such cross-examination should not happen directly, but through a set of questions submitted to the Committee.

(d) Completion of the inquiry report

The Committee will complete the inquiry within ninety (90) days of receiving the complaint, and submit a written report containing the findings and recommendations to the Company's CEO, within ten (10) days of completion of the inquiry.

(e) Action taken by the Company

The Company will ensure corrective action on the recommendations of the Committee within sixty (60) days of receiving inquiry report. The IC will keep the Complainant and the Respondent informed of the same.

(f) Appeal for re-evaluation

If a Complainant or Respondent feels that the action taken pursuant to the complaint of sexual harassment does not fully or properly deal with the allegations raised in the complaint, they can bring the same to the notice of the Committee, which will then re-evaluate it accordingly on receipt of such other evidences. An appeal for re-evaluation may be made within a period of two (2) working days of the recommendations being communicated to the Complainant or Respondent. This appeal needs to be made in writing to the CEO, specifying the reasons for the appeal. Within ten (10) working days from the receipt of such an appeal, the Company shall come to a conclusion and dispose of the appeal.

(g) Legal representation

Neither the Complainant nor the Respondent will have the right to be represented by legal counsel at any stage of inquiry by the Committee.

(h) Assistance during criminal proceedings

If the Complainant desires to take criminal action against the Respondent, there shall be no objection by the Internal Committee and the Company.

6. CORRECTIVE ACTION

Where the Committee arrives at the conclusion that the allegation against the Respondent has been proved, it shall recommend to the Company, actions which may include one or more of the following:

- Undergoing a counselling session
- Written warning to the Respondent and a copy of it maintained in the employee's file
- Change of work assignment / transfer for either the Respondent or the Complainant
- Written apology to the Complainant
- Verbal warning
- Reprimand or Censure
- Withholding of Promotion
- Withholding of pay raise or increments
- Termination of services of the employee found guilty of the offence
- Carrying out community service

7. INTERIM PROTECTION

The Committee is empowered to issue certain interim orders during the pendency of the inquiry on the written request of the Complainant. This is to provide interim protection to the Complainant. These include:

- A transfer of the Complainant or of the Respondent to another Workplace, if possible
- Grant of leave to the Complainant for a period up to 3 (three) months
- Restraint on the Respondent from reporting on the work performance of the Complainant, or from writing their confidential report, and assigning the said task to another officer;
- Such other relief as may be prescribed in the applicable law

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

The Company understands that it is difficult to come forward with a complaint of Sexual Harassment. To protect the interests of the Complainant, Respondent and Witnesses, confidentiality shall be maintained throughout any inquiry process to the extent practicable and appropriate under the circumstances.

The identities of the Complainant, the Respondent and Witnesses involved with the process shall be kept confidential. Anyone (Witness, Committee Members, Respondent or Complainant) who breaches this clause is liable to be penalized with consequences ranging from a fine of Rs. 5,000 (Rupees Five Thousand) to additional disciplinary action.

9. ACCESS TO REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

All records of complaints, including contents of meetings, results of inquiry and other relevant material will be kept confidential by the Company except where disclosure is required under disciplinary or other remedial processes or where otherwise required by law.

10. FALSE OR MALICIOUS COMPLAINT

In case the complaint is found to be intentionally false or malicious in nature, or if forged evidence is found to have been presented either by the Complainant or any supporting Witness, such employees are liable for appropriate disciplinary action.

These recommendations to be made by the Internal Committee will be similar to the recommendations of disciplinary action to be taken against the Respondent if she/he is found guilty of sexual harassment, as discussed in clause 6.

In cases where there is insufficient evidence to prove that harassment has taken place, the Committee shall deem the complaint as not proven. In such a case, the complaint shall not be judged as a false complaint and the Complainant will not be held liable.

11. COMPENSATION

In addition to any disciplinary action recommended, the Committee is empowered to recommend monetary compensation, factoring in the income and financial status of the Respondent, in the following cases:

- Mental trauma, pain, suffering and emotional distress
- Loss in career opportunity
- Medical expenses (physical and psychiatric)

The compensation amount may be paid in lump sum or installments.

12. PROTECTION OF COMPLAINANT AND WITNESSES FROM RETALIATION

The Company is committed to ensuring that no employee who brings forward a harassment concern is subject to any form of retaliation.

Any employee who retaliates against another employee who has reported, in good faith, a sexual harassment claim, will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal. Any reprisal will be considered as a separate case of harassment. Anyone who abuses this procedure (for example, by maliciously putting an allegation knowing it to be untrue) would also be subject to disciplinary action including dismissal from service.

In the event that the Complainant or any Witness of the Complainant is being supervised by the Respondent or any of their Witnesses, then such reporting assignments will be changed to the extent possible by the Company.

The Company will not victimize or discriminate against a Complainant or Witnesses while dealing with complaints of sexual harassment.

13. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, **Parablu Systems Private Limited** reiterates its commitment to providing its employees a Workplace free from sexual harassment, where every employee is treated with dignity and respect.

Internal Committee

Till further notice, the Internal Complaints Committee will comprise of the following members:

- Presiding Officer – Megha Parmar – megha@parablu.com
- Internal Member – Ratna Singh – ratna@parablu.com
- Internal Member – Inbaraj K - inbaraj@parablu.com
- Internal Member – Naveen Kumar T - naveenkumar@parablu.com
- External Member from Vimochana. - Smitha Kumar ksmitha.blr@gmail.com