Policy on Respect for Gender

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This policy is released for use in Voltbek Home Appliances Pvt. Ltd. with effect from 1st April 2019

By Human Resources

Approved On 1st April 2019 by	**Authorised Signatory**	Jayant Balan
	Authorised Signatory	

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1. **Objective:**

The objective of the policy is to create greater awareness of the visible and implied behaviors that contribute towards Gender-based 'Respect' and 'Disrespect' for both, women and men, its implications and the mechanisms for redressal.

2. **Scope & Definitions:**

The Policy on 'Respect for Gender' is applicable to all persons employed for any work on regular, temporary, ad-hoc or daily wage basis including contract workers, probationers, trainees or apprentices working for remuneration or on a voluntary basis at the workplace or at the client's site, irrespective of the nature, terms and location of employment. It also extends to visitors or guests of the Company in any of its premises.
The workplace includes:

1. All offices or other premises where the Company's business is conducted.
2. All Company related activities performed at any other site away from the Company's premises.
3. Any place visited by the Employee during the course of employment including transportation provided by the Company for such journey.
4. Any social, business or other functions.

In this Policy the following shall mean:

1. **Aggrieved Employee**: The Employee subjected to/ reporting an incident of disrespectful behavior and/ or sexual harassment.
2. **Respondent:** means a person against whom the Aggrieved Employee has made a complaint.

Service Rules for the purpose of the policy refers to the Code of Conduct Employment contract, Policies & Guidelines as applicable from time to time.

2.1 Respect

Respect here refers to a conduct of positive regard and care that stems from the feeling of esteem or honour for a person or entity. Individually as 'human beings', and collectively as 'we are operating to achieve shared outcomes', we reinforce the significance of demonstrating respectful behavior to colleagues and other stakeholders of both genders.
Respectful behavior, specifically with respect to gender-based identity of employee includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. Providing **equal access to opportunity** (viz. employment, job-distribution, development, growth) **and information.**
2. Using **polite and cordial language** while interacting with colleagues.
3. Demonstrating **physical gestures and body language** that indicate courtesy and kindness. Maintaining a polite distance while interacting with colleagues.
4. **Listening** to viewpoints of colleagues rather than interjecting and dismissing counterviews of the others.
5. Demonstrating **fair and equitable behavior** to colleagues. **Avoiding gender stereotyping** in decision-making.

6. Being **approachable** and **open minded. Appreciate achievements** irrespective of the gender of the person achieving them.
7. Providing a **safe and secure** work environment.

2.2 Disrespect

Disrespect refers to any damage or abuse, visible or concealed, caused on account of physical, verbal or psychological harassment, to the self-esteem and self-worth of our employees or any of our stakeholders, triggered due to their gender-based identity.

Disrespectful behavior or gender-based harassment and discrimination includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. **Gender-based incivility:**
   a. Stereotyping based on feminine/ masculine behavior or making remarks about the challenges and phases in a life cycle of a particular gender.
   b. Infantilizing individuals of a particular gender through small talks, giving an impression of incompetency.
   c. Intimidating, humiliating or creating a hostile work environment for a particular gender, likely to affect ones health and safety.
   d. Using uncivil language, gestures/body language or tone for communication. Interrupting or ignoring views of the others in meetings and discussions.

2. **Gender-based discrimination:**
   a. Explicitly or implicitly denying opportunity (viz. employment, job-distribution, development, growth) or information on account of one's gender.
   b. Isolating /excluding individuals from team meetings and discussions on account of her/his gender.

3. **Sexual harassment:**
   a. Physical contact and advances.
   b. Demand or request for sexual favours as a quid pro quo or otherwise; verbal abuses; lurid stares, remarks / jokes about person's sex life or sexually coloured remarks.
   c. Offensive gestures; touching in a sexual manner or coerced acts of sex and assault (also covered under Indian Penal Code).
   d. Showing and/ or forwarding pornographic pictures or stories through any media such as email/instant message/SMS, phone calls; displaying of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, magazines or posters in Workplace or writing communication that has a sexual tenor.
   e. Implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in employment or threat of detrimental treatment in employment or threat about the present or future employment status or circumstances which interfere with the Employees work or which creates an intimidating or offensive or hostile work environment or humiliating treatment which is likely to affect the Employees health or safety.
   f. Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or nonverbal conduct of a sexual nature.

3. **3.0 Redressal mechanism**

In line with 'The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2012, the Rules prescribed there under and the Code of Conduct, the Company has institutionalized a comprehensive and robust redressal mechanism for any misconducts of disrespect.

3.1 Organization structure

The Company has constituted an Internal Committee (IC) for all its premises to look into all complaints relating to gender-based disrespectful behavior. The Company's Ethics Counselor is the authority who will oversee the independent working and governance of the IC. The IC shall operate under highest principles of confidentiality, fairness and justice and implement provisions of this Policy in letter and spirit.

HR Head will be responsible for implementation of the IC's recommendations, with the support of the Leadership Team.

Appendix 1.0 gives details of the structure of the IC and their roles and responsibilities.

3.2 Complaint management & Implications of misconduct

3.2.1 The Aggrieved Employee may approach any member of the IC to make a written complaint against any act of gender-based misconduct. If the complaint cannot be made in writing, the Presiding Officer or any IC member will provide reasonable assistance to the Aggrieved Employee for making the complaint in writing. The Aggrieved Employee shall submit 6 copies of the complaint along with supporting documents, if any, and the names and addresses of the Witnesses.

3.2.2 In case of offenses under the IPC, the IC shall support the Aggrieved Employee if he/she chooses to file an additional complaint with the local police. Where the Respondent is not an employee, the IC shall also initiate action for a gender-based misconduct at Workplace under the IPC or any other law if the Aggrieved Employee so desires.

3.2.3 The Aggrieved Employee shall file a complaint with the IC within 3 months from the date of the incident or in case of series of incidents, within 3 months from the date of the last incident. The IC may extend this period by another 3 months if it is satisfied with the circumstances which prevented the Aggrieved Employee from filing a complaint within the said period.

3.2.4 Further, the legal heir or any other individual can represent the Aggrieved Employee in case of her/his inability to file a complaint, on account of the physical/mental inability or death.

3.2.5 The IC shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 working days. The IC shall submit a copy of the Complaint to the Respondent within 7 working days from the date of receipt of the Complaint. The Respondent should file his/her reply to the Complaint along with supporting documents and the names and addresses of witnesses within 10 working days from the date of receipt of the Complaint.

3.2.6 The IC may before initiating an enquiry, at the request of the Aggrieved Employee take steps to settle the matter between the Aggrieved Employee and the Respondent through conciliation. If a settlement is arrived at during the conciliation, the IC shall record the settlement and forward the same to the HR Head & Ethics Counselor. When the matter is settled through conciliation, no monetary settlement shall be made.

3.2.7 In case if any of the condition of the settlement arrived under Conciliation is not complied by the Respondent, then the Aggrieved Employee may inform the IC who shall in turn proceed to make inquiry into the complaint or forward the complaint to Police, as the case may be.

3.2.8 The IC shall conduct the required inquiry and complete the investigation within 90 days from the date of the Complaint. The parties to the Complaint shall not be allowed to bring any legal practitioner to represent them before the IC.

3.2.9 Interim reliefs may be granted at the written request of the Aggrieved Employee such as transfer of Aggrieved Employee or the Respondent to any other Workplace or grant leave to Aggrieved Employee upto 3 months (in addition to the Employee's normal entitlement) or restraint the Respondent from reporting to the Workplace or grant any other such relief.

3.2.10 The IC shall have the power to summon/enforce attendance of any person/witness and/or discovery and production of documents. Concealing / destroying of any evidence relating to the complaint attracts proceeding and appropriate penalty as per the Service Rules.

3.2.11 Upon completion of the inquiry, the IC shall provide a report of its findings to the HR Head & Ethics Counselor, within 10 days from the date of completion of the inquiry. The report shall be made available to the concerned parties by the HR Head & Ethics Counselor.

3.2.12 If the IC concludes that the allegations against the Respondent have not been proved, then it shall recommend that no action is required to be taken.

3.2.13 If the IC concludes that allegations have been proved against the Respondent, then it shall recommend the following to the HR Head & Ethics Counselor:

3.2.13 (a) take action for the gender-based disrespectful behavior as a misconduct as per Service rules, including a written apology, undergoing a counseling session, warning, reprimand or censure, withholding of promotion, withholding of pay rise / increments, suspension or termination of services.

3.2.13 (b) in case of sexual harassment, deduct (irrespective of the Service rules applicable to the Respondent) from the wages/salary of the Respondent such sum as may be appropriate to be paid to the Aggrieved Employee or to her legal heirs as per section 15 (Determination of Compensation) of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2012 which takes into consideration the following while determining the amount of compensation:

i. Mental Trauma, pain, suffering and emotional distress caused to the Aggrieved Employee;

ii. Loss in career opportunity due to incident of sexual harassment;

iii. Medical expenses incurred by the victim for physical or psychiatric treatment;

iv. Income and financial status of the Respondent; and

v. Feasibility of such payment in lump sum or installments.

3.2.14 The HR Head has to act upon the recommendations within 60 days of its receipt.

3.2.15 In cases of sexual harassment, any person aggrieved by the findings of the IC or non-implementations of the recommendations, may prefer an appeal to the jurisdictional Industrial Tribunal.

3.2.16 In the case where a false complaint has been filed and the investigation has proved that the intent of the complaint was purely to defame the Respondent, disciplinary action, which may also result in termination, will be initiated against the Aggrieved Employee by the HR Head. If the IC concludes that during an enquiry, any witness has given false evidence, it shall recommend to the HR Head & Ethics Counselor to take such action against the Witness as prescribed in the Service rules.

3.2.17 If the Company is unable to make a deduction from the salary of the Respondent of the amount to be paid to the Aggrieved Employee, it may direct the Respondent to pay the amount to the Aggrieved Employee failing which the IC shall forward the order for recovery of the sum as an arrear of land revenue to the concerned District Officer nominated by the Government.

4. Confidentiality

The IC will operate under complete confidentiality of all aspects of the complaint including the information and identity of the Aggrieved Employee, the Respondent and the Witnesses. Violation of this clause attracts penalty as per by the Service rules or as may prescribed otherwise.

However information may be disseminated regarding the issue and action taken without disclosing the identity or related particulars leading to the identification of the parties involved.

5. Communication, Awareness & Training

It is our intent to affirmatively prevent disrespect and misconduct of any nature to employees. The IC, in collaboration with the HR Head & Ethics Counselor, shall on a regular basis create greater consciousness and appreciation of gender-issues and the merit of having harmonious relationships between employees of both genders. This includes:

a. Communicating the Policy for Respect for Gender to all employees from time to time.
b. Organize workshops and awareness programs for sensitizing employees.
c. Provide training and counseling to the IC members to update & renew their competencies.

6. Review

The Policy on Respect for Gender shall be reviewed from time to time, for any amendments, given past learnings, changes in law or societal dynamics.

Appendix 1.0

Internal Committee (IC)

a. The IC shall comprise of at least 4 members and would be constituted by the HR Head.
b. The IC shall be represented by both the genders and shall be such that at least half the members are women. The Members of the IC shall hold the office for a maximum tenure of 3 years.
c. The Presiding Officer of the IC shall be a senior female employee.
d. Preference of membership will be given to employees who are committed to cause of women or who have had experience in social work or/and have legal knowledge/background.
e. The Committee will also have one member from amongst Non-Governmental organizations or associations committed to the cause of women or a person familiar with the issues relating to sexual harassment. The member appointed from such non-government organization or association shall be paid the prescribed fees or allowance holding the proceedings of the IC.
f. During the inquiry, a minimum of 3 members including the Presiding Officer shall be present.
g. The IC shall in each calendar year prepare an annual report containing the number of cases filed, if any, and their disposal which is to be submitted to the HR Head & Ethics Counselor.