

# PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

**Table of Contents**

I. Introduction - What is this Policy about and for?----- 3

II. Scope - What is the applicability of this Policy?-----3

III. Understanding this Policy Document----- 3

    a. Who is covered under this policy? (Definition of Employee)----- 3

    b. Where all this policy is applicable? (Definition of Workplace)----- 3

    c. Who can file a complaint of workplace sexual harassment? (Definition of Complainant)-----4

    d. Who can a complaint be filed against? (Definition of Respondent)----- 4

    e. Where to raise or bring such complaints? (Definition of Internal Committee)----- 4

    f. Who is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this Policy and the functioning of the IC?-----4

IV. Sexual Harassment at Workplace: Understanding its dimensions----- 5

V. Roles and Responsibilities-----6

VI. Redressal Forum-----7

    a. Composition - What is the composition of the IC?----- 7

    b. Tenure and working of the IC----- 7

    c. Raising a complaint----- 7

    d. What is the process once a complaint is filed with the IC?----- 9

    e. Furthering the Inquiry Process----- 10

    f. Interim measure----- 10

    g. Final recommendation----- 10

    h. What are the possible outcomes of an investigation?----- 11

VII. Other acts that are punishable under law----- 11

VIII. How will confidentiality be maintained once a complaint is filed?----- 12

IX. Criminal proceedings----- 12

X. Is there a process to file an appeal against the decision of the IC?----- 12

XI. What happens if an Employee of this organization experiences sexual misconduct by someone outside of the organization?-----12

XII. How will this Policy protect against any form of retaliation?----- 13

XIII. Amendments----- 13

Annexure A----- 14

## I. Introduction - What is this Policy about and for?

This Policy is framed in accordance with the provisions of “The Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013 and the rules framed thereunder (hereinafter “the Act” and/or “Rules”), as may be amended from time to time. The fundamental objective of this policy is to prevent, prohibit, redress, and deter any incident of sexual harassment by following a zero-tolerance policy. The Policy on Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace (hereinafter “Policy”) covers all the key aspects of the Act, however, any matter not specifically covered or discussed in it shall be dealt with in the manner prescribed in the Act.

Zysk Technologies Private Limited is a gender-friendly workplace and even though the reliefs in the statute are for women, there is a discretionary and non-statutory complaint mechanism for all genders.

The Policy is gender-neutral and applies to all genders.

## II. Scope - What is the applicability of this Policy?

This Policy applies to all categories of Employees (defined below) and encourages every Employee who believes that they have been sexually harassed to use the redressal mechanisms provided under this Policy.

## III. Understanding this Policy Document

### a. Who is covered under this policy? (Definition of Employee)

Any individual employed at Zysk Technologies Private Limited, for any work on a regular, temporary, ad-hoc, or daily wage basis, including an intern, either directly or through an agent, including a contractor, with or without the knowledge of the Zysk Technologies Private Limited is included. Additionally, this association could be for remuneration or not, or voluntarily. Lastly, even in situations where the terms of employment or association with Zysk Technologies Private Limited are expressed or implied, this Policy applies to them. All the above associations mentioned are referred to as “Employee” in this document.

### b. Where all this policy is applicable? (Definition of Workplace)

This Policy covers all instances of sexual harassment that may arise in places associated with Zysk Technologies Private Limited and is not restricted to geographical location alone. This includes Zysk Technologies Private Limited offices and branches and also the places where our official work requirements are being fulfilled. As we follow an onsite/hybrid/remote working setup, any such premises where the Employee is present for work whether it is their office, residence/home, or any co-working space, such premises will be considered as Workplace for application of this Policy. In such remote-working environments, all mediums of communication including but not limited to email, SMS, social messaging services, etc., shall be considered as an extension of the workplace. In addition to the place of work, it shall incorporate every place visited by the Employee during the course of their employment including client sites, conferences, social, business, or other functions organized by us in connection with work.

Lastly, the above and our specific modes of communication Slack, Teams, Emails, and Calls are all considered as “Workplace” in this document.

### **c. Who can file a complaint of workplace sexual harassment? (Definition of Complainant)**

While the Act declares a person who can file a complaint of workplace sexual harassment as a woman, we, have adopted a gender-neutral policy and extend this to all genders. As and when certain legal mandates that are applicable solely under the Act are applicable, respective individuals will be educated on the same.

So, any person, irrespective of their gender, if and when, has experienced any sexual misconduct from a person defined under the definition of “Employee” and in a place defined under “Workplace”, is eligible to file a complaint and is called as “Complainant” for the purpose of this document.

### **d. Who can a complaint be filed against? (Definition of Respondent)**

Any individual who is mentioned under the definition of “Employee” and has extended an inappropriate behavior in a place defined under “Workplace” is someone against whom a complaint can be filed.

There may be instances where such a person is employed at a workplace other than this organization. An Employee, who has experienced sexual misconduct from an employee of another organization during the course of their work, can bring a complaint of sexual harassment to the Internal Committee (as defined later) of this organization. This extends to include our customers (existing and potential), users, and any other individual our Employees interact with during the requirement of their work duties.

### **e. Where to raise or bring such complaints? (Definition of Internal Committee)**

An internal redressal body of selected members is formed in accordance with the Act to receive such complaints and provide redressal to the individual Complainant. This Committee, titled “Internal Committee” (IC) has the powers of a Civil Court to:

- 1) Receive complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace;
- 2) Conduct inquiry as per the established procedure under law;
- 3) Submit findings and final recommendations to be implemented by the Management;
- 4) Maintain strict confidentiality throughout the process;
- 5) Ensure absolute transparency in its activities and investigate the complaints while abiding by the principles of natural justice.

### **f. Who is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this Policy and the functioning of the IC?**

The Leadership Team at Zysk Technologies Private Limited will be responsible for this. Any Employee who observes a violation of this Policy or non-implementation of this Policy is requested to approach the Leadership.

## IV. Sexual Harassment at Workplace: Understanding its dimensions

Sexual harassment may be one or a series of incidents involving unsolicited and unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or any other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual Harassment at the workplace includes:

- 1) Unwelcome advances whether verbal (by audio and video calls), written (by SMS, social media platforms, letters, E-Mails, etc), or physical;
- 2) Demands or requests for sexual favors;
- 3) Sexually colored remarks or remarks of a sexual nature about a person's clothing or body;
- 4) Showing/ sharing pornography or other offensive or derogatory pictures, cartoons, representations, graphics, pamphlets or sayings;
- 5) Humiliating treatment with sexual connotations likely to affect health or safety;
- 6) Verbal abuse or 'joking' that is sex-oriented;
- 7) Any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature;
- 8) Any conduct that has the purpose or the effect of interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment and/or submission to such conduct is either an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment and /or submission or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for making decisions detrimental or preferential to the employment.

It is important to note that whether the harassment has taken place or not, does not depend on the intention of the people but on the experience of the person who has received such behavior.

It is also important to note that the aforesaid are only a few instances of sexual harassment and any such other instance which may be considered to be an instance of 'sexual harassment' can be brought forward to the redressal mechanism formulated under this Policy for further investigation.

Note: Points to be noted with respect to understanding the definition of Sexual Harassment

- 1) *It is the reasonable perception of an individual that would be relevant in determining whether the conduct was sexual in nature, and, if so, whether such conduct was unwelcome or not. It is therefore the impact and not the intent that has to be determined.*
- 2) *All the above-mentioned instances through any mode of communication including in person, over the phone, on voice mail, through pen and paper, on e-mail, through chat, through SMS, social media platforms, etc. will be identified as an act of sexual harassment.*
- 3) *Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. It refers to unwelcome sexually determined behavior or pattern of conduct, that would cause discomfort and/or humiliate an Aggrieved at whom the behavior or conduct was directed.*
- 4) *As a team, we are always expected to maintain and nurture the professional work environment of our Company. We do acknowledge that fraternization and romantic personal associations might happen between two members of our team or with an associated stakeholder. However, in the best interest of protecting a fair and transparent work culture, individuals are advised to convey this to the People Operations Team so that necessary provisions can be made to address the same. Similarly, the same should be done when two members involved with each other are also associated with*

*subordinate and supervisory roles. As an organization, for all of us, protecting and nurturing a safe and comfortable work environment must always be a priority.*

## V. Roles and Responsibilities

It is the personal responsibility of all Employees of Zysk Technologies Private Limited to respect the rights of others and not encourage acts of harassment, thus abiding by this Policy.

In connection with the endeavor and statutory obligation to maintain a work environment free from any instances of sexual harassment, we will conduct awareness and sensitization sessions for all Employees at regular intervals.

### **Your responsibilities as an Employee of this organization:**

Your role as an Employee is important to uphold the highest standards of ethical conduct at this workplace in all your interactions with business stakeholders. All Employees have a responsibility to:

- 1) Refrain from any unwelcome behavior that has a sexual connotation (of a sexual nature);
- 2) Refrain from creating a hostile environment at the workplace via sexual harassment;
- 3) Refuse to participate in any activity that constitutes sexual harassment;
- 4) Support employees to reject and defend unwelcome sexual behavior;
- 5) Report sexual harassment experienced by any other employee to IC immediately and abide by the complaint handling procedure;
- 6) Act as a witness if the person being harassed decides to lodge a complaint to the IC of the organization;
- 7) Support and co-operate during any inquiry process and provide full and truthful disclosure of relevant information and assist with investigations; and
- 8) Participate in all the awareness programs to further the objectives of this Policy.

### **Your responsibilities as a Manager**

As a Manager, your role under this Policy extends beyond your duties as an employee to ensure the following for your team members:

- 1) Ensure that all complaints pertaining to Sexual Harassment at the Workplace, if brought to attention by an employee, are immediately communicated to the relevant IC;
- 2) Individually do not take any action on the reported complaints of sexual harassment but immediately and without delay ensure that any written complaints pertaining to Sexual Harassment at the Workplace received by any team member are forwarded to the relevant IC;
- 3) Assure the Complainant(s) that such complaints will be taken seriously by IC and will be inquired as per this Policy and provisions of the law;
- 4) Fully cooperate, facilitate, and aid the prompt handling of an inquiry by the IC and allow the Complainant, Respondent, witnesses, and allied parties to attend the inquiry proceedings at the stipulated time and place;

- 5) Assure the Complainant(s) that they would not face retaliation of any kind of reporting such incidents to the IC;
- 6) Assure the Complainant/ Respondent/s, or witnesses that they would not face any undue victimization within the organization; and
- 7) Maintain confidentiality of all information disclosed about any incident of Sexual Harassment and in the course of the relevant investigations (in instances where such manager and team leader are made aware of any details of an ongoing investigation and in instances where an employee approaches their manager or team leader directly with a complaint).

## VI. Redressal Forum

### a. Composition - What is the composition of the IC?

In accordance with the Act, an appropriate complaint mechanism in the form of IC is constituted for the time-bound redressal of the complaint.

Details of the current IC members will be displayed and or circulated via notices at conspicuous places and via mediums at the office premises (virtual and physical as applicable) across locations of operations.

Every IC will have a minimum of 4 members with the following composition:

- 1) Presiding Officer who will be a senior woman employee from Zysk Technologies Private Limited;
- 2) Two members from among the employees; and
- 3) External member (third party), who will be from an NGO or an individual who is familiar with the issues relating to sexual harassment at workplaces;
- 4) The quorum (chosen member for reviewing a specific complaint) for any IC composition at any time will be constituted with at least 50% women representatives.

### b. Tenure and working of the IC

Every member of the IC shall hold office for a period not exceeding 3 years from the date of nomination and appointment.

The members will regularly meet at the end of every quarter for the purpose of implementation of the Policy and monitoring the progress done till date.

For the purpose of making an inquiry, the IC shall have the same powers as are vested in a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 which will include the power to summon and enforce attendance of any person, require discovery and production of documents and any other matter for the purposes of conducting investigation under the Policy.

### c. Raising a complaint

What is the timeline for filing a complaint?

An individual may make a complaint of sexual harassment at the workplace within 3 months from the date of the incident and in case of a series of incidents, within a period of 3 months from the date of the last incident. The period of filing of a complaint may be extended for a further period of 3 months if circumstances warrant such extension in the opinion of the IC.

### Where to file a complaint?

All Employees of Zysk Technologies Private Limited, with access to an internal complaint management system should file complaints through that platform.

Employees who do not have access to the platform may send an email to [posh@zysk.tech](mailto:posh@zysk.tech) or reach out to our HR Department to receive guidance on filing a complaint.

Please note that for the purpose of legal adherence to this procedure, such complaints are mandatory to be put in writing and oral complaints cannot be entertained.

In instances where an email is not feasible and a handwritten complaint is being filed, an individual may reach out to HR, or their manager, to be connected with the IC, and from there onwards IC will extend all necessary support in filing a written complaint.

### What is the format and content of the complaint?

A complaint must contain the names of the Complainant and Respondent(s); a description of the event(s); and the names and contact email/phone number of the witnesses of the Complainant. The Complaint must be accompanied by all supporting documents/evidence such as screenshots of text messages or any other evidence and with a list of witnesses.

### **Note:**

- 1) IC is bound by legal mandate to only act upon complaints that are in written form. All assistance will be provided by the IC to the Complainant for converting their verbal complaint into a written one. However, in instances where the Complainant is not willing to file a written complaint, or IC has not received a written complaint from the Complainant, it will not be legal for IC to undertake it. IC will coordinate with HR and/or management to assist them with further resolution;
- 2) Anonymous complaints shall not be entertained;
- 3) If the Complainant for reasons of any difficulty is unable to file the complaint in writing it can seek reasonable assistance from the IC. The Complaint may also file a complaint through its legal heirs, or any such other person as may be authorized in cases of mental or physical incapacity;
- 4) In instances a Complainant is unable to lodge a complaint on account of any physical or mental incapacity or death or otherwise, his/her legal heir, co-worker, or any person with knowledge of the incident may make a complaint to the IC, but only with the written consent of the Complainant;
- 5) The identity of the Complainant, Respondent, witnesses, statements, and other evidence obtained in the course of the inquiry process, recommendations of the IC, and action recommended and implemented by the Management is considered confidential and will not be published or made known to the public or media. Any person violating the confidentiality provision will be subject to



disciplinary action as prescribed in the Act and any other internal Policy of the organization. All individuals who are part of the IC inquiry will need to sign a confidentiality undertaking.

6) Any individual who would like to understand the process of IC and its redressal procedures may reach out to any of the IC members.

#### d. What is the process once a complaint is filed with the IC?

On receipt of a written complaint, the IC will:

1) Officially acknowledge the receipt of the complaint through mail within 7 days of the receipt of such a report of complaint;

**Note:** At this point, IC will also identify the quorum (minimum 3 members from the IC) who will be assigned the responsibility of addressing this complaint. At the time of identifying the members, an internal conflict check will be initiated by the Presiding Officer and External Member to ensure that none of the IC members involved in the proceedings are closely connected with the complaint or Respondent. Additionally, it is also confirmed that none of the members are privy to the details of the incident prior to this case as they may be referred to as witnesses at a certain point. In case of any conflict of interest, such conflicted IC members will be replaced for the purposes of investigation.

2) Initiate the first meeting to validate the eligibility of the complaint as a sexual harassment complaint;

3) Meet the Complainant in person and request any additional details missing from the complaint if required;

4) Share further details of the procedure of investigation with the Complainant;

5) Implement interim measures during the pendency of the investigation such as changing the arrangement in work settings that may be needed for complaints where the Complainant and Respondent are working in close professional association. If needed in special circumstances, IC will extend at their discretion a paid leave provision towards the Complainant for a period not longer than 3 months;

6) Forward the complaint to the Respondent/ Alleged Harasser within 7 working days of receipt of the complaint. The Respondent/ Alleged harasser will be granted time of up to 10 working days to file their official response along with a list of documents and names of witnesses.

7) Once the official response is received, the same will be shared with the Complainant, and options for conciliation will be presented and assessed.

Note: Conciliation is an option available to the Complainant before proceeding with the formal inquiry and the IC can only proceed with it if the Complainant expressly agrees for the same.

No monetary settlement will form the basis of the conciliation. Once a settlement is reached through conciliation of dispute, there will be no further inquiry conducted by the IC and the case with the IC will stand closed.

If the IC finds that the complaint does not fall within the definition of Sexual Harassment or within the IC's jurisdiction, the complaint will be referred to the Human Resources team for appropriate action.

## **e. Furthering the Inquiry Process**

In case of failure of conciliation or the Complainant not opting for conciliation, the IC will then carry forward with the process.

Investigation proceedings into the complaint shall be completed within 90 days of the complaint being filed and the IC shall formulate its report and recommendations within 10 days of completion of investigation.

The recommendations of the IC shall be implemented within 60 days.

The IC shall conduct the inquiry as per the principles of natural justice and in a fair and unbiased manner.

Important to take note that the IC investigation process does not allow any individual member, Complainant, or Respondent to bring in any lawyer to the meetings or otherwise. This is why it is crucial for absolute transparency to be maintained in the entire proceedings between the parties so they are able to defend and present their sides in an adequate manner.

There may be instances when either of the parties is no longer cooperating in an investigation. The IC may give an ex-parte decision or terminate the inquiry proceedings if the Respondent or Complainant fails to appear before the IC for 3 consecutive hearings without sufficient cause. However, the IC will give prior written notice of 15 days to the concerned party before taking any such decision.

## **f. Interim measure**

Pending completion of the inquiry and at the written request of the Complainant and recommendations of the IC, one or more of the following interim measures can be initiated:

- 1) Change reporting lines or division/ department of the Complainant or Respondent as the case may be;
- 2) In case the parties to a complaint happen to be working in close proximity at a site/office/working space then the IC may transfer the Complainant or Respondent to any other site/office/working space; or
- 3) Grant leave to the Complainant for up to a period of 3 months in addition to the leave already entitled; or
- 4) Any other action recommended by the IC.

## **g. Final recommendation**

- 1) IC will provide its final inquiry report to the Leadership within a period of 10 days from the date of completion of the inquiry.
- 2) A copy of the report will be provided to the Complainant & Respondent.
- 3) The recommendations in the inquiry report are binding and will be implemented by the Leadership within sixty (60) days.
- 4) Post-implementation of the recommendation, Leadership shall provide a status report to the IC for its internal case records.

## **h. What are the possible outcomes of an investigation?**

- 1) Against the Respondent: In its final report, IC on concluding that allegations have been proved, may recommend on the basis of the gravity of the misconduct committed any or more of the following penalties:
  - a) a written apology from the respondent or issuance of a reprimand/ censure by the management;
  - b) a letter of warning;
  - c) immediate transfer or suspension without pay;
  - d) withholding of pay rise or increment(s);
  - e) demotion in a post;
  - f) counselling sessions for the Respondent;
  - g) payment of monetary compensation;
  - h) termination from service; and
  - i) any other remedy provided by the law.
- 2) Against the Complainant

Where the IC concludes that the complaint has been made knowing it to be false or malicious and the Complainant has produced any forged or misleading document, it may recommend to the Management to take appropriate action against the Complainant after a duly investigated and substantiated inquiry into the same. The action recommended will be similar to the action proposed for the Respondent in case of substantiated and proven complaint.

### 3) Against the Witness/es

In any investigation and redressal assistance, IC relies on the cooperation of individual members who are privy to any information about the incident/s. Sometimes, a person's name might be mentioned by the Complainant or Respondent, and at times IC will identify individuals it would need to speak to. Additionally, on your own, if and when an individual does know a fact or information that can assist IC in a case, it is their duty to come forward and share it. In case a witness has given false evidence or produced any forged or misleading document during the inquiry, action may also be taken against the said witness in accordance with the applicable internal Policy.

## **VII. Other acts that are punishable under law**

Apart from sexual harassment, disciplinary action can also be taken against an Employee if they commit the following acts:

- 1) Making false allegations of sexual harassment with malicious intent and knowledge that such allegation is false or producing false evidence to justify this complaint;
- 2) Giving false evidence or testimony when called as a witness;
- 3) Breaching statutory duty to maintain confidentiality of information relating to the investigation by divulging such details to any unauthorized person(s), including but not limited to any other Employee of the Organisation who is not involved in the complaint; and
- 4) Victimizing, retaliating, intimidating, or influencing any person who is party to the complaint, specifically the aggrieved/Complainant and witness, whether directly or indirectly.

### VIII. How will confidentiality be maintained once a complaint is filed?

All details pertaining to investigation proceedings, documents, and records maintained under this Policy, including but not limited to names of complainant, respondent, and witnesses, shall be kept strictly confidential as mandated under the Act.

Any person who is involved in any investigation proceeding whether as a Complainant or Respondent or witness or member of the IC or any other Employee who has become aware of a complaint of sexual harassment, whether directly or indirectly, is required to maintain the strictest form of confidentiality. Any person violating the confidentiality clauses is subject to disciplinary action as prescribed in the Act and additionally subjected to immediate dismissal from their role in Zysk Technologies Private Limited.

### IX. Criminal proceedings

If the Complainant wishes to file a complaint under the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC) or any other law for the time being in force, in relation to the alleged offense of sexual harassment, we will fully cooperate with her and provide her the necessary support required to pursue this.

### X. Is there a process to file an appeal against the decision of the IC?

IC will do its best to ensure a fair and just investigation is conducted while addressing a specific complaint. However, in instances where one of the individuals is not satisfied with the decision, the following can be initiated:

When the complainant is a woman or a person who identifies self as a woman:

In instances when the Complainant or Respondent is dissatisfied with the recommendations related to the quantum or nature of penalties made by the IC, they may file an appeal to the Appellate Authority in accordance with the Act and Rules within three (3) months from the date of the final inquiry report. (Such appellate authority is the respective Central Government Industrial Tribunal-cum-Labour Court appointed in various States).

When the complainant is not a woman or a person who identifies self as a woman:

In instances when the Complainant or Respondent is dissatisfied with the recommendations related to the quantum or nature of penalties made by the IC, they may file an appeal to the Management of the organization to take necessary steps to take corrective measures.

### XI. What happens if an Employee of this organization experiences sexual misconduct by someone outside of the organization?

Any misconduct extended by an internal member of this workplace or an external member, will not be taken lightly and will be addressed in the manner as defined under this document. In case any Employee of the organization faces harassment from a third party (customer, client, visitor) during the course of their work, they can bring the complaint to the IC or the Leadership. We will extend all

necessary and reasonable support required to the Employee to help them initiate action on seeking redressal.

## **XII. How will this Policy protect against any form of retaliation?**

This Policy seeks to encourage all employees to express freely, responsibly, and in an orderly way opinions and feelings about any problem or complaint of sexual harassment. Retaliation against persons who report or provide information about Sexual Harassment or behavior that might constitute Sexual Harassment is also strictly prohibited. Any act of retaliation, including internal interference, coercion, and restraint by an Employee, violates this Policy and will result in appropriate disciplinary actions as per applicable Policies of the organization. Suspected or actual cases of retaliation must be reported to the IC.

## **XIII. Amendments**

This Policy will be periodically revised and is subject to modification by the organization.

## Annexure A

### IC Member Composition FY 2021-23

The following members from the organization have been nominated and appointed as members of the IC of the organization.

Name	Designation	IC Role	Email
Rishika Teja Lokesh	Front End Developer	IC Presiding Officer	<a href="mailto:rishika.lokesh@zysk.tech">rishika.lokesh@zysk.tech</a>
Vikas M	Jr. Front End Developer	IC Member	<a href="mailto:vikas.m@zysk.tech">vikas.m@zysk.tech</a>
Arijit Saha	Full Stack Developer	IC Member	<a href="mailto:arijit.saha@zysk.tech">arijit.saha@zysk.tech</a>
Pooja Poddar	-	IC External Member	<a href="mailto:pooja@ungender.in">pooja@ungender.in</a>

**Note:** Any changes in the IC composition will be announced to the members of the organization in a timely manner and shall be annexed to the Policy document.