



Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy

THE KOORALBYN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The Kooralbyn International School is implementing this policy to ensure that staff members feel safe to undertake their day to day duties free from bullying and harassment in all its forms by persons in positions of authority and/or other members of the workforce.

Scope

This policy applies to all employers of the school, whether paid or volunteers, and all contractors who provide services to the school and sets out the procedures to be followed in the event of an employee feeling they are being bullied or harassed in the workplace.

Responsibility

Principal

Point of Contact

Principal or General Manager

DEFINITIONS

What is workplace bullying?

The *Fair Work Act 2009* defines workplace bullying as repeated unreasonable behaviour by an individual towards a worker which creates a risk to health and safety.

Bullying behaviour can range from obvious verbal or physical assault to subtle psychological abuse. It can include:

- physical or verbal abuse
- yelling, screaming or offensive language

- excluding or isolating employees
- psychological harassment
- intimidation
- assigning meaningless tasks unrelated to the job
- giving employees impossible jobs
- deliberately changed work rosters to inconvenience particular employees
- undermining work performance by deliberately withholding information vital for effective work performance.

A *bully* is a person who uses strength or power to coerce others by fear; and to bully is to oppress, persecute, physically or morally by (threat of) superior force.

Bullying is physical or psychological behaviour or conduct where strength (including strength of personality) and/or a position of power is misused by a person in a position of authority or by a person who perceives that they are in a position of power or authority. While bullying is normally associated with unequal power relationships, peer to peer bullying is not uncommon and is considered bullying under this policy.

A variety of behaviour and acts may constitute bullying which, over time, create a negative workplace environment. These may include:

- sarcasm and other forms of demeaning language
- threats
- verbal abuse
- shouting
- coercion
- punitive behaviour
- isolation
- blaming
- "ganging up"
- constant unconstructive criticism
- deliberately withholding information that a person needs to exercise her or his role or entitlements within the School
- repeated refusal of requests for leave or training without adequate explanation and suggestion of alternatives.

Reasonable management action undertaken in a reasonable manner does not amount to workplace bullying.

What is harassment?

Under discrimination law, it is unlawful to treat a person less favourably on the basis of particular protected attributes such as a person's sex, race, disability or age. Treating a person less favourably can include harassing or bullying a person. The law also has specific provisions relating to sexual harassment, racial hatred and disability harassment.

Harassment can include behaviour such as:

- telling insulting jokes about particular racial groups
- sending explicit or sexually suggestive emails or text messages
- displaying racially offensive or pornographic posters or screen savers
- making derogatory comments or taunts about a person's disability, or
- asking intrusive questions about someone's personal life, including his or her sex life.

It is important to understand that a one-off incident can constitute harassment.

The *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* prohibits harassment in the workplace by employers, co-workers and other "workplace participants", such as partners, commission agents and contract workers. Sexual harassment is broadly defined as unwelcome sexual conduct that a reasonable person would anticipate would offend, humiliate or intimidate the person harassed.

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* prohibits harassment in the workplace based on or linked to a person's disability or the disability of an associate.

The *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* prohibits offensive behaviour based on racial hatred. Racial hatred is defined as something done in public that offends, insults or humiliates a person or group of people because of their race, colour or national or ethnic origin.

All incidents of harassment – no matter how large or small or who is involved – require employers or managers to respond quickly and appropriately. If issues are left unaddressed, a hostile working environment can develop which can expose employers to further complaints.

POLICY

The policy of The Kooralbyn International School is to take a proactive approach to workplace bullying and harassment by establishing processes to educate and inform staff about bullying and harassment and procedures to follow in the event that they are being bullied or harassed.

The school bases this policy on the principles for behaviour required in the workplace, namely that:

- all people should be treated with respect;
- all staff should develop an awareness about the impact of their behaviour on others; and
- there is agreement about what is appropriate behaviour at work.

Procedures

The Kooralbyn International School considers that bullying and or harassment in the workplace is inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour, and staff found to have either committed or condoned such behaviour in the workplace may be subject to disciplinary action.

If you believe you are being bullied:

1. you may attempt to resolve the issue with the person you believe is responsible for the bullying (if you feel that is appropriate and if you feel comfortable doing so); and
2. if the issue is not resolved in this way, you may lodge a formal complaint in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy and Procedure and the Guidelines for Staff Complaints and Grievances.

SCHOOL AND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff members have a responsibility to ensure that their actions do not negatively affect another staff member's career, health or well-being.

Staff members are encouraged to try to resolve issues of workplace bullying and or harassment at the local level, directly with the person they believe is responsible for bullying and or harassment.

Supervisors have a responsibility to provide a safe work environment that enables staff to carry out their work responsibilities free from bullying and or harassment. This includes investigating complaints of bullying and harassment thoroughly and expeditiously and reviewing work units/faculty areas where bullying and or harassment has been found to have taken place.

The school will make copies of the Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy available to all members of staff who request this information and in the staff area of the school's intranet, and will provide information about the policy at staff in-service days and staff induction sessions.

POLICY RELEASE DETAILS

Date of Policy

April 2013

Last reviewed May 2023

Approved by

Board

Review Date

Biennially, in consultation with the school's Workplace Health and Safety Committee

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

Sexual-Harassment Policy
Complaints Policy and Procedure
Guidelines for Staff Complaints and Grievances
Staff Code of Conduct
Whistleblower Policy