



WORKPLACE BULLYING POLICY

1 Rationale

Every staff member has a responsibility to behave in a professional manner, to comply with this policy and to treat everyone who works here with dignity and respect. Moreland Primary School is committed to providing all employees with a healthy and safe workplace free from bullying and intimidation.

2 Aim

To maintain a safe workplace for all staff by preventing workplace bullying and to deal promptly and effectively with any alleged incidents of workplace bullying

We encourage any staff who experience or witness bullying to report it to the principal or elected representative immediately. When bullying is reported, it will be dealt with seriously, investigated promptly.

All reports will be investigated according to the established Department complaints resolution procedures.

Any staff member who lodges a complaint will be assured of confidentiality and of protection from potential victimisation as a result of lodging the report. Both the complainant and the alleged bully will be offered support throughout the issue resolution process.

3 Implementation

3.1 Defining Bullying

Workplace bullying can be defined as the repeated less favourable treatment of a person in the workplace, which may be considered unreasonable and inappropriate workplace practice. It includes behaviour that intimidates, offends, degrades or humiliates an employee, possibly in front of others and can involve Principal Class personnel, employees, contractors and visitors to the school or students.

Bullying, harassment and discrimination includes a wide range of unwelcome and unsolicited behaviours that are largely defined by the offended person.

3.1.1 What is bullying?

Workplace bullying is characterised by persistent and repeated negative behaviour directed at an employee that creates a risk to health and safety (Victorian WorkCover Authority).

The definition of bullying encompasses a wide range of behaviours. Some common examples include:

- verbal abuse, yelling, screaming;
- abusive language or intimidation;
- excluding or isolating employees;
- assigning meaningless tasks or giving employees impossible assignments;
- continually criticising someone;
- sabotaging someone's work or their ability to do their job by withholding vital information and resources;
- belittling someone's opinions;



WORKPLACE BULLYING POLICY

- unexplained job changes;
- failure to give credit where it is due or taking credit for someone else's work.

3.1.2 What is not bullying?

Workplace bullying is not reasonable management actions performed in a reasonable way, examples include:

- setting performance goals, standards and deadlines;
- allocating work to an employee;
- deciding not to select an employee for promotion;
- informing an employee about unsatisfactory work performance;
- informing an employee about inappropriate behaviour or providing constructive feedback;
- implementing organisational changes;
- performance management processes;
- physical violence or threats of physical violence which are addressed separately in the [Occupational Violence guide](#).
- A single incident of bullying-style behaviour; however, since an employer has a general duty to provide his or her employees with a safe workplace and safe system of work, single incidents of bullying-style behaviour must not be ignored or condoned.

3.2 Issues associated with workplace bullying

The following health and safety issues can result from workplace bullying:

- a wide range of injuries and illnesses including psychological injuries such as anxiety, depression, social phobia (withdrawal from usual social interaction), insomnia, stress conditions and even suicide;
- a negative whole workplace/school climate including decreased employee morale and increased stress levels in teams and individuals.

3.2.1 Where/when would these issues be relevant?

Research studies show that workplace bullying is a major contributing factor to high stress and low morale in the workplace. Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*, workplaces are required to put in place strategies designed to prevent psychological injuries. Therefore, identifying bullying risk factors and putting in place appropriate preventative measures through collaboration and consultation should form an important part of the workplaces OHS risk management system.

3.3 Responding to workplace bullying

All reports will be investigated according to the established Department complaints resolution procedures. Once a report is lodged, those directly involved will be informed of the complaint, and are permitted to have a support person present throughout the issue resolution process, including at any interviews or meetings. The principles of natural justice shall be followed in any investigation. The person who reported the incident shall not be victimised as a result of having made the report. The person in charge of the investigation/resolution process must not have been involved in the alleged incident. All parties are to maintain strict confidentiality throughout the process. A record shall be made of all proceedings and outcomes.



WORKPLACE BULLYING POLICY

3.3.1 Informal

An employee may choose to deal with a problem initially by informally speaking to the Principal, or Occupational Health and Safety representative. All reports of bullying should be taken seriously. After discussing the concerns with the employee the following strategies could be considered:

- Aim to gain a commitment from the employee displaying the alleged bullying behaviour to cease the behaviour. This can sometimes be achieved by:
 - the complainant (after careful consideration) choosing to approach the person responsible for
 - the alleged inappropriate behaviour
 - a management representative counselling the employee displaying the alleged behaviour
- Discuss the option of involving an independent third party or mediator. Participation by all parties must be voluntary. (Contact the Employee Safety and Wellbeing Branch on 9637 2414)
- Conduct a workplace bullying awareness session for all employees, outlining responsibilities in relation to appropriate behaviour in the workplace
- Provide the option for employees to access independent counselling support if they require it from the Department's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) on 1300 361 008

3.3.2 Formal

Usually, the progression to a formal complaint is the choice of the complainant. However, in some cases the Principal, or Occupational Health and Safety representative, may decide that it is in the interest of the organisation to proceed to the next level. If:

- informal approaches appear to be having little impact;
- the behaviour may constitute misconduct;
- a criminal act may have occurred;
- where there has been or is likely to be significant disruption in the workplace;
- where there may be a safety issue;

For further information on the Department's complaints process refer to [Workforce Management](#).

Records of every complaint, the findings and resolutions, including actions taken need to be documented and kept on file. For further information Managers should contact the Department's Conduct and Ethics Branch on 03 9637 2594 or 9637 2595 or via email at conduct.ethics@edumail.vic.gov.au.

3.3.3 What the School will to do?

- Identify, assess and implement controls measures for bullying risk factors in your school/workplace and document on the OHS Risk Register
- Consult with Health and Safety Representatives (HSR) and employees when:
 - bullying risks are being identified and assessed;
 - making decisions about developing and implementing procedures for resolving bullying complaints;
 - making decisions about providing information and training to prevent bullying;
 - reviewing existing prevention of bullying policy and/or procedures;
 - proposing changes to the way work is performed;



MORELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL – NO 2837

WORKPLACE BULLYING POLICY

- provide appropriate information, instruction and training for employees so they have the awareness, knowledge and skills to identify risk factors associated with bullying in the workplace and the appropriate prevention measures to control these kinds of risks.
- Record incidents into eduSafe as soon as possible after the incident

3.3.4 Outcomes

If a case has been found against an individual, the records will be securely filed (in a sealed envelope marked 'Authorised access only') in the person's official file.

Recommendations arising from an investigation/resolution process shall be implemented by the principal, as appropriate. This may include disciplinary or dismissal action in line with the DE&T unsatisfactory performance procedures.

The Principal, or Occupational Health and Safety representative, in cases involving the Principal, will follow up the incident three months after the investigation

4 References and Appendices

- Workplace Bullying (DET)
(<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/workplacebullying.aspx>)
- Workplace Bullying (WorkSafe Victoria)
(<http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/safety-and-prevention/health-and-safety-topics/workplace-bullying>)
- EduSafe
(<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/reportinjuryhazard.aspx>)

5 Evaluation

To be reviewed as required by developments in relevant legislation or DET requirements etc.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.