

PURPOSE

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

RATIONALE

Bullying in the workplace is not to be tolerated as it is contrary to maintaining the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and can cause stress for individuals and poor morale within the workplace.

DEFINITION

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. These behaviours include workplace practices such as:

- belittling opinions or unconstructive criticism
- isolating an employee from normal work interactions, training and development, or career opportunities
- undermining work performance, deliberately withholding work-related information or resources
- overwork, unnecessary pressure or impossible deadlines
- unexplained job changes, meaningless tasks, under-work, tasks beyond a person's skills, or failure to give credit where due
- teasing or regularly being made the brunt of pranks or practical jokes
- displaying written or pictorial material or sending emails that degrade or offend
- unreasonable administrative sanctions
- yelling, screaming, abuse, offensive language, insults, inappropriate comments about a person's appearance, life style, slandering an employee or his/her family
- sexual or other unwanted advances.

GUIDELINES

- 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.
- Hume Valley School is committed to providing all employees with a healthy and safe workplace free from bullying and intimidation.
- Hume Valley School will not tolerate bullying behavior in the workplace or at activities organised through the workplace.
- The school will identify, assess and implement control measures for bullying risk factors in the school and document them on the OHS Risk Register
- Bullying is not an acceptable part of our work culture and it can harm a person's health and wellbeing.
- Any staff member who experiences or witnesses workplace bullying should report it to the principal or a member of the Leadership Team as soon as possible.
- Anyone who experiences or witnesses bullying involving the principal should report it to the Regional Director.
- Any reports of workplace bullying will be treated seriously and investigated promptly, confidentially and impartially.
- If there is no response from the relevant authority, the complainant is entitled to approach the school's occupational health and safety representative.

- Where necessary, a formal investigation will be undertaken following the procedures described in relevant Department of Education and Training materials. Disciplinary action may result.
- 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.

RESPONDING TO WORKPLACE BULLYING

INFORMAL

An employee may choose to deal with a problem initially by informally speaking to the workplace manager. 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 637 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

FORMAL

Usually, the progression to a formal complaint is the choice of the complainant. However, in some cases the workplace manager 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;

A formal complaint will be dealt with following the Department's complaints process.

Records of every complaint, the findings and resolutions, including actions taken need to be documented and kept on file.

EVALUATION

Ratified By Hume Valley School Council	November 2015
Review Date:	November 2018

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