

Workplace Bullying Policy

Background

Huntingdale Primary School, as part of The Department of Education and Training (DET) is committed to providing a safe working environment without risks to health where all employees are treated with dignity and respect. Bullying will not be tolerated in any form in our workplace.

Bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards or from an employee or group of employees that creates a risk to health, safety and wellbeing. Bullying may be either direct or indirect and can be carried out verbally, physically or in writing (e.g. via email, social media, instant messaging and text messaging). Some examples of behaviour that may amount to bullying include:

- abusive, aggressive or intimidating conduct
- making belittling or humiliating comments
- spreading malicious rumours or misinformation
- teasing or practical jokes
- deliberately excluding someone from work-related activities or events
- unreasonable work expectations, including providing excessive or insufficient workload or setting work below or beyond a worker's skill level
- withholding or denying access to information or resources necessary to perform work functions
- displaying offensive material
- pressure to behave in an inappropriate manner.

Reasonable management actions carried out in a reasonable manner **do not** constitute bullying. Some examples of reasonable management action includes:

- setting reasonable performance goals, standards and deadlines
- allocating work
- rostering and allocating working hours
- failing to select and promote an employee, or informing an employee that their performance is unsatisfactory, in accordance with the Department's policies
- taking action in relation to unsatisfactory work performance i.e. disciplinary action, or terminating employment.

Workplace refers to any Department premises or facilities where Department business is conducted.

The workplace is not restricted to our physical work space. The workplace:

- extends beyond the physical boundaries of the workplace
- extends beyond the set times of work
- includes interaction with other organisations and the public (where the individual may be seen as representing the organisation – e.g. in uniform, online social media platforms, etc.)
- includes interaction between employees in a social context i.e. Christmas parties, fundraisers and employees farewells. It may also include interactions outside of work – e.g. – a workmate's barbecue), especially if it impacts on relationships and behaviours within the workplace.



Purpose

To ensure:

- That Huntingdale Primary School is free of workplace bullying.
- That all staff, visitors, volunteers and contractors at Huntingdale Primary School have an understanding of workplace bullying
- That the school responds to allegations of workplace bullying using DET Guidelines.
- Maintain the DET values of leadership, respect, responsiveness, human rights, integrity, impartiality and accountability.

Implementation

- The Principal has the overall responsibility of implementing this policy, but may delegate certain roles to suitably qualified staff.

Responsibilities of DET

DET recognises its obligations under *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* to provide and maintain a safe working environment. The Department is committed to:

- Ensuring that there are clear processes are in place for raising grievances and complaints
- Clearly communicating and promoting these processes amongst staff
- Monitoring the implementation of this Policy
- Identifying potential risk factors and taking prompt, reasonable action to minimise those risks including:
 - Managing organisational change in an inclusive and participatory way e.g. consult with employees affected as early as possible and develop and maintain effective communication throughout the change process
 - Implementing work systems to prevent the risk of bullying and review and evaluate those work systems e.g. review resource availability and seek feedback from employees through the People Matter Survey and School Climate Survey
 - Promoting positive working relationships in the Department's workplaces
- Ensuring the accessible provision of information and training as necessary to support the effective implementation of this Policy

Responsibilities of the Principal

It is the role of the Principal to:

- Promote and model the Department's Values
- Understand what constitutes bullying and know how to prevent or respond to bullying
- establish and maintain an environment where employees can conduct their daily work in a safe manner and where employees feel comfortable raising concerns relating to bullying or behaviour that causes a risk to health and/or safety
- Identify behaviour that may amount to bullying, and take prompt action to address the behaviour. If the behavior involves violence or a threat of violence, contact Victoria Police
- Consult and communicate with employees and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) on decisions and changes that may affect their health and safety
- Ensure staff responsibilities and accountabilities are clearly defined and agreed to
- Ensure availability of adequate resources and information for employees to enable them to perform their role
- Facilitate teamwork and cooperation
- Respond to concerns in a timely manner



- Adhere to the Department's Guidelines for Managing Complaints, Misconduct and Unsatisfactory Performance (Teaching) (Public Service) when managing a bullying complaint
- Encourage reporting onto eduSafe and close out reported incidents
- Ensure employees are aware of available support services e.g. Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and the DET Workplace Contact Officers Network (WCO)
- Ensure that all discussions, communications and actions are handled with sensitivity and confidentiality.

Responsibilities of employees

Employees are to take reasonable care for their own health, safety and wellbeing while at work and ensure that their acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health, safety and wellbeing of others. It is the responsibility of employees who believe they are experiencing bullying to:

- Raise matters of concern at an early stage and actively participate in the complaint management process if necessary
- Provide specific information regarding the perceived or alleged bullying in a form that enables the allegation to be considered and managed accordingly
- Maintain confidentiality and not discuss or release information relating to a bullying complaint to any third party who has no legitimate involvement in the process
- Ensure that any allegations relating to bullying are made honestly and not vexatiously or maliciously, or to impede legitimate managerial action
- Cooperate with any complaint procedure in a timely and professional manner.

1. How to report bullying

If an employee believes they are experiencing or witness bullying, the first priority is to seek support.

The following steps provide a guide for employees reporting bullying:

1. Discuss and/or report the behaviour to the Principal. If the behaviour relates to the Principal, you can raise the matter with their manager (Senior Education and Improvement Leader). When raising the matter, it is often useful to communicate directly about your experience. You can also report it through [eduSafe](#).
2. With the Principal's support, you may wish to use informal avenues to discuss and resolve the issues. For instance, you may wish to speak about the behaviour with the person directly, such as with support from the Principal.
3. You may also wish to lodge a formal complaint of bullying. Lodging a complaint will mean that your allegations are properly considered, with an outcome provided to you. Based on the allegations, the Principal will run a process to examine your allegations and allow the person to respond to your allegations. Your complaint should contain your specific allegations of behaviour that you believe is bullying. It is always best to lodge your complaint in writing. You can also report bullying anonymously, although this will limit your Principal's ability to examine the allegations and take action.



2. Responding to reports of bullying

A complaint of bullying behaviour is to be managed in accordance with the Department's *Guidelines for Managing Complaints, Misconduct and Unsatisfactory Performance (Teaching) (Public Service)*. These guidelines set out DET's complaints resolution process and processes for managing misconduct including in relation to bullying.

The Principal who receives a complaint of bullying can seek advice from the Employee Conduct Branch as to the appropriate procedure to manage it. Bullying is misconduct and allegations of bullying will generally warrant the commencement of disciplinary proceedings. In some instances it may be appropriate to manage allegations through complaint resolution procedures but advice should be sought from the Employee Conduct Branch in order to make that judgement.

3. Support and assistance

Support is available to all employees involved in reporting and managing a bullying complaint, including after the matter has been resolved. Employees can seek support from their Workplace Contact Officer, Health and Safety Representative (HSR), Union Representative as well as the Department services:

- Employee Assistance Program
- Conflict Resolution Support Service

Further information, advice or assistance on any matters related to workplace bullying is available by:

- Accessing the bullying page on HR Web
- Contacting the People and Culture Unit via email people.matter@edumail.vic.gov.au
- Contacting the OHS Advisory Service on 1300 074 725 or email safety@edumail.vic.gov.au
- Contacting the Employee Conduct Branch on 9637 2495 or by email employee.conduct@edumail.vic.gov.au for information on the managing or reporting of allegations of bullying.

Legislation and related policies

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Crime Amendment (Bullying) Act 2011
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees
- Department of Education and Training Victoria Guidelines for Managing Complaints, Misconduct and Unsatisfactory Performance (Teaching) (Public Service):
 - Department Complaints – Information for Employees
 - Complaints Procedures: FAQs
- Department of Education and Training Equal Opportunity, Discrimination and Harassment Policy 2011
- Department of Education and Training Equal Employment Opportunity Guidelines for Victorian Government Schools 2011



Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three- year cycle or as needed to comply with DET policy changes.

Document Status

Reviewed	School Council Ratification	Next Review
April 2018	15 th May 2018	15 th May 2021