



Bullying & Harassment Policy

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Background Information

In line with Puckapunyal and District Neighbourhood Centre's (PDNC) mission which expresses a fundamental concern for the dignity of all human beings, this policy seeks to develop a supportive environment with policies and procedures that provide a clear statement of the Centres expectations of its staff and Volunteers in respect of conduct that may constitute workplace bullying and/or breach of related policies, including but not limited to the Puckapunyal District Neighbourhood Centre's Code of Conduct for All Staff.

Statement

- The Puckapunyal and District Neighbourhood Centre is committed to providing a workplace that is free from bullying.
- All Staff and Volunteers have a right to work in an environment free from bullying, and to be treated with dignity and respect.
- All managers are responsible for actively intervening to prevent and stop any bullying behaviour that is occurring in their workplaces, whether or not a complaint is received.
- The Puckapunyal and District Neighbourhood Centre provides these procedures by which all staff and volunteers can have any complaint of workplace bullying addressed.
- All staff and Volunteers have a right to use the procedures in this policy if they believe they have experienced bullying that can be dealt with under these procedures.

Bullying and Harassment Policy

This document sets out the policy of in relation to bullying and harassment of staff, committee, volunteers and participants of the centre. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Equal Opportunity Policy and Procedures and provides guidelines to committee and staff of Puckapunyal and District Neighbourhood Centre in order to see that adequate measures are in place to both prevent workplace harassment, sexual harassment, victimisation or bullying from occurring and to provide guidelines for the effective management of any complaints regarding the above. All categories of employee including full/part time, contract, casual, unpaid, agent and voluntary are covered by the Equal Opportunity laws and by Puckapunyal and District Neighbourhood Centre's policy.

Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide the committees approach to concerns or complaints about workplace bullying.

Application of Policy

This policy applies to all staff members who are subject to alleged bullying behaviour or any other behaviour that may constitute a breach of this policy.

Definitions

Workplace Harassment – usually refers to behaviour that is unwelcome, results in the person feeling offended, intimidated or humiliated, is related to any of the grounds in the Equal Opportunity Act, and is reasonable in the circumstances to feel that way.

Sexual Harassment – Sexual harassment covers unwelcome behaviours of a sexual nature which cause a person to feel intimidated, humiliated or offended and where it might be determined reasonable for them to feel that way. In the case of sexual harassment, what is important is how the behaviour was perceived, not necessarily how it was intended. These are some of the forms that sexual harassment can take:

- Unwelcome touching or kissing in a sexual way
- Repeated comments or jokes, leering or staring, that is sexually suggestive
- Sexually explicit pictures, objects or reading matter
- Direct or implied sexual propositions, or unwelcome requests for dates
- Intrusive questions about sexual activity
- Abusing a position of power to try to obtain sexual favours

Sexual harassment can also include the general climate of a workplace. A poor workplace atmosphere can create an uneasy, intimidating, hostile environment. This can have a bad effect on health, work performance, job satisfaction and productivity.

Sexual harassment can occur between

- Employer and employee (or potential employee)
- Employee and employee
- Or employer/employee and client.

What is not Sexual Harassment - Sexual harassment should not be confused with sexual attraction. It has nothing to do with mutual attraction or friendship. Humour, friendship and relationships based on mutual consent are not sexual harassment.

Workplace Bullying – usually refers to the persistent ill treatment of an individual at work by one or more other persons which causes risks to the health, safety and welfare of paid and unpaid staff. If an employee is intimidated, put down or humiliated (sometimes in front of others) on a regular basis, this may constitute workplace bullying. It need not involve physical ill treatment, such as punching and kicking. Most cases of bullying involve such treatment as verbal abuse, 'nit-picking', threats, sarcasm, ostracism, constant criticism, gossip (i.e. bad mouthing to others in Centre) or sabotage of a person's work.

Victimisation - treating someone unfairly because they have acted on the rights given them by equal opportunity law, or because they have supported someone else who acted upon those rights—for instance, if a person's job is threatened because they have made a complaint to the Equal Opportunity Commissioner.

Procedure

If harassment does occur, Puckapunyal and District Neighbourhood Centre has provided the following procedure for making and dealing with complaints related to this issue.

At all times the matter will be dealt with confidentially, promptly, impartially, seriously and sensitively.

Staff members should normally raise a claim of bullying with the Puckapunyal and District Neighbourhood Centre Manager or the Executive Committee and attempt to resolve such claims locally and informally.

- In the case of all bullying complaints, the Puckapunyal and District Neighbourhood Centre will review the allegations and respond to the staff member or volunteer who raised the complaint.
- While the procedural requirements of the various bullying resolution mechanisms vary, the Puckapunyal and District Neighbourhood Centre aims to ensure that:
 - bullying complaints are addressed sensitively, promptly and in accordance with the relevant centre policy and the principles of natural justice;
 - all reasonable steps are taken to respect the confidentiality of the people involved in a complaint;
 - fairness and impartiality prevail throughout the appropriate resolution process - until a bullying complaint is investigated and a decision is made, a grievance is an allegation, not a fact; appropriate records are maintained throughout the resolution process;
 - persons who notify a bullying complaint are protected from victimisation or reprisal;
 - Persons who notify a bullying complaint are regularly informed of the progress of the matter and of the consequences of any finding i.e. whether or not the grievance is substantiated.

In circumstances where the bullying complaint is unable to be resolved at the informal stage or local level, the nominated Manager or Executive Committee Member who has received the complaint may refer the matter to relevant parties. The relevant Manager or Executive Committee Member may attempt to conciliate or mediate the matter, by agreement with the parties, or appoint an appropriate independent (internally or include, but is not limited to:

- Requiring the individual or group of individuals to stop the specified behaviour(s);
- Regular monitoring of behaviours by the parties;
- Requiring compliance with this policy and any other relevant policy;
- Provision of information, additional support and training of relevant staff or volunteer.

The relevant nominated supervisor/Member may also:

- Counsel the staff member and or volunteer involved on their behaviour and the findings made as a result of the investigation;
- Take some other form of appropriate action; or
- Take no further action.

Notwithstanding the above, the primary purpose of this policy is to identify bullying behaviour and to take action to prevent its occurrence in the workplace. This policy must not be used for the sole purpose of seeking a desired change in work arrangements (such as transfer, alternative duties, and / or reporting lines, etc.) or to receive compensation or any other pecuniary outcome.

This Workplace Bullying Policy and Procedure is a complete code for the Puckapunyal and District Neighbourhood Centre to manage and resolve Workplace Bullying complaints. This policy in no way limits a staff member's or volunteers rights, including their access to a State based Workover Authority and/or the Fair Work Commission or any other jurisdiction (court or tribunal).