

Preventing bullying at work

Sample policies

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Workplace bullying policy

It is advisable to develop and implement a policy on bullying prevention for your workplace. A workplace policy sets out standards of behaviour and makes a clear statement that inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated. A workplace policy supports other risk control measures.

There are a range of options for workplace policies:

- develop a specific workplace policy on bullying
- include it within an existing OHS policy
- include it in a policy that covers workplace behaviour.

An employer must consult with health and safety representatives (HSRs) and workers on policy development, implementation and review.

It should be signed by senior management of the organisation to show their commitment.

The policy should include:

- a clear statement that the organisation is committed to preventing bullying
- examples of bullying behaviour
- the standards of appropriate behaviour expected
- encouragement for reporting
- consequences for not complying with the policy
- responsibilities and accountabilities of categories of staff (eg management, supervisors and workers).

Three sample policies are below.

1. for very small companies
2. for small companies
3. a positive workplace culture policy

1. The owner of a small vehicle repair workshop developed the following bullying prevention policy in consultation with his six workers.

X Car repairs: Workplace policy

This organisation is a bullying-free workplace where everyone is treated with respect.

Bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed toward a worker, or group of workers, that creates a risk to health and safety. It includes behaviour such as:

- verbal abuse
- intimidation and threats
- withholding information that is essential for someone to do their job
- excluding or isolating others
- interfering with someone's personal property or work equipment

One-off behaviours can still present a risk to health and safety and will not be tolerated.

Bullying is taken seriously by this organisation, and will be addressed. Disciplinary action may be taken if this policy is breached.

If you are being bullied, or see others being bullied at work, you can talk to your supervisor, or if this is not possible, talk to {contact person's name}, the contact person for this policy.

Reports of bullying will be followed up and in serious cases investigated quickly, objectively and fairly.

Supervisors will receive training in the following before starting supervisory duties:

- Workplace policy and procedures
- How to deal with bullying
- How the organisation deals with bullying
- How to report bullying
- How to comply with the policy
- Risk assessment
- Measures used in the workplace to prevent bullying

Signed: _____

Date: _____

2. An accounting firm developed the following policy in consultation with its 20 workers.

XYZ & Associates: Workplace policy

XYZ & Associates believes all employees should work in an environment free from bullying.

More information about Preventing bullying at work

Bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed toward a worker, or group of workers, that creates a risk to health and safety. Bullying may include:

- verbal insult or abuse
- personal attack, threats, intimidation and misuse of power
- job-related harassment, such as withholding information, having responsibilities removed or work overload
- deliberate exclusion or isolation from workplace activities

Single incidents can also present a risk to health and safety and will not be tolerated. Bullying may cause the loss of trained and talented workers, reduce productivity and morale, and create legal risks. XYZ & Associates have a responsibility to ensure workers are not bullied.

XYZ & Associates have procedures to deal with bullying. All reports will be treated seriously and investigated promptly, confidentially and impartially. XYZ & Associates encourages all employees to report workplace bullying.

XYZ & Associates will ensure that workers who make reports, and anyone else who may be involved, are not victimised. The contact person for bullying at this workplace is (contact person's name).

Signed: _____

Date: _____

3. An aged-care facility, with 50 workers, developed the following policy in consultation with workers and HSR's.

Smith Inc: Dignity at work policy

Smith Inc is committed to providing a work environment in which all workers are treated fairly, with dignity and respect.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure the dignity at work of all our employees
- ensure we are fair and just in our dealings
- build happy and constructive working relationships
- ensure we respect and value differences
- encourage constructive discussion of differences of views and approaches
- ensure we are open and constructive in our communications
- prevent actions of bullying, exclusion, unfair treatment and other negative or demeaning behaviours
- deal firmly and fairly with negative behaviours, including bullying and harassment.

Smith Inc. will:

- protect the dignity of all our employees
- review all policies and procedures so that they are consistent with the principles of justice, fairness and respect for employees and the organisation
- ensure that there are appropriate procedures, systems and campaigns in place to promote dignity at work
- educate all employees on their personal responsibility to behave in a way that respects the dignity of co-workers
- provide advice, information and support that protects the dignity of our employees
- raise awareness of the Dignity at Work policy and procedures and make training and education available at all levels of the organisation
- develop systems to regularly assist the effectiveness of our actions and interventions

Roles and responsibilities

It is the role of company management and supervisors to:

- provide induction and information to staff in this policy
- model positive and constructive behaviour in their treatment of workers
- monitor their workgroups and act if they become aware of any potential hazards
- address breaches of this policy.

It is the role of employees to:

- treat fellow workers with dignity and respect
- comply with the Dignity at Work policy
- where possible, report incidences of breaches of this policy to supervisors or management

Consequences of breaches

If this policy is not adhered to, it may result in disciplinary action, including a warning, transfer, counselling, demotion or dismissal, depending on the circumstances.

Management endorsement

This policy is endorsed by senior leadership.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Workplace procedures

To ensure a consistent approach to resolving bullying at work, it is recommended that organisations have an agreed workplace procedure. The agreed procedure must be developed in consultation with HSRs and workers.

Procedures should outline how reports of bullying will be dealt with, and should set out broad principles to ensure

More information about Preventing bullying at work

the process is objective, fair and transparent. Where no reporting procedure exists or the existing system is not appropriate, it is recommended that an employer develop a specific procedure to address bullying in consultation with HSRs and workers.

Procedures should be developed to suit the size and structure of an organisation. The procedure should be flexible enough to accommodate the informal and formal ways of dealing with bullying. Any procedure should ensure confidentiality and fair treatment of those involved. A reporting procedure can be developed and implemented in a number of ways.

Further information

For further information contact the WorkSafe Victoria Advisory Service on **1800 136 089** or go to **worksafe.vic.gov.au**

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