

Workplace Bullying Policy

Wettrade Apprenticeships is committed to ensuring a healthy and safe workplace that is free from bullying.

Workers are protected by this policy whether they feel bullied by a supervisor, another worker, client, contractor or member of the public.

We will treat reports of workplace bullying seriously. We will respond promptly, impartially and confidentially.

This policy will be made available to all workers including contractors. New workers will be given a copy of this policy at their induction. Managers and supervisors will remind workers of the policy from time to time.

What's expected of you

Under work health and safety laws, workers and other people at our workplace must take reasonable care that they do not adversely affect the health and safety of others.

We expect people to:

- Behave in a responsible and professional manner;
- Treat others in the workplace with courtesy and respect;
- Listen and respond appropriately to the views and concerns of others; and
- Be fair and honest in their dealings with others.

This policy applies to behaviours that occur:

- In connection with work, even if it occurs outside normal working hours;
- During work activities, for example when dealing with clients;
- At work-related events, for example at conferences and work-related social functions; and
- On social media where workers interact with colleagues or clients and their actions may affect them either directly or indirectly.

Defining workplace bullying

Workplace bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour towards a person or group of people in the workplace that creates a risk to health and safety. Unreasonable behaviour means behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard for the circumstances, would see as unreasonable including behaviour that is victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening.

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Bullying can be intentional, where the actions are intended to humiliate, offend, intimidate or distress, whether or not the behaviour ultimately had that effect. Bullying can also be unintentional, where actions which, although not intended to humiliate, offend, intimidate or distress, cause and should reasonably have been expected to cause such an effect.

Repeated behaviour refers to the persistent nature of the behaviour, not the specific type of bullying behaviour. Behaviour is considered 'repeated' if an established pattern can be identified; it may involve a series of diverse incidents over time.

A single incident is not considered to be workplace bullying. Nevertheless, single incidents should not be ignored or allowed.

Detailed below are examples of behaviours that may be regarded as workplace bullying, if the behaviour is repeated or occurs as part of a pattern of behaviour. This is not an exhaustive list – however, it does outline some of the more common types of harassing behaviours.

Examples include:

- Abusing a person loudly, usually when others are present;
- Repeated threats of dismissal or other severe punishment for no reason;
- Constant ridicule and being put down;
- Leaving offensive messages on email or the telephone;
- Sabotaging a person's work, for example, by deliberately withholding or supplying incorrect information, hiding documents or equipment, not passing on messages and getting a person into trouble in other ways;
- Maliciously excluding and isolating a person from workplace activities;
- Persistent and unjustified criticisms, often about petty, irrelevant or insignificant matters;
- Humiliating a person through gestures, sarcasm, criticism and insults, often in front of customers, management or other workers;
- Spreading gossip or false, malicious rumours about a person with an intent to cause the person harm.

Workplace bullying does not include reasonable management action taken in a reasonable way by the person's employer (or manager or supervisor) in connection with the person's employment. Reasonable actions may include:

- Workplace counselling, managing under performance and other action in accordance with Wettrade Apprenticeships' policy and procedures;
- Action taken to transfer or retrench someone;
- Decision not to promote;

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- Legitimate disciplinary action;
- Workplace change or restructuring;
- Injury or illness processes;
- Occasional differences of opinion, and non-aggressive conflicts and problems in working relations;
- Enforcement of lawful directions.

As long as these managerial actions are not used to primarily offend, humiliate, and threaten workers or to create an environment where workplace bullying is more likely to occur, the above examples would not constitute bullying. Behaviour will only be defined as bullying if a reasonable person observing the situation would consider it to be bullying. The reasonable person is defined as an objective third party.

What can you do?

If you feel you are experiencing or witnessing workplace bullying, and are not comfortable dealing with the problem yourself, or your attempts to do so have not been successful, you should raise the issue promptly either with your supervisor, health and safety representative or another manager within the organisation. If you are a member of the union, you may also raise any issues with your delegate.

If you witness unreasonable behaviour, you should bring the matter to the attention of your manager as a matter of urgency.

How we will respond

If workplace bullying or unreasonable behaviour is reported or observed, we will take the following steps:

- The responsible supervisor or manager will speak to the parties involved as soon as possible, gather information and seek a resolution to satisfactorily address the issue for all parties;
- If issues cannot be resolved or the unreasonable behaviour is considered to be of a serious nature, an impartial person will be appointed to investigate. Both sides will be able to state their case and relevant information will be collected and considered before a decision is made;
- All complaints and reports will be treated in the strictest of confidence. Only those people directly involved in the complaint or in resolving it will have access to the information;
- There will be no victimisation of the person making the report or helping to resolve it. Complaints made maliciously or in bad faith may result in disciplinary action.

Consequences for breaching this policy

Disciplinary action will be taken against a person who harasses a worker or who victimises a person who has made or is a witness to a complaint.

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The disciplinary action will depend on the circumstances of the case but can range from counselling the offender to termination of employment.

Other resources

More information on workplace bullying may be found on the Fair Work Commission's Website, <https://www.fwc.gov.au/disputes-at-work/anti-bullying>, or at Safe Work Australia, <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/bullying>.

Support is available via:

Lifeline - (telephone) 13 11 14 or <https://www.lifeline.org.au>

beyondblue - (telephone) 1300 22 4636 or <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

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