

## WORKPLACE BULLYING POLICY & PROCEDURE

**Castlemaine Childcare Co-operative** is committed to ensuring that staff work in an environment where people are treated with mutual respect. It is important for a productive and harmonious workplace that staff are aware of the impact of their behaviours on others. Bullying in the workplace is inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour.

All employees have a legal responsibility to care for their own health and safety and that of co-workers, and therefore must treat other staff with respect and courtesy and not engage in acts which constitute bullying behaviour. Staff found to have either committed or condoned such behaviour in the workplace will be subject to disciplinary action which may include the termination of employment.

### What is bullying?

Workplace bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed toward an employee or group of employees that creates a risk to health and safety. The following types of behaviour where directed towards an individual and repeated, or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour, could be considered to be bullying:

- Demeaning language or verbal abuse.
- Threats, physical or verbal intimidation.
- Outbursts of anger or aggression.
- Excluding or isolating employees.
- Giving employees impossible assignments.
- Deliberately changing work rosters to inconvenience particular employees.

The above list is not exhaustive. Other types of behaviour may also constitute bullying.

### What is NOT bullying?

Reasonable management actions carried out in a fair way are not bullying. For example:

- Setting performance goals, standards and deadlines
- Deciding not to select a worker for promotion
- Informing a worker about unsatisfactory work performance
- Informing a worker about inappropriate behaviour
- Implementing organisational changes.

## PROCEDURE

### What can I do if I believe I am being bullied?

Below is a summary of the steps that can be taken to address individual concerns and who to contact:

- If you can, try to resolve the problem yourself with the person(s) involved as soon as possible. You may find that they didn't mean to do what they did.
- If you're unsure of how to handle the problem yourself, you can report your complaint verbally by talking to the Centre Director or in writing by completing a Grievance/Incident form and giving it to the Centre Director.
- If your complaint is about the Centre Director you can report your complaint directly to the Committee of Management.

If you observe an incident in which another employee is being bullied, bring it to the attention of the Centre Director.

If you do make a complaint about bullying, you are responsible for ensuring that you:

- Make the complaint honestly and in good faith.
- Provide all the facts relevant to the complaint.
- Co-operate with the investigation and resolution processes.

If a complaint of bullying has been made about you, you are responsible for ensuring that you:

- Cooperate with the investigation and resolution processes and maintain confidentiality.
- Provide a written or verbal response to the complaint which has been made.
- Provide all relevant facts to the person conducting the investigation.

## Management responsibility

If an employee brings an allegation of bullying to your attention:

### DO NOT

- Ignore the complaint.
- Tell the employee making the complaint to sort it out themselves.
- Make a judgement about whether the complaint is true or not.
- Say that the employee should put up with the bullying.
- Talk to anyone about the issue except those involved in the investigation and resolution of the complaint.

### DO

- Behave consistently with the Workplace Bullying Policy.
- Resolve the complaint as quickly as possible.
- Be sympathetic, sensitive and serious; the complaint is obviously serious to the person making it.
- Enquire into the matter within 2 working days, and attempt to resolve it as soon as possible.

### Manager's action steps

1. Notify the Committee of Management immediately.
2. Document the complaint using complaint form.
3. In discussion with the Committee of Management, determine who should investigate, and if possible, mediate the complaint.

### Investigation and mediation:

- Investigation of the complaint of bullying must commence within 2 working days of receipt of the complaint.
- With the Committee of Management, determine who the appropriate person to investigate the complaint is.
- The investigator must be someone who is impartial, and who has been trained to conduct investigations. This person may need to be sourced from outside the organisation.
- Mediation may be a consideration in resolving a bullying complaint. This form of dispute resolution is appropriate only if the person making the complaint agrees.

### Outcome:

In situations where bullying complaints are substantiated, management may take the following actions:

- Require an apology from the respondent
- Make changes to work practices
- Undertake disciplinary action
- Require employees to participate in training
- Place notes in personnel file
- Any other action deemed fair and reasonable.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

- Workplace bullying – prevention and response – Guidance Material October 2012 (WorkSafe Victoria).
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004.