

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Anti-Bullying Policy applies to all Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (**DOSCEL**) workplaces.

DOSCEL recognises the importance of demonstrating respect for the dignity of each person and of creating an environment where a sense of belonging for all is experienced. These aspirations are central to the wellbeing of individual employees and to a workplace where all employees feel safe and respected.

DOSCEL is therefore committed to building and nurturing workplaces that are free from bullying. It is important that all employees share a responsibility for upholding professional standards of conduct and for building and nurturing a workplace where bullying does not occur. It is therefore expected that employees will desist from engaging in or condoning such behaviours and practices.

It is also expected that employees who make a complaint, or who may be witnesses to circumstances giving rise to a complaint, will participate fully and confidentially in any investigation and resolution procedures.

This policy and the accompanying documents are compliant with the legislative framework under which DOSCEL operates and DOSCEL is guided by the applicable legislation in determining its prevention and intervention measures.

### 2.0 PURPOSE

This policy provides clarity of processes and procedures regarding the Anti-Bullying Policy for all employees and students of DOSCEL.

### 3.0 PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles give direction in determining processes and procedures regarding the Anti-Bullying policy.



- 3.1 DOSCEL is committed to building and nurturing workplaces that are free from bullying.
- 3.2 DOSCEL is committed to implementing awareness-raising programs and strategies that heighten each employee's understanding of the impact of their behaviour on others and awareness of their rights and responsibilities.
- 3.3 DOSCEL aims to achieve resolution of complaints of perceived or actual incidents of bullying promptly. DOSCEL will endeavour to ensure that the offending behaviour stops.
- 3.4 DOSCEL encourages the reporting of behaviour which is perceived to be in breach of this policy and will endeavour to ensure protection of the complainant(s) from any subsequent victimisation.

## 4.0 DEFINITIONS

Workplace Bullying is defined as being repeated unreasonable behaviour directed at a worker or group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety.

Bullying can take the form of both direct and indirect bullying.

Examples of **direct** bullying include:

- Verbal abuse
- Putting someone down
- Spreading rumours or innuendo
- Interfering with a person's property

Examples of **indirect** bullying include:

- Unjustified criticism or complaints
- Deliberately excluding someone from meetings/workplace activities
- Setting timelines that are difficult to achieve or
- Deliberately changing work arrangements e.g. rosters/leave to inconvenience.

**Bullying:** Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

**Covert bullying:** Covert bullying can be very difficult for someone outside of the interaction to identify. It can include hand gestures and threatening looks, whispering, excluding or turning your back on a person, restricting where a person can sit and who they can talk with. Social bullying (spreading rumours, manipulation of relationships, excluding, isolating) is often covert bullying.

**Cyberbullying:** Cyberbullying includes any form of bullying behaviour that occurs online or via a mobile device. It can be verbal or written, and can include threats of violence as well as images, videos and/or audio.

**Physical bullying:** Physical bullying includes hitting, pushing, shoving or intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence.

**Social bullying:** This is sometimes called relational or emotional bullying, and includes deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, sharing information that will have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.

**Verbal and written bullying:** Verbal and written bullying includes name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic.

**Contact Officers:** A Contact Officer is an employee who is trained in, and responsible for, being a contact point for employees with concerns about whether they may have been bullied. A Contact Officer is able to provide employees with information on bullying, clarify any questions or concerns a person may have and provide advice on the options that are available for dealing with bullying.

**Employees, Contractors and Volunteers:** All persons who work in a DOSCEL workplace, including volunteers and contractors, are required to comply with this policy in relation to the treatment afforded to other employees and contractors.

**Note:** Serious cases of bullying may constitute a criminal offence. Bullying is also against DOSCEL's Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Policy as it can create an unsafe work environment.

If a complaint is substantiated, appropriate action, will be taken which may include:

- An apology
- Changes to work practices
- Disciplinary action, including dismissal
- An undertaking that the behaviour will not be repeated

- Reversal of an action or decision or substitution of a different action or decision, and/or
- Training.

## 5.0 WHAT IS NOT BULLYING?

Many things occur in the workplace that are not considered to be bullying. Reasonable management action carried out in a fair way is not bullying. For example:

- Setting reasonable performance goals, standards and deadlines
- Allocating work to a worker in a transparent and appropriate way
- Fairly rostering and allocating working hours
- Transferring a worker for reasonable and explained reasons
- Deciding not to select a worker for promotion following a reasonable selection process, or
- Informing a worker about unsatisfactory work performance.

## 6.0 VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

DOSCEL will not deal with complaints under this policy that:

- are made anonymously, without sufficient detail being provided so as to allow investigation or resolution of the matter
- do not have sufficient details so as to allow investigation or resolution of the matter
- taken at their highest, do not constitute bullying as defined by this policy.

Where a Complainant makes frivolous, vexatious or malicious claims against a Respondent; for example, where false or misleading information is provided, relevant information is withheld, facts are distorted or there is no demonstrated commitment to resolution, then depending on the circumstances, disciplinary action may be taken against a Complainant.

## 7.0 SUPPORT AGENCIES

### 7.1 WorkSafe Victoria

WorkSafe Victoria is a statutory body set up to, amongst other things, enforce Victoria's occupational health and safety laws and assist injured workers back into the workforce.

**Phone:** 1800 136 089

**Website:** [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)

**Address:** 567 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000

## 7.2 Fair Work Commission

Fair Work Commission is a statutory body set up to deal with various workplace matters, including complaints of bullying.

**Phone:** 1300 799 675

**Website:** [www.fwc.gov.au](http://www.fwc.gov.au)

**Address:** Level 4, 11 Exhibition Street, Melbourne Vic 3000

## 8.0 REFERENCES

- DOSCEL Anti-Bullying Checklist
- DOSCEL Anti-Bullying Procedures
- *Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2018*

## 9.0 RELATED POLICIES

- DOSCEL Complaints and Grievance Management Policy
- DOSCEL Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- DOSCEL Privacy Policy
- DOSCEL Social Media Policy
- DOSCEL Whistleblower Policy

## 10.0 REVIEW

**Implementation Date:** May 2020

**Review Date:** October 2022