



WORKPLACE BULLYING

Policy

AIM:

To provide a safe and supportive work environment where diversity is valued and everyone is treated with respect, fairness and dignity.

GUIDELINES:

1. Discrimination, sexual and other forms of harassment, bullying, violence and threatening behaviour are unacceptable at Epping Views Primary School. All employees, students, parents and visitors in schools and other DEECD workplaces are expected to act accordingly.
2. The Victorian WorkCover Authority defines workplace bullying as:
“..... 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 repeated or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour, could be considered bullying:
 - Verbal abuse
 - Excluding or isolating employees
 - Psychological harassment
 - Intimidation
 - Assigning meaningless tasks unrelated to the job
 - Giving employees impossible assignments
 - Deliberately changed work rosters to inconvenience particular employees
 - Deliberately withholding information vital for effective work performance
 - Misusing complaints or unsatisfactory performance processes against another member of staff
3. Bullying is the word used to describe certain types of unacceptable behaviour. Sometimes the word harassment might be used to describe this unacceptable behaviour. Unacceptable behaviour makes the workplace uncomfortable, unpleasant and often unsafe.
4. Workplace bullying is not principals/managers carrying out their required responsibilities in relation to the investigation of complaints or the management of unsatisfactory performance.
5. Workplace Bullying does not include reasonable and legitimate actions of the employer in managing an employee's performance, workload, or other duties.
6. Workplace Bullying is not defined by WorkSafe as physical violence or threats of physical violence. This is defined by WorkSafe as Occupational Violence.
7. A wide range of injuries and illnesses can be caused by workplace bullying including psychological injuries such as anxiety, depression, social phobia (withdrawal from usual social interaction), insomnia, stress conditions and even suicide.
8. It is often assumed that principals and managers are the bullies but this is not always the case. Any DEECD staff member may demonstrate bullying behaviour.
9. The Principal and members of the School Leadership team are responsible for:
 - Demonstrating support for the Department's commitment to the prevention of workplace bullying;
 - Ensuring that their staff understand the Workplace Bullying Policy and educate all employees on their personal responsibility to behave in a way that respects the dignity of fellow workers;
 - When having observed bullying, taking steps to stop it and warn the person/s of the consequences if the behaviour continues;
 - If a person approaches them with a complaint about bullying, taking appropriate steps to resolve it. If this is not possible or is inappropriate, then the Regional Director should be informed;
 - Dealing with bullying complaints quickly, fairly and confidentially and transparently;
 - Not bullying employees;
 - Promoting positive working relationships and clearly communicate, promote and support appropriate ways of behaving;
 - Clearly defining what is meant by workplace bullying in precise, concrete language;

- Recognising and defusing bullying and intervening at an early stage;
 - Stating in clear terms the Department's view toward workplace bullying and its commitment to the prevention of workplace bullying;
 - Communicating that there will be consequences for staff found to be engaged in workplace bullying;
 - Outlining the process by which preventive measures will be developed;
 - Encouraging reporting of all incidents of bullying or other forms of workplace violence;
 - Outlining the confidential process by which employees can report incidents and to whom;
 - Ensuring no reprisals will be made against reporting employees;
 - Outlining the procedures for investigating and resolving complaints using the principles of natural justice;
 - Develop systems to assess the effectiveness of actions and interventions to prevent workplace bullying;
 - If a workplace bullying complaints is too complex seek assistance from the regional office;
 - Model respectful and positive behaviour to all members of the school community.
10. If you believe you have been bullied or witnessed bullying in the workplace, you should report the matter to the appropriate person – Principal / Assistant Principal / Regional Director who is required to act in accordance with the Department's complaints procedures.

11. **Resources:**

a) DEECD Health Safety and Wellbeing

Policy: http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/ohs/HSW_Policy.pdf

b) Health, Safety and Wellbeing: Prevention of Bullying in the Workplace Kit:

The kit includes 4 sample school workplace bullying policies and a presentation for principals to communicate to staff to increase their awareness and knowledge on workplace bullying.

http://www.nmr.vic.edu.au/Library/bullying/complete_policy.pdf

c) WorkSafe Victoria's Prevention of Bullying and Violence at Work – Guidance Note 2003:

<http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/resources/file/eb255b4ee66c908/preventbullying.pdf>

d) For [School Services Officers](#), [Teaching Service](#) and [Public Service Staff](#) the Department's complaints procedures: <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/hrweb/workm/perform/comres.htm>

e) For VPS staff, the Department's complaints procedures (Complaints, Unsatisfactory Performance and Serious Misconduct in the VPS - Guidelines): http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Docs/VPS_Complaints_Guidelines.doc

f) For specific advice in relation to allegations of sexual harassment refer to the Department's [Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures](#): <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Docs/SexHarPolicy.doc>

g) [Public Service Code of Conduct](#): <http://www.ssa.vic.gov.au/>

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

August 2008