

BULLYING POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all personnel (employees, religious and volunteers) are protected from unwelcome, threatening or abusive behaviour such as bullying within the work environment.

As a Catholic employer, the Trustees of the De La Salle Brothers (the Trustees) uphold the rights of each individual to be treated with dignity and respect, and to have their reputation safeguarded. In addition, the Trustees are committed to fostering a pleasant, friendly and cooperative work environment that facilitates mutual respect and good workplace relations.

This policy is designed to:

1. Ensure that all personnel strive to achieve the highest professional standards of conduct at all times
2. Provide clear guidelines about what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in the work environment
3. Ensure all personnel are aware of both their own and management's roles and responsibilities in ensuring a cooperative and harmonious work environment
4. Guide personnel in the processes used to identify, report and eliminate bullying in the workplace
5. Ensure all personnel are aware that they may be disciplined and/or dismissed if they are found to have engaged in bullying behaviour.

What is Workplace Bullying?

Workplace bullying can target any person, or any group of people, for any reason. It includes physical and psychological behaviour and consists of intimidating, degrading and humiliating behaviour and physically aggressive or violent behaviour towards another person. Bullying is usually deliberate behaviour, although the perpetrator does not necessarily agree that their behaviour constitutes bullying. Bullying behaviour is usually repetitive and can include name calling, belittling and manipulating others and verbal abuse such as shouting and inappropriate anger, etc.

The legitimate actions of a supervisor or manager in correcting an employee's conduct or behaviour, giving legitimate instructions to an employee or disciplining an employee, etc, do not constitute bullying.

The Effects of Workplace Bullying

Bullying can affect individuals through high levels of stress and anxiety, low staff morale, lack of concentration, adverse health effects, job insecurity, high levels of tension and exacerbation of the power imbalance between workers.

The workplace can also be adversely affected through increased absenteeism, reduced performance and productivity, bad reputation and image, inefficient productivity and increased costs associated with the consequent legal, compensation and recruitment processes.

GUIDE TO RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of the Employer

- Legal responsibility which involves educating personnel on the proper procedures to prevent bullying
- To effectively implement an appropriate policy within the organisation
- To implement a workplace grievance procedure.

Responsibilities of Manager and Supervisor

- Ensure all reasonable steps are in place to identify and prevent bullying in the workplace
- Ensure all personnel support and understand the policy and procedures
- Be a good role model by engaging in positive and appropriate behaviours at all times
- Monitor the treatment of personnel who may be more vulnerable to bullying behaviours
- Be aware of the appropriate manner for dealing with a complaint regarding bullying
- Always act promptly on any complaint
- Refer any sensitive, controversial or ongoing situation to the appropriate authority.

Responsibilities of Personnel

- Avoid any behaviour that may be considered as bullying behaviour
- Be familiar with the policy on bullying and immediately report any incidents witnessed to the appropriate authority within the workplace
- Be aware that employees can be held legally responsible for committing or being involved in unlawful acts, and can be disciplined and/or dismissed for bullying behaviours.

REPORTING WORKPLACE BULLYING

STEP 1:

Inform the individual that their behaviour is inappropriate and unacceptable. Explain in clear terms that the behaviour needs to stop.

STEP 2:

If you are unable to approach the individual as outlined in Step 1, contact an appropriate person who can (eg Office Manager, Brother Visitor, Brother Auxiliary Visitor); avoid discussing with others who are not in a position to assist.

STEP 3:

Where necessary, lodge a grievance under the Trustees' grievance handling procedures.

REMINDER - It is important to keep such matters confidential; it is possible through idle gossip that the individual could sue for defamation.