

BULLYING POLICY - THE KEY ELEMENTS

As an employer, you need to show that you’ve taken all reasonable steps to deal with any acts of bullying. You should start with a policy or a clear, written process for dealing with bullying. This checklist gives guidance on the key elements that should be included.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

This is only an example - you should make sure that any policy you create is appropriate and relevant to your organisation.

| | Example |
|---|--|
| <p>Purpose</p> <p>Explain the reason for the policy</p> | <p>Our organisation is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace, where all staff are treated fairly, with dignity and respect. Bullying is a risk to our people’s health and safety in work, and there’s no place for it our organisation.</p> <p>This policy outlines our commitment to a safe workplace. It’s aimed at making sure that our people don’t experience any type of bullying while they’re at work. It also details the legal responsibilities of our organisation, and you as an employee, to prevent bullying in the workplace.</p> |
| <p>Scope</p> <p>Identify who the policy applies to</p> | <p>This policy covers everyone who works at our organisation (whether full-time, part-time or casual) and all people working under our direction, in connection with us, or on behalf of us (e.g. contractors, subcontractors, agents, consultants, and temporary staff - collectively “workers”).</p> <p>This policy also covers all events and places that are work related (e.g. work lunches, conferences, Christmas parties and client events). This policy isn’t part of any employment contract, and it’s not part of any contract for services.</p> |
| <p>Definitions</p> <p>Clarify what you mean by certain words and phrases</p> | <p>Repeated behaviour: refers to continuing behaviour but can also refer to a range or pattern of behaviour over certain amount of time.</p> <p>Unreasonable behaviour: is behaviour that a reasonable person in the context, would see as victimising, humiliating, undermining or threatening another person.</p> <p>Workplace bullying: is verbal, physical, social or psychological abuse by another person or group of people at work.</p> |
| <p>Principles</p> <p>Mention the legal aspects</p> | <p>Everyone in the workplace has a legal and moral responsibility to prevent bullying. Under health and safety legislation, our organisation’s main duty is to stop or minimise where we can, the risks to health and wellbeing in the workplace. This duty includes putting strategies in place to prevent workplace bullying.</p> <p>You need to take reasonable care of their own health and wellbeing and their colleagues’. You also need to comply with any reasonable, related instructions given by us (as the organisation).</p> |
| <p>Define workplace bullying</p> | <p>Workplace bullying is repeated, and/or unreasonable behaviour directed towards a “worker”, or a group of “workers”. It creates an unpleasant work environment and/or has a negative impact on a person’s health. It includes both physical and psychological risks and abuse.</p> |

Help staff to understand what is, or can mean bullying

Bullying behaviours can take many forms, such as...

- repeated, hurtful remarks or attacks, or making fun of your work or you as a person (including your family, sex, sexuality, gender identity, race or culture, education or economic background)
- harassment, such as unwelcome touching and explicit comments and requests that make someone uncomfortable
- exclusion or stopping someone from working with people or taking part in activities that relate to their work
- playing mind games, ganging up on someone, or other types of psychological harassment
- intimidation (making someone feel less important and undervalued)
- giving pointless tasks that have nothing to do with someone's job
- giving impossible jobs that can't be done in the given time or with the resources provided
- deliberately changing work hours or a schedule to make it difficult for someone
- deliberately holding back information someone needs for getting their work done properly
- pushing, shoving, tripping, grabbing people in the workplace
- initiation or hazing (where someone is made to do humiliating or inappropriate things in order to be accepted as part of the team)
- cyber bullying through messaging, social media or email

The above examples aren't a complete list of bullying behaviours, but they indicate the type of behaviours which may be classed as bullying.

Other things to note on workplace bullying:

- some types of workplace bullying are criminal offences if they involve violence or the threat of violence
- bullying may also be discrimination if it's because of age, sex, pregnancy, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or certain other reasons
- a single incident of unreasonable behaviour may be classed as bullying and it shouldn't be ignored as it may escalate to more
- a person's intention is irrelevant when determining what is and isn't bullying. Bullying can be unintentional, where actions which are not meant to victimise, humiliate, undermine or threaten a person actually have that effect.
- workplace bullying is harmful not the person who's being bullied. It also damages our organisation's culture and reputation.

Effects of bullying

Explain the impact of bullying

If someone's being bullied at work, they might:

- be less active or successful in their job
- be less confident in their work
- feel scared, stressed, anxious or depressed
- have their life outside of work affected (e.g. relationships)
- want to stay away from work
- feel like they can't trust their employer or the people who they work with
- lack confidence and happiness
- feel physical signs of stress (e.g. headaches, backaches, sleep problems)

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>What isn't workplace bullying?</p> <p>Be clear on the difference between bullying and strong management</p> | <p>If done reasonably, managing people doesn't mean bullying. Managers have the right to manage people and are required to do so as part of their role. This includes directing the way work is performed, doing performance reviews, following disciplinary policies and providing positive and negative feedback.</p> <p>Examples of reasonable management includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • setting reasonable performance goals, standards and deadlines, taking into account people's skills and experience • setting work fairly • fairly rostering and allocating working hours • transferring someone for legitimate and explained operational reasons • deciding not to select someone for a promotion, following a fair process • letting someone know about their unsatisfactory performance in a constructive way, and a way that follows the organisation's policies • letting someone know about their inappropriate behaviour in an objective and confidential way • carrying out organisational changes or restructuring • carrying out performance management processes |
| <p>Steps to prevent workplace bullying</p> <p>Detail what a good employer should aspire to</p> | <p>Our organisation will take all the steps that we can to prevent bullying through a risk management process, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying bullying risk factors - things and situations which could contribute to bullying (e.g. the way that people are managed, large organisational change such as redundancies) • assessing how likely bullying is to happen from the risk factors, including the risk's impact on people and the workplace • eliminating, controlling and minimising the risks, as far as we reasonably can • reviewing how effective the methods/process put in place are • training people about bullying, how to deal with it and its impact on the workplace |
| <p>Reporting workplace bullying</p> <p>Emphasise the importance of raising an issue</p> | <p>If you're being bullied, it's important that you know there are things you can do and people who can help. You have the right to be in a safe workplace, free from violence, harassment and bullying. Everyone has a moral responsibility to help create a positive and safe workplace.</p> <p>If someone in the workplace is experiencing bullying, there are steps that can be taken to solve it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raise a formal grievance • keep a diary - keeping note of everything that happens, including what you've done to try stop it • get support from someone you trust; • if you feel safe and confident, approach the person who is bullying them and tell them that their behaviour is unwanted and not acceptable. If you're unsure how to approach them, you might be able to get advice from a colleague or line-manager. • seek outside information and advice if the situation hasn't changed after talking to a line-manager, or if you feel there's no one you can safely talk to at work |

**Policy
breaches**

**Share the
consequences
of proven
bullying**

We take our commitment to providing a safe and healthy work environment, free from bullying, very seriously. Everyone at our organisation needs to comply with this policy.

If you, or another, breaches this policy, you may be subject to disciplinary action. In serious cases, this may include termination of employment. Agents and contractors (including temporary contractors) who breach this policy may have their contracts with the company terminated or not renewed.

If someone makes a false complaint, or a complaint in bad faith (e.g. making up a complaint to get someone else in trouble, or making a complaint where there's no foundation for it), that person may be disciplined and or have their employment terminated.