



DOGS NSW Bullying Prevention and Guidelines

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1 Purpose

These guidelines support the principles of the Bullying Prevention and related Management Policy. They aim to provide further information and advice for:

- 1.1 People who have been bullied.
- 1.2 Managers, supervisors and staff who are acting or involved in the activities of DOGS NSW including but not limited to those providing advice or initiating action regarding possible bullying;
- 1.2 Those who are given delegated responsibility for providing information in relation to equal opportunity matters providing advice in relation to those who may consider that they have been bullied.

2 Definitions

Bullying	<p>Bullying is the repeated unreasonable behaviour directed at a person or group of people that creates a risk to health and safety.</p> <p>Bullying may be intention or unintentional however behaviour will only be found to be bullying if it satisfies all of the elements in this definition.</p>
Discrimination	<p>Unlawful discrimination is discrimination based on any characteristic listed as protected by state, territory or Commonwealth legislation, and which has the purpose or effect of disadvantaging individuals on the basis of their protected characteristics.</p>

	<p>There are two forms of discrimination:-</p> <p>a. Direct discrimination, which occurs when people are treated less favourably because they belong to a particular group or category of people, for example, people with a disability or people of a particular ethnicity. It also includes treating someone unfairly because of a stereotype about a particular group or category of people to which they belong.</p> <p>b. Indirect (or systemic) discrimination exists when there is a requirement (a rule, policy, practice or procedure) that is the same for everyone, but which has an unequal or disproportionate effect or result on a particular group or groups.</p> <p>Unless this type of requirement is reasonable in all the circumstances, it is likely to be indirect discrimination.</p>
Repeated behaviour	Refers to the persistent nature of the behaviour, not the specific form the behaviour takes. Behaviour is considered repeated if an established pattern can be identified.
Respectful relationships	<p>Respectful relationships require that all people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are treated with integrity and goodwill • Are aware of the impact of their behaviour on others, and • Adjust their interpersonal styles and methods to the social and cultural environment.
DOGS NSW Community	<p>For the purpose of this policy, DOGS NSW Community includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members dealing with the administration and staff of DOGS NSW • Employees of DOGS NSW • Committees of DOGS NSW • Any volunteers in the workplace of DOGS NSW

3 Understanding Bullying

3.1 No Bullying at DOGS NSW

3.1.1 DOGS NSW is committed to providing a work environment that maximises the opportunities for everyone within the community of DOGS NSW to undertake the work positively and safely. Respectful relationships between people within the DOGS NSW community is the basis for such an environment.

3.1.2 When a person feels that they have been bullied this can affect many aspects of the person's work and overall life. DOGS NSW wants all Members of the DOGS NSW community to have the opportunity to access fair, prompt and effective relief from bullying.

3.2 **Who can be bullied or engaged in bullying behaviour**

3.2.1 Bullying behaviour may be displayed by anyone. In particular, it is important to note that it can occur from individuals or groups who are:-

3.2.1.1 in a position of authority or power over another person or group within the DOGS NSW community; or

3.2.1.2 a peer of the person or group.

3.2.2 In some instances people can engage in bullying behaviour towards a person they report to or come into contact by reason of the person's activities within the DOGS NSW community. This kind of bullying may also be experienced as a group action, where more than one person acts together to engage in bullying of an employee, manager or supervisor.

3.3 **Examples of bullying behaviours**

3.3.1 Examples of work or other behaviours when repeated may cause others to feel victimised, humiliated, intimidated or threatened include, but are not limited to:-

3.3.1.1 arbitrarily dispensing punishment, blaming, 'ganging up' or providing preferential treatment to one individual of a group to the detriment of others;

3.3.1.2 unreasonable criticism about work;

3.3.1.3 online harassment (for example, making inappropriate or aggressive comments about individuals on published emails, repeated electronic pestering of individuals to provide responses in unreasonably short time frames;

3.3.1.4 unjustified or exaggerated negative discussion about an individual by any means whether face to face or by email or on a social media platform;

3.3.1.5 constantly changing work guidelines, requesting impossible deadlines, assigning unreasonable work loads or demeaning tasks;

3.3.1.6 undermining or deliberately impeding a person's work.

- 3.3.2 Person-related behaviours that may also be bullying include:-
 - 3.3.2.1 coercive or persecuting behaviours
 - 3.3.2.2 hostile or aggressive verbal and/or non-verbal communication
 - 3.3.2.3 personal insults and name-calling, verbal abuse, sarcasm, threats, repeatedly shouting or swearing at staff
 - 3.3.2.4 physical or psychological harassment
 - 3.3.2.5 spreading malicious gossip, rumours, innuendo
 - 3.3.2.6 excluding or isolating someone socially at work
 - 3.3.2.7 intruding on a person's privacy by pestering, spying or stalking
 - 3.3.2.8 tampering with a person's personal belongings or work.
- 3.3.3 Sometimes bullying can be motivated by discriminatory reasons being prompted by a bias against a protected characteristic possessed by a person and thereby being bullied which such characteristics may be related to disability status, gender, sexuality or race.

3.4 What effect does bullying have?

- 3.4.1 Some effects of bullying can be manifested immediately. Other effects evolve over a period of time as the behaviour gradually erodes an individual's or group's confidence, self-esteem and work.
- 3.4.2 Signs that an individual may be subjected to bullying include:
 - 3.4.2.1 the onset or worsening of stress-exacerbated illnesses
 - 3.4.2.2 loss of confidence and reduced self esteem
 - 3.4.2.3 social isolation, absenteeism
 - 3.4.2.4 reduced performance at work
 - 3.4.2.5 in extreme cases, depression and other mental health issues.
- 3.4.3 Negative impacts on the DOGS NSW work environment include:-
 - 3.4.3.1 reduced commitment and respect for Dogs NSW

3.4.3.2 breakdown in communication and teamwork

3.4.3.3 increased staff turnover.

4 What can you do about bullying?

4.1 What can you do about bullying behaviour?

4.1.1 **Seek advice:** DOGS NSW provides several ways for staff to get assistance and information:-

4.1.1.1 Staff can contact the designated Equal Opportunity Contact Officer to discuss the situation:-

*Mrs Bernadette Gudge
DOGS NSW Accounts Team Lead
PH: 02 9834 0213
Email: bgudge@dogsnsw.org.au*

4.1.1.2 For those managing bullying situations, extra support is available from:-

*Mrs Belinda McLean
HR Focus
PH: 0438 464 787
Email: belinda@hrfocus.com.au*

4.1.2 **Take early action:** Everyone is encouraged to take appropriate and relevant action to address bullying early. Where successful, this improves outcomes for everyone in the DOGS NSW community.

Actions that are 'appropriate and relevant' will differ according to every situation, the context and the people involved. Some actions include but are not limited to:-

4.1.2.1 talking to someone you trust about the behaviour to test whether or not perceived bullying is reasonable and meets the test of 'reasonableness'.

4.1.2.2 raising the matter directly with the person concerned if you feel comfortable and safe to do so.

4.1.2.3 keeping a record of instances of the behaviour and the context within which it occurs.

4.1.2.4 reporting the behaviour to a superior.

4.1.3 **Make a complaint:** If early action is not successful or not appropriate, DOGS NSW provides a process for complaint. A formal complaint should be initially made with the Company Secretary in writing but should you not believe you are in a position to make a written complaint, requests should be made of the Company Secretary orally or an initial discussion prior to the lodgement of a formal written complaint.

4.2 **Specific strategies for preparing to address bullying**

4.2.1 **Name the behaviours:** What are you experiencing that you find victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening? Naming the behaviours will assist in identifying strategies to address them, whereas simply reporting 'I'm being bullied' is less likely to lead to a positive resolution.

4.2.2 **Make diary notes:** Write down:-

4.2.1 when those behaviours are experienced and the context within which they occur (eg, in private, in public, during one-on-one discussions)

4.2.2 when the behaviours began

4.2.3 how long they have been going on

4.2.4 any witnesses who can speak to the 'persistent and ongoing' nature

4.2.5 whether others experience similar behaviours from the same source

4.2.6 what, if anything, has been done to address the inappropriate behaviours to date.

4.2.3 **Seek advice and support:** It is important to ensure that any direct action you choose to take is one that you feel safe, comfortable and supported to do. Seeking assistance in preparing to address the person whose behaviour is causing you a problem can help you determine your best course of action. If you decide to raise your concerns informally with the individual, you may find it helpful to have a support person with you when you do so.

If you do decide to address the issue directly with the individual, it is important to:-

- 4.2.3.1 approach the matter in a non-confrontational way
- 4.2.3.2 focus on the unwanted behaviour and how it affects you, rather than the individual's character
- 4.2.3.3 provide specific information about what changes you would like them to make in their interactions with you.

4.2.4 **Consider taking more formal action:** You can speak with the Equal Opportunity Officer Mrs Bernadette Gudge to explore the options available to you if you want to make a formal complaint.