

# HORIZONS COLLEGE – POLICY & PROCEDURE

## WORKPLACE BULLYING POLICY



**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to protect workers and others from workplace bullying.

**Scope:** All workers and other persons at the school, including students.

- References:**
- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(Qld\)](#)
  - [Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Regulations 2001 \(Qld\)](#)
  - Horizons College Work Health and Safety Policy
  - Horizons College Staff Code of Conduct
  - Horizons College Complaints Handling Policy
  - Horizons College Complaints Handling Procedures

<b>Policy Name:</b>	Workplace Bullying Policy		Version 202207_01
<b>Policy Type:</b>	Governance		
<b>Supersedes:</b>	Workplace Bullying Policy – Version 202006_01		
<b>Authorised by:</b>	Board Chair	<b>Date of Authorisation:</b>	July 2022
<b>Review Date:</b>	Every 2 Years	<b>Next Review Date:</b>	July 2024
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Principal		

Note: Policy types marked with asterisks as follows are:

\* published on school website

\*\* only mandatory for schools incorporated through the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth)

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### Policy

All workers at Horizons College have the right to work in an environment free from workplace bullying. Horizons College is committed to taking action to protect workers from workplace bullying and to responding appropriately should such behaviour occur, including possible disciplinary action. Any instances of workplace bullying should be reported under the Horizons College Complaints Handling Policy.

In accordance with relevant law, Horizons College prohibits workplace bullying towards its workers, whilst they are engaging in their work at Horizons College

Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld), Horizons College recognises its duty in relation to workplace bullying includes, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- Elimination or minimisation of risks via the highest level of protection from hazards and risks as is reasonably practicable
- The provision of a safe work environment and safe systems of work
- Fair and effective representation, consultation, co-operation and issue resolution
- Provision of information, training, instruction and supervision
- Monitoring the health and safety of workers and the conditions at the workplace to ensure that work related illnesses and injuries are prevented.

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld) defines health as meaning physical and psychological health and therefore includes the mental and physical health of workers that may be negatively impacted by workplace bullying.

### Definitions

- **Workplace bullying:** repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or a group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety.
- **Repeated behaviour:** refers to the persistent nature of the behaviour and can involve a range of behaviours over time.
- **Unreasonable behaviour:** means behaviour that a reasonable person, having considered the circumstances, would see as unreasonable, including behaviour that is victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening.

Examples of behaviour, whether intentional or unintentional, that may be considered to be workplace bullying if they are repeated, unreasonable and create a risk to health and safety include but are not limited to:

- abusive, insulting or offensive language or comments, which may include using electronic mediums
- unjustified criticism or complaints
- deliberately excluding someone from workplace activities
- withholding information that is vital for effective work performance
- setting unreasonable timelines or constantly changing deadlines
- setting tasks that are unreasonably below or beyond a person's skill level
- denying access to information, supervision, consultation or resources to the detriment of the worker
- spreading misinformation or malicious rumours, which may include using electronic mediums
- changing work arrangements such as rosters and leave to deliberately inconvenience a particular worker or workers.

If workplace bullying behaviour involves violence, for example physical assault or the threat of physical assault, it should be reported to the police.

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### Responsibilities

#### Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking

In its legal role as a *Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking*, Horizons College undertakes its role and responsibilities under the legislation as detailed in the Horizons College Work Health and Safety Policy. Specifically, in relation to bullying, Horizons College acknowledges its responsibility to:

- take reasonable steps to prevent workplace bullying from occurring, as far as is reasonably practicable
- appropriately respond to any occurrences of workplace bullying.

#### Officers

In their legal role as Officers, Horizons College's Board Members and the Principal undertake their role and responsibilities under the legislation as detailed in the Horizons College Work Health and Safety Policy. Specifically, in relation to bullying, Officers have a responsibility to:

- take reasonable steps to prevent workplace bullying from occurring, as far as is reasonably practicable
- appropriately respond to any occurrences of workplace bullying.

#### Workers and Others

Horizons College's employees, as well as contractors and subcontractors and their employees, employees of a labour hire company who have been assigned to work in the school, outworkers, apprentices, trainees, students gaining work experience and volunteers, must undertake their role and responsibilities under the legislation as detailed in the Horizons College Work Health and Safety Policy and Staff Code of Conduct. Specifically, in relation to bullying, Workers at Horizons College have a responsibility to:

1. not bully any other person
2. appropriately report to the school bullying that is targeted towards them.

### Implementation

#### Preventing workplace bullying

Horizons College will take the following steps to prevent workplace bullying:

- making a clear statement that bullying is not acceptable and will not be tolerated
- establishing a positive workplace culture that encourages and promotes respectful behaviour and communication
- consulting with staff regularly to determine if bullying is occurring or if there are factors likely to increase the risk of workplace bullying
- monitoring incident reports, worker's compensation claims, patterns of absenteeism, sick leave, staff turnover and records of grievances to establish regular patterns or sudden unexplained changes
- providing a transparent process for reporting workplace bullying and dealing with bullying complaints
- conducting regular training to ensure that staff are aware of:
  - the school's standards of behaviour and the Staff Code of Conduct
  - the impact certain behaviours can have on others
  - the work health and safety duties and responsibilities relating to workplace bullying
  - how to manage difficult conversations and provide constructive feedback both formally and informally
  - how workplace bullying should be reported and how such reports are managed; and where to go internally and externally for more information and assistance

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### Responding to workplace bullying

Horizons College will take the following steps if workplace bullying or unreasonable behaviour is reported or observed:

- The Principal will speak to the parties involved as soon as possible, gather information and seek a resolution to satisfactorily address the issue for all parties.
- If issues cannot be resolved or the unreasonable behaviour is considered to be of a serious nature, an impartial person will be appointed to investigate. Both sides will be able to state their case and relevant information will be collected and considered before a decision is made.
- All complaints and reports will be treated in the strictest of confidence. Only those people directly involved in the complaint or in resolving it will have access to the information.
- There will be no victimisation of the person making the report or helping to resolve it. Complaints made maliciously or in bad faith may result in disciplinary action.

After a report of workplace bullying is resolved, there will be a follow-up review to check the health and safety of the parties involved, to offer support and to find out whether actions taken to stop the workplace bullying have been effective.

A flowchart to assist in responding to workplace bullying is provided in Appendix A.

### Compliance and Monitoring

Horizons College will keep appropriate records of workplace bullying reports in the Complaints and Incidents Register. The following information will be recorded:

- the person who made the report
- when the report was made
- who the report was made to
- the details of the issue reported
- action taken to respond to the issue, and
- any further action required – what, when and by whom.

Records will also be made of conversations, meetings and interviews detailing who was present and the agreed outcomes.

The Principal reports to the College Board on complaint handling including reports of workplace bullying on a regular basis. Regular monitoring of records assists in analysing trends to help prevent bullying from recurring in the future and making any relevant changes to this policy.

### Appendices

Appendix A – Workplace Bullying Flowchart (see next page)

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### Appendix A – Workplace Bullying Flowchart

