



Workplace Anti-Bullying Policy

Acorn Child Care Centre (Acorn) seeks to provide a work environment that is safe and enjoyable for all. This includes contractors, volunteers, and employees, herein referred to as 'employees' collectively. Workplace bullying has a detrimental effect on an organization and its people. It can create an unsafe working environment, result in a loss of trained and talented workers, cause the breakdown of teams and individual relationships, increase absenteeism, and reduce efficiency and productivity. People who are bullied can become distressed, anxious, withdrawn and can lose self-esteem and self-confidence. Workplace bullying is also, in some circumstances, against the law. For these reasons, bullying will not be tolerated by Acorn. Acorn recognises that workplace bullying may involve comments and behaviours that offend some people and not others. Acorn accepts that individuals may react differently to certain comments and behaviour. That is why a minimum standard of behaviour is required of employees. Acorn recognises that workplace bullying can take place through several different methods of communication including face to face, email, text messaging and social media platforms. As such, this Policy applies to all methods of communication.

This Policy applies to behaviours that occur:

- **In connection with work, or able to be perceived as related to Acorn and /or it's employees, even if it occurs outside normal working hours**
- **During work activities, for example, when dealing with families**
- **At work related events and functions, for example, at Christmas parties and;**
- **On social media platforms where employees interact.**

WHAT IS WORKPLACE BULLYING?

Workplace bullying occurs when an individual, or a group of individuals, behaves unreasonably towards an employee, or a group of employees, and the behaviour creates a risk to health and safety. It includes both physical and psychological abuse.

Bullying behaviours can take many different forms, from the obvious (direct) to the more subtle (indirect). The following are some examples of direct bullying:

- **Abusive, insulting or offensive language or comments; Violent, aggressive, or intimidating conduct.**
- **Belittling or humiliating comments; Victimisation; and**
- **Practical jokes or initiation.**

The following are some examples of indirect bullying:

- **Unjustified criticism or complaints.**
- **Deliberately excluding someone from work-related 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; and**
- **Changing work arrangements such as rosters and leave to deliberately inconvenience a particular employee/s.**

The above examples are not an exhaustive list of bullying behaviours. They are indicative of the type of behaviours that may constitute bullying and are therefore unacceptable to Acorn. If you are unsure whether behaviour not provided on this list constitutes bullying, you should contact your direct supervisor in the first instance.

Other incidents of unreasonable behaviour (such as harassment, violence, or threatening behaviour) can also present a risk to health and safety and will not be tolerated by Acorn.

Harassment is any form of behaviour that is:

- **Unwanted**
- **Offends, humiliates, or intimidates or,**
- **Creates a hostile environment**

Where such conduct occurs towards a person due to a particular characteristic of that person (such as when based on sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, age, disability, ethnicity or race) this may be unlawful under discrimination and equal opportunity law, even if it is limited to a single incident.

For example, sexual harassment is unlawful even where it is not repeated.

Workplace violence is considered to be any incident where a person is physically attacked or threatened in the workplace, whether this is directed to a co-worker, subcontractor, family, child, or visitor.

It includes (but is not limited to):

- **Any type of direct physical contact such as punching, pushing, tripping, spitting, or blocking of someone's way.**
- **Any form of unwanted physical contact.**

WHAT IS NOT WORKPLACE BULLYING?

Reasonable management action taken by managers or supervisors to direct and control the way work is carried out is not considered to be workplace bullying if the action is taken in a respectful, reasonable, and lawful way.

The following are some examples of reasonable management action:

- **Realistic and achievable performance goals, standards, and deadlines.**
- **Fair and appropriate rostering and allocation of working hours.**
- **Transferring a worker to another area or role for operational reasons; Deciding not to select a worker for a promotion where a fair and transparent process is followed.**
- **Informing a worker about unsatisfactory work performance in an honest, fair, and constructive way.**
- **Informing a worker about unreasonable behaviour in an objective and confidential way.**

- **Taking disciplinary action, including suspension, or terminating employment where appropriate or justified in the circumstances.**

MANAGERS' AND SUPERVISORS' ROLES

Managers and supervisors have an important role to play in terms of fostering a culture that does not tolerate or encourage harassment, bullying or workplace violence. Managers and supervisors will:

- **Ensure that they do not engage in, encourage, or contribute to any conduct of this nature themselves.**
- **Ensure that workers understand this Policy and consequences of non-compliance.**
- **Take steps to prevent harassment, bullying, and workplace violence from continuing when they observe it happening.**
- **Warn the person or people involved of the consequences if the behaviour continues (including performance management and possible termination of employment).**
- **Treat all grievances raised by employees in accordance with Acorn's Grievance Handling Policy.**
[\(Link\)](#)

EMPLOYEE ROLE

Acorn expects employees:

- **Not to engage in harassment, bullying or workplace violence.**
- **Not to aid, abet or encourage others to engage in harassment, bullying or workplace violence.**
- **To behave in a responsible and professional manner.**
- **Treat others in the workplace with courtesy and respect.**
- **Listen and respond appropriately to the views and concerns of others.**
- **to be fair and honest in their dealings with others.**

ARE YOU EXPERIENCING BULLYING, HARASSMENT OR BEING SUBJECTED TO VIOLENCE?

Complaints of bullying, harassment and workplace violence will be taken seriously and will be handled in accordance with Acorn's Grievance Handling Policy.

If you make a complaint of workplace bullying, harassment or violence it will be taken seriously and will be dealt with sympathetically and in a confidential manner (except where Acorn deems it is necessary to disclose information in order to properly deal with the complaint).

You will not be victimised or treated unfairly for making a complaint.

If the claim is found to be substantiated, Acorn will act in accordance with its Disciplinary & Termination Policy.
[\(Link\)](#)

Please note that any worker found to have fabricated a complaint may be subject to disciplinary action under the Disciplinary & Termination Policy, up to and including termination of employment.

MORE INFORMATION

If you need any more information about workplace bullying, harassment, or violence please see your manager.

OTHER POLICIES

Employees are encouraged to read this policy in conjunction with other relevant Acorn policies, including:

- **Code of Conduct.**
- **Telephone, Mobile & Internet Policy.**
- **Social Media Policy.**
- **Equal Employment Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy.**
- **Grievance Handling Policy.**
- **Discipline & Termination Policy.**

Links to be added at a later date.

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Next revision Due December 2021