

KATHERINE TOWN COUNCIL

BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY



TITLE: BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY
ADOPTED BY: COUNCIL
RESPONSIBILITY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 01/03/2019

Version	Decision Number	Adoption Date	History
1		28/02/2017	
2			
3			
4			

1. BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY

Katherine Town Council (Council) recognises the importance of providing awareness and education to ensure that the Council workplace is free from bullying and harassment.

2. COMMENCEMENT OF POLICY

The Policy will commence from 01/03/2017; it replaces all other policies, if any, relating to Bullying and Harassment in the workplace (whether written or not).

3. SCOPE

Bullying can potentially have dire consequences for individuals and the workgroup, therefore, Council is committed to taking all reasonably practicable steps to eliminate the factors that can cause bullying and views it as a serious risk to health and wellbeing; it will not be tolerated in any way from any faction within Council. Workers of Council are encouraged to report any real or potential bullying and harassment complaints as per the **Complaint Handling Policy**.

4. PURPOSE

Council actively promotes a culture where everyone is treated with dignity, respect and raises awareness of unacceptable behaviour in the workplace. Workplace bullying and/or harassment is a psychological hazard, the risks of which need to be managed like any other hazard at the workplace. This policy provides a clear understanding of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the workplace.

5. BULLYING

Bullying is classified as; *“repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards an individual or group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety”*. Unreasonable behaviour means behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, feels victimised, humiliated, undermined or threatened.

It is not considered bullying for a manager or supervisor to counsel a worker about their performance. Performance counselling is a necessary function to ensure workers meet standards of work and behaviour. Also, other reasonable managerial actions such as disciplinary action, work directions and orders, and allocation of work in compliance with business needs and systems do not constitute bullying.

6. HARASSMENT

Harassment is commonly understood as *“behaviour intended to disturb or upset, and it is characteristically repetitive in nature and is intentional behaviour which is found threatening or disturbing”*.

Under federal legislation, unlawful harassment occurs when someone is made to feel intimidated, insulted or humiliated because of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin; sex; disability; sexual preference; or other characteristics specified under antidiscrimination or human rights legislation.

Harassment can include behaviour such as:

- Telling insulting jokes about particular racial groups
- Sending explicit or sexually suggestive emails
- Displaying offensive or pornographic posters or screen savers
- Making derogatory comments or taunts about someone’s race or religion
- Asking intrusive questions about someone’s personal life, including their sex life

7. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, which makes a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated; this can be intentional or unintentional behaviour. Conduct is not considered sexual harassment if a reasonable person, having regard for all the circumstances, could not have anticipated that the conduct would offend, humiliate or intimidate the other person. Sexual harassment does not have to be directed at a particular individual; behaviour which creates a hostile working environment for other workers can also be unlawful.

Sexual harassment can include behaviour such as:

- Physical contact such as pinching, touching, grabbing, kissing or hugging
- Staring or leering at a person or at parts of their body
- Sexual jokes or comments
- Requests for sexual favours
- Persistent requests to go out, where they are refused
- Sexually explicit conversations
- Displays of offensive material such as posters, screen savers, etc.
- Accessing or downloading sexually explicit material from the Internet
- Suggestive comments about a person’s body or appearance
- Sending rude or offensive emails, attachments or text messages

8. COMPLAINTS

Council has a range of resources, strategies and programs available to manage and assist with workplace conflicts. Please reference the Complaint Handling Policy for details regarding the reporting process, additionally Council promotes and supports an Employee Assistance Program.

While Council demonstrates due diligence in controlling bullying and its effects; the most effective and long-term solution for creating a harmonious workplace lies with the individual. Witnessing or having knowledge of bullying and not speaking up or taking action, is validating inappropriate behaviour. If you have harassment or bullying complaints please follow the Complaint Handling Policy located on the electronic record management system.

9. APPLYING THIS POLICY

Council seeks the co-operation of all workers, contractors, visitors and others who may be affected by our business or undertakings.

Council encourages and supports suggestions to create a safe working environment and promotes all reasonable preventative measures being taken.

This policy applies to all business operations and functions, including those situations where workers are required to work off-site.

10. REVIEWING THIS POLICY

Council will review this policy every two (2) years, unless legislative changes trigger an earlier review, in consultation with workers:

- to assess the effectiveness of the policy,
- by reviewing our overall health and safety performance,
- by monitoring the effectiveness of policies and procedures.

11. COMMUNICATING THIS POLICY

This policy (and related procedures) shall be displayed in our workplace/s.

All workers, contractors and others affected by our business or undertakings will be provided with a copy through their manager/supervisor.

New workers will be provided with a copy as part of their induction.

12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge:

- *receiving the Policy,*
- *that I will comply with the Policy, and*
- *that there may be disciplinary consequences if I fail to comply, which may result in the termination of my employment.*

Name:

Signed:

Date:
