

Staffing & Employment
HACC Standard 3
AQTF Standard 7
Review Date June 2011

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Attachment: 1

POLICY REGISTER

Subject: Harassment & Bullying Prevention

Primary Responsibility:

Board members, Executive Officer /Operations Manager and Staff.

Policy Statement:

It is the policy of WSCF that all employees and volunteers understand that harassment will not be allowed in the workplace, that complaints will be taken seriously and handled in a timely manner.

Procedure:

All harassment, (*For definition of harassment refer Attachment*) is discriminatory and will not be tolerated in the workplace. Most types of harassment are also against State and Federal anti-discrimination law and may also be an offence under the Crimes Act. Harassment also goes against WSCF's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy and Occupational Health and Safety Policy.

An important part of good working relationships is that everyone must be able to work in an environment free from harassment, i.e. everyone should feel comfortable in the workplace and that differences should be respected.

- Harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances.
- Any employee can complain about harassment to their supervisor or other managers, their union or the Anti-Discrimination Board,
- All harassment complaints will be treated seriously, sympathetically, quickly and privately,
- All harassment complaints will be investigated fairly and impartially,
- Action will be taken to make sure that harassment stops,
- People making complaints and witnesses will not be victimised in any way,
- Complaints should be settled within the workplace wherever possible.

At all times, management must make sure that complete privacy is maintained. The names of anyone involved in a complaint must not be discussed with others except those immediately involved in the complaint.

If you can, tell the person(s) to stop. You should also tell them that you do not like what they are doing and that it is not OK with you or with management.

If they do not stop, you should tell the Executive Officer or Operations Manager. The Executive Officer or Operations Manager should take action to prevent further harassment. If the harassment comes from the Executive Officer or Operations Manager, inform the WSCF Chairperson.

Keep a note of any harassment that happens with dates, times, witnesses if any, what happened and what you said, did or felt.

Responsibility of staff

It is the responsibility of all staff to respect the rights of others and never encourage harassment. If you become aware that someone you work with is being harassed, help prevent it by offering your support to the person being harassed. You can do this by:

- Telling them that you are willing to act as a witness if the person being harassed decides to lodge a complaint,
- Refusing to join in with any harassing activity,
- Backing them up or supporting them to say no.

It is not your responsibility to say anything to the person who they say is harassing them or to spread rumours about someone. If you participate in spreading rumours you may be subject to a defamation action.

CROSS REFERENCE

- Human Rights And Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986
http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/hraeoca1986512/
- SACS Award
- Staff Supervision and Performance Appraisals Policy & Procedures
- Staff Disciplinary Policy & Procedures
- WSCF's constitution
- WSCF's Vision and Mission statement

DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT¹

Harassment is any behaviour, which is not asked for and not wanted and that happens because of a person's sex, race, age, pregnancy, marital status, disability, transgender (transsexuality) or sexuality.

Harassment offends, upsets, humiliates or scares another person. It makes the workplace uncomfortable and unpleasant.

Harassment is not always intended – acts or behaviour, which are funny or don't mean much to one person may hurt or offend another. A workplace without harassment is a workplace where people respect and tolerate the rights and differences of others.

Harassment often happens when power is used wrongly. The power may be related to:

- Position (e.g. a supervisor over someone they are in charge of),
- Cultural difference (e.g. men over women in a society where men hold most of the power or of a white person over a person of colour in a traditionally Anglo-Saxon society),
- Number (e.g. women over men in a workplace where most of the workers are women).

Types of harassment

Harassment in the workplace can take many forms. It can be overt (obvious) or subtle, direct or indirect (for example, where a hostile feeling/environment is created without any direct attacks being made on a person).

Some forms of verbal harassment:

- Sexual or suggestive remarks, Propositions (sexual invitations),
- Making fun of someone, Imitating someone's accent, Spreading rumours,
- Obscene telephone calls/unsolicited letters, faxes or E-mail messages,
- Repeated unwelcome invitations, Repeated questions about personal life,
- Threats or insults, Name calling,
- The use of language that is not suitable in the workplace,
- Calling someone who is transgender (transsexual) "it" or refusing to refer to them because their preferred gender or name.

Some forms of visual/physical harassment

- Displaying or circulating sexually suggestive, offensive or degrading/insulting material on walls, computer screen savers, E-mail,
- Suggestive looks or leers,
- Offensive hand or body gestures,
- Unwelcome practical jokes, Wolf whistling,
- Mimicking someone with a disability,
- Following home from work,
- Ignoring someone or being particularly cold or distant with them,
- Not sharing information,
- Invasion of personal space e.g. unnecessarily leaning over someone,
- Continually ignoring or dismissing someone's contribution in a meeting/discussion.
- Unnecessary physical contact (pinching, patting, brushing up against a person, touching, kissing, hugging against a person's will),
- Indecent or sexual assault or attempted assault,
- Pushing, shoving or jostling.

Source: ¹Definition of Harassment: Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986