



CATHOLIC DIOCESE  
OF ROCKHAMPTON

# Harassment, Bullying and Violence in the Workplace Policy

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# 1. Purpose

This policy outlines the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton's ('Diocese') commitment to a safe workplace and is aimed at ensuring, so far as it reasonably can, that employees are not subjected to any form of harassment, bullying or violence while at work. It also details the legal responsibilities of the Diocese and its employees in relation to preventing harassment, bullying and violence in the workplace.

# 2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees (including full-time, part-time, casual and temporary employees, consultants, etc.), volunteers, contractors and visitors. This policy extends to all functions and places that are controlled by the Diocese.

# 3. Policy Statement

The Diocese is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which all employees, volunteers, contractors, visitors and others are fairly treated, with dignity and respect and which is free from all forms of harassment, bullying and violence. Harassment, bullying and violence are risks to the health and safety of those within the Diocese and will not be tolerated.

By effectively implementing this Harassment, Bullying and Violence in the Workplace Policy, the Diocese aims to attract and retain well-suited and talented people, as well as create a positive environment for employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors.

# 4. Principles

Everyone within the Diocese has a legal and moral responsibility to prevent harassment, bullying and violence from occurring. Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)*, the Diocese's primary duty is to eliminate or minimise as far as reasonable practical, the risks to the health and wellbeing of the employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors. This duty includes the implementation of strategies to prevent harassment, bullying and violence.

Employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors are expected to take reasonable care for their own health and wellbeing, as well as that of others. They are required to also comply with any reasonable instruction given by the Diocese.

## 4.1. Harassment

Harassment generally involves unwelcome behaviour that intimidates, offends or humiliates a person because of a particular personal characteristic such as age, race, gender, disability, religion or sexuality. It is possible for a person to be bullied, harassed and discriminated against at the same time. However, unlike workplace bullying, harassment may be based on some characteristic, or perceived characteristic of the affected person.

There are various laws, for example anti-discrimination, equal employment opportunity, workplace relations and human rights laws, that make it illegal to discriminate against or harass a person in the workplace. The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)* includes specific protections against discriminatory conduct for persons raising health and safety concerns or performing legitimate safety-related functions.

## 4.2. Bullying

Bullying is repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person or group of people that creates a risk to health and safety. Bullying can take many forms, including jokes, teasing, nicknames, emails, pictures, text messages, embarrassment or humiliation, social isolation or ignoring people, or unfair work practices.

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Behaviours that may constitute bullying include:

- Sarcasm and other forms of demeaning language;
- Threats, abuse or shouting;
- Coercion;
- Isolation;
- Inappropriate blaming;
- Ganging up;
- Constant unconstructive criticism;
- Deliberately withholding information or equipment that a person needs to do their job or access their entitlements; and
- Unreasonable refusal of requests for leave, training or other workplace benefits.

If someone is being bullied because of a personal characteristic protected by equal opportunity law, it is a form of discrimination. The behaviour does not have to be repeated to be discrimination – it may be a one-off event.

### 4.3. Violence

Workplace violence is any action, incident or behaviour in which a person is assaulted, threatened, harmed or injured in circumstances relating to their work. The risk of workplace violence must be eliminated or minimised so far as is reasonably practicable.

Workplace violence may originate outside the Diocese i.e. from members of the public, or from within. Within the office, every attempt should be made to address interpersonal conflict quickly, to reduce the risk of escalation.

It is possible for workplace violence to occur within the context of a pattern of bullying. However unlike workplace bullying, workplace violence may occur as a single incident. Every incident of workplace violence (i.e. physical assault or the threat of physical assault) should be reported to the police by the Human Resource Manager or employee immediately, no matter who it involves, because workplace violence is a criminal matter.

### 4.4. Steps to prevent harassment, bullying and violence

The Diocese will take all reasonable steps to prevent bullying through a risk management process. This will include:

- Identification of harassment, bullying and violence risk factors;
- Assessment of the likelihood of harassment, bullying or violence occurring;
- Eliminating the risks, as far as practical, or controlling, or minimising, them as far as reasonable practical;
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the control methods put in place and the process; and
- Training and awareness programs for employees, volunteers and contractors about harassment, bullying and violence on how to manage them and the potential impact on the work environment if they are not managed.

### 4.5. Reporting

If harassment, bullying or violence is believed to have occurred then action should be taken. This includes the process outlined in the Diocese's grievance handling procedure. Action can also be in the form of reporting the issue to the Human Resource Manager.

If violence or threatened violence is thought to have occurred then this should be reported to the Police as soon as possible.

Reports regarding harassment, bullying or violence in the workplace can also be reported to:

- Australian Human Rights Commission [www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)
- Commonwealth Fairwork Ombudsman [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au)
- Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland <http://www.adcq.qld.gov.au/complaints>

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## 5. References

N/A

## 6. Schedules

This policy must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.

## 7. Policy Information

<b>Subordinate Schedules</b>	
<b>Accountable Officer</b>	Human Resource Manager
<b>Policy Type</b>	Executive Policy
<b>Approved Date</b>	6/05/2020
<b>Effective Date</b>	16/01/2020
<b>Review Date</b>	16/01/2023
<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	
<b>Related Policies</b>	
<b>Related Procedures</b>	
<b>Related forms, publications and websites</b>	
<b>Definitions</b>	