

BULLYING POLICY

Aster Services is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment in which all workplace participants are treated fairly, with dignity and respect. Bullying is a serious risk to workplace health and safety. It is unacceptable and will not be tolerated by Aster Services.

Definition

Bullying is repeated and unreasonable behaviour which poses a risk to workplace health and safety. It includes both physical and psychological risks and abuse.

- 'Repeated behaviour' refers to the persistent nature of the behaviour and can refer to a range or pattern of behaviours over a period of time.
- 'Unreasonable behaviour' means behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine or threaten another person.

Bullying has many characteristics in common with discrimination and harassment but the reasons for the bullying behaviour may be much broader than the grounds on which it is unlawful to discriminate or harass someone. Bullying can lead to serious breaches of Work Health & Safety law and in some cases, criminal law.

Examples of bullying behaviour may include:

Direct Bullying:

- Abusive, insulting or offensive language;
- Spreading misinformation or malicious rumours;
- Behavior or language that frightens, humiliates, belittles or degrades, including over criticizing, or criticism that is delivered with yelling or screaming;
- Displaying offensive material;
- Inappropriate comments about a person's appearance, lifestyle, their family or sexual preferences;
- Teasing or regularly making someone the brunt of pranks or practical jokes;
- Interfering with a person's personal property or work equipment; or
- Harmful or offensive initiation practices.

Indirect Bullying:

- Unreasonably overloading a person with work, or not providing enough work;
- Setting unreasonable timeframes, or constantly changing them;
- Setting tasks that are unreasonably below, or above a job skills level;
- Deliberately excluding or isolating a person from normal work activities; or
- Withholding information that is necessary for effective work performance.

The above examples do not represent a complete list of bullying behaviours. They are indicative of the type of behaviours which may constitute bullying and are unacceptable at Aster Services.

Bullying is not:

- Fair and appropriate feedback, assessment or counselling where it appropriate to do so;
- Training, Coaching or Mentoring;
- Work Role Discussions; or
- Setting Performance Targets.

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Examples include where an employee is not performing their role appropriately and the manager/supervisor conducts a meeting with them to discuss the concerns.

Conduct which may amount to bullying may extend to situations and places which are not within the confines of the workplace. Bullying may occur through electronic and online channels, through the use of social media and telecommunications devices. Where there is a sufficient connection to the workplace and risks of health and safety, this policy will apply.

Complaint Reporting Procedure

The Complaints process for instances of any type of Bullying in the workplace is the same as previously described for instances of Discrimination. Please read the Anti-discrimination Policy for a comprehensive explanation of the complaints procedure.

- Bullying can result in legal action against Aster Services and individuals; it can also cause Work Health & Safety risks. For these reasons, it is everyone’s responsibility to report instances of Bullying.
- If a workplace participant feels that they have been bullied, or have witnessed bullying, they should not ignore it.
- The first step is to immediately raise the concern with their direct manager/supervisor (unless the complaint is against their direct manager/supervisor in which case the complaint should be raised with the next level of management).
- Aster Services will, where possible, objectively investigate and assess the details of the complaint and following the investigation, come to a finding and take action on those findings where possible.
- Aster Services has the discretion to take disciplinary action against any workplace participant who has been found to have bullied another workplace participant.

Breach of this Policy

- Aster Services takes very seriously its commitment to providing a safe and healthy work environment, free from inappropriate workplace conduct.
- Any employee or contractor who has been found by Aster Services, after an investigation, to have engaged in inappropriate behaviour with respect to bullying will be subject to appropriate sanctions ranging from warnings up to and including possible termination of employment.
- If a person makes a false complaint, or a complaint in bad faith (e.g. making up a complaint to get someone else in trouble, or making a complaint where there is no foundation for the complaint), that person may be disciplined and may be exposed to legal liability.

This policy is approved and issued by the Executive Director of Aster Services.



Michael Walshe
Executive Director
24 December 2019

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