



# AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

## WORKPLACE BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

This policy applies to workers at Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) Agencies.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and its Agencies aim to provide workplaces that are free from all forms of bullying and harassment.

Bullying is persistent and repeated negative behaviour directed towards a worker that creates a risk to health and safety at work and/or in the course of employment. It may be direct or indirect, verbal or physical, or some form of negative interaction between one or more persons against another or others. Reasonable management action (including, for example, performance management) does not constitute bullying.

Harassment is unwanted behaviour which may involve inappropriate actions, comments or physical contact that is objectionable or causes offence. Unlawful harassment may relate to any of the attributes protected in equal opportunity legislation.

It is the responsibility of all workers to participate in the development and maintenance of a workplace that is free from all forms of bullying and harassment, including the misuse of social media. Substantiated claims may have serious consequences, including termination of employment.

The ACBC Agencies aim to provide a workplace where:

- Management treats all complaints seriously and sympathetically.
- No worker is penalised or disadvantaged as a result of raising a legitimate concern or complaint relating to bullying or harassment.
- Management implements an internal complaint resolution process to assist workers to raise issues of concern.
- Management provides support to workers while it investigates bullying and harassment issues.
- Management takes appropriate disciplinary action, which may include dismissal, against any worker found to have breached this policy.

As allegations of bullying are viewed seriously, all workers should be aware that where the ACBC is satisfied that a complaint is malicious, frivolous or vexatious, the complainant may face disciplinary action.

The intention of this policy is not to diminish supervisory or managerial prerogative to direct or control how work is done in the workplace other than to ensure, in so far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of workers. As noted above, reasonable management directions and practices do not constitute bullying and harassment.

Workers are expected to comply with this policy. However, this policy is not intended to create contractual rights or entitlements outside of an employee's contract of employment, and is not intended to apply as terms of an employee's contract of employment. The ACBC may amend, substitute or remove this policy at any time.

**Most Reverend Mark B Coleridge DD BA DSS**  
Chairman, Permanent Committee  
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference  
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