Workplace Bullying & Anti- Harassment Policy

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| This is a template policy developed for general use by Baptist Churches in NSW and ACT and may not necessarily be suitable for you and your church's situation.  The information provided in this document is accurate and up-to-date as of the time of writing. However, due to the possibility of changes in circumstances or changes in legislative requirements and best practise, we cannot guarantee the continued accuracy or relevance of the content.  It is recommended that you consider whether the information is appropriate to your needs, and where appropriate, seek professional advice.  This document should be used and read in conjunction with the *Guide to the Template Policies* document. |

# Purpose

The purpose of this document is to ensure that all workers including pastors, employees, contractors and volunteers are aware of the behavioural expectations under which they are engaged.

# Scope

This policy applies to all workers, employees, contractors, and volunteers of **ABC Baptist Church** and applies to all methods of communication including face to face, email, text messages, and social media platforms. As such, this Policy applies to all methods of communication through which workplace bullying or harassment can take place.

# Definitions

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| Worker | any individual that performs work in any capacity for **ABC Baptist Church** including pastors, employees, contractors, and volunteers. |

# Bullying

**What is Bullying?**

Workplace bullying occurs when an individual, or a group of individuals, repeatedly behaves unreasonably towards a worker, or a group of workers, and the behaviour creates a risk to their health and safety. It includes both physical and psychological abuse.

Bullying behaviours can take many different forms, from the obvious (direct) to the more subtle (indirect).

The following are some examples of *direct* bullying:

* Verbal or written abuse including offensive language;
* Violent, aggressive, or intimidating conduct;
* Belittling or humiliating comments;
* Victimisation; and
* Practical jokes or initiation.

The following are some examples of *indirect* bullying:

* Unjustified criticism or complaints;
* Deliberately excluding someone from a work-related activity;
* Withholding information that is vital for effective work performance;
* Setting unreasonable timelines or constantly changing deadlines;
* Setting tasks that are unreasonably below or beyond a person's skill level;
* Denying access to information, supervision, consultation or resources to the detriment of the worker;
* Spreading misinformation or malicious rumours; and
* Changing work arrangements such as rosters to deliberately inconvenience a particular worker or workers.

**Bullying does not include:**

Reasonable management action taken by **[leadership/ management/ supervisors etc]** to direct and control the way work is carried out. Such management is not considered to be workplace bullying if the action is taken in a reasonable and lawful way.  
  
These actions include:

* Reasonable and achievable performance goals, standards, and deadlines;
* Feedback that is delivered in constructive ways and intended to assist workers to improve their work performance or the standard of their behaviour;
* Deciding not to select a worker for a promotion where a fair and transparent process is followed;
* Implementing organisational changes or restructuring; and
* Taking disciplinary action, including suspension, or terminating employment where appropriate or justified in the circumstances.

**Consequences of Bullying**

Disciplinary action may be taken against anyone who bullies a co-worker. Discipline may involve a warning, counselling, demotion, or dismissal, depending on the circumstances.

No one who reports bullying will be victimised and reports will be investigated quickly and fairly.

**Violence**  
Violence between workers is not tolerated under any circumstances. **[Leadership/ management/ supervisors etc]** are responsible to ensure that no person in their work group is bullied, threatened, or physically hurt by other workers.

If you are being bullied, or see others being bullied at work, you must report it as soon as possible to your **[leadership/ management/ supervisors etc]**.

# Harassment

Harassment is unwanted behaviour that offends, humiliates, or intimidates a person and creates a hostile environment. This conduct is directed towards a person due to a particular characteristic of that person (such as when based on gender, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, age, race, ethnicity, religion or any form of physical feature or disability).

Harassment can be sexual in nature, for example, unwanted sexual advances or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature.

Harassment is any form of behaviour that is:

* Unwanted;
* Offensive, humiliating or intimidating; or
* Creates a hostile environment.

Some examples of harassment include:

* Making negative comments about an employee’s religious beliefs.
* Using racist slang, phrases, or nicknames.
* Making remarks about an individual’s skin colour or other ethnic traits.
* Making offensive reference to an individual’s mental or physical disability.
* Sharing inappropriate images, videos, emails, letters, or notes.
* Making derogatory age-related comments.
* Sending suggestive letters, notes, or emails.
* Displaying inappropriate sexual images or posters in the workplace.
* Telling lewd jokes or sharing sexual anecdotes.
* Inappropriate touching.

**Victimisation**

Victimisation is selecting or threatening to subject someone to a ‘detriment’ because they propose to, or are believed to have:

* Asserted their rights under this Policy, or relevant legislation; or
* Alleged that another person has breached this policy or the relevant legislation.

A ‘detriment’ in employment includes demotion, dismissal, transfer, suspension, loss of a benefit, being ostracised from work, or work-related social functions, or being the subject of innuendo. **ABC Baptist Church** does not permit retaliation against a person because they propose to have or are believed to have made a complaint of unacceptable behaviour under this policy, equal opportunity legislation, or Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation.

# Roles

**[Leadership/ management/ supervisors etc]**

**[Leadership/ management/ supervisors etc]** have an important role to play in terms of fostering a culture that does not tolerate or encourage unacceptable behaviour and should ensure that they do not engage in any conduct of this nature themselves.

**[Leadership/ management/ supervisors etc]** should ensure that workers understand this Policy and consequences of non-compliance. When it is observed that unacceptable behaviour is occurring, they should take steps to prevent this conduct from continuing and warn the person or people involved of the consequences if the behaviour continues (including disciplinary measures up to and including termination of employment).

All grievances raised by workers should be handled in accordance with **ABC Baptist Church’s** Grievance Handling Policy.

**Workers**

**ABC Baptist Church** expects workers;

* Not to engage in unacceptable behaviour;
* Not to aid, abet or encourage others to engage in unacceptable behaviour;
* To behave in a responsible and professional manner;
* Treat others in the workplace with courtesy and respect;
* Listen and respond appropriately to the views and concerns of others; and
* To be fair and honest in their dealings with others.

# Are you experiencing unacceptable Behaviour?

Complaints of unacceptable behaviour will be taken seriously and be handled in accordance with **ABC Baptist Church**’s Grievance Handling Policy.

If you make a complaint of bullying, harassment, or other unacceptable behaviour, it should be raised through our Grievance Handling Policy. A complaint will be taken seriously and will be dealt with sympathetically and in a confidential manner (except where **ABC Baptist Church** deems it necessary to disclose information to properly deal with the complaint).

If the claim is found to be substantiated, **ABC Baptist Church** will respond in accordance with its Disciplinary Policy.

Note that any worker found to have fabricated a complaint may be subject to disciplinary action under the Disciplinary Policy, up to and including termination of employment.

**Document Control Information**

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| **Workplace bullying and anti-harassment policy** | |
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