

Geelong Grammar School

Policy For Equal Opportunity and Respectful Workplace Behaviour

POL-GGS-HR-002

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Distribution: All Geelong Grammar School Staff

Date Effective: 31st July, 2011

Review Date: 31st July, 2013

Location of Original: HR Policies and Procedures/EEO and Respectful Workplace Behaviour Policy 28 July, 2011.

1. Policy

1.1. Policy context

It is the policy of Geelong Grammar School that the learning and working environment is positive and supportive for all members of the School community. Therefore, Geelong Grammar School is committed to ensuring that the working and learning environment is free from discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), vilification, victimisation and bullying.

Geelong Grammar School aims to:

- foster an environment where all members of the School community are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect
- promote appropriate standards of conduct at all times
- implement training and awareness-raising strategies to ensure that everyone knows their rights and responsibilities
- encourage, where necessary, reporting of inappropriate behaviour and provide an effective procedure for resolving complaints in a sensitive, fair and timely manner and as confidentially as possible.

This Policy sets out what constitutes discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), vilification, victimisation and bullying and what you can do if you experience these things. It also details the complaints procedure which Geelong Grammar School has implemented to ensure that any form of discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), vilification, victimisation or bullying is dealt with promptly, confidentially and impartially.

1.2. Policy scope

This Policy relates to:

- Members of the School Council
- employees
- applicants for positions of employment, student placements, contractors, subcontractors and volunteers.

In this Policy, employee is considered to include the above persons.

This Policy applies to:

- the provision of services within the School community
- interactions with service providers, suppliers and members of the public in the course of undertaking School duties
- all aspects of employment
- the workplace, which extends beyond the School's physical boundaries and set times of work, and includes after-hours work, staff meetings, School camps and excursions, conferences, School-authorized functions and activities.

1.3. Employee responsibilities

All employees have a responsibility to treat each other with courtesy, dignity and respect. Individual employees must also ensure that they do not discriminate against, harass, sexually harass, vilify, victimise or bully other employees. Any reports of discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), vilification, victimisation or bullying will be treated seriously and sympathetically by the School. Disciplinary action may be taken against anyone where a complaint of discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), vilification, victimisation or bullying has been substantiated.

1.4. Additional responsibilities of managers and supervisors

Managers and supervisors are expected to:

- role-model appropriate standards of behaviour for all members of the school community
- take action to ensure their staff are educated and aware of their obligations under this policy and law
- intervene promptly, fairly and appropriately when they become aware of inappropriate conduct or behaviour
- assist staff, wherever possible, in informal (non-disciplinary) resolution of problems and complaints
- refer formal complaints about breaches of this policy to the Principal (for complaints about the behaviour of teaching staff) or the Commercial Director (for complaints about the behaviour of non teaching staff, student placements, contractors, subcontractors and volunteers) for investigation
- take action to ensure that staff who raise an issue or make a complaint are not victimised for so doing
- act impartially in resolving issues and enforcing appropriate workplace behaviour and conduct, and ensure relevant parties have an opportunity to be heard.

2. Legislation

Both Federal and State legislation are relevant to the concepts discussed in this policy. This legislation includes:

Federal:

Age Discrimination Act 2004
Disability Discrimination Act 1992
Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999
Fair Work Act 2009
Racial Discrimination Act 1975
Sex Discrimination Act 1984
Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1996

Victorian:

Equal Opportunity Act 2010
Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001

WorkSafe Victoria publishes a handbook titled *Preventing and Responding to Bullying at Work* which provides guidelines for dealing with bullying in workplaces.

3. Discrimination

It is unlawful to discriminate against or harass a person in employment (or in the provision of goods and services) on the basis of an attribute.

3.1. Attributes

Protected attributes in Australia include the following:

- age
- disability or impairment (physical, intellectual, mental or psychiatric – visible or invisible, temporary or permanent)
- race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin
- religious belief or activity
- sex
- gender identity
- transgender or transsexual status
- lawful sexual activity/sexual orientation
- family, marital, parental or carer status
- physical features
- political opinion, belief or activity
- industrial activity or membership of an industrial association

- pregnancy or potential pregnancy
- breastfeeding
- medical record
- irrelevant criminal record
- employment activity
- personal association with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes.

Discrimination is treating a person with an identified attribute or personal characteristic less favourably than a person who does not have the attribute or characteristic. Discrimination can be either direct or indirect.

3.2. Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs if a person treats, or proposes to treat, a person with a protected attribute covered by an equal opportunity law unfavourably because of that attribute, regardless of whether the person is aware of the discrimination or considers the treatment to be unfavourable.

3.3. Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs where a person imposes, or proposes to impose, a requirement, condition or practice that has, or is likely to have, the effect of disadvantaging people with a protected attribute and that is not reasonable.

Awareness of the discrimination is irrelevant.

3.4. Family responsibilities

The *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic) (the Act) places a positive obligation on the School not to unreasonably refuse to accommodate an employee's parental or carer responsibilities, in relation to their work arrangements either when offering employment or during the course of employment.

In considering a request from an employee and determining whether a refusal is reasonable in the circumstances the following factors should be considered by the School:

- the nature of the employee's work and parental or carer responsibilities
- the nature and cost of arrangements required for an employee to fulfil their parental or carer responsibilities
- the financial circumstances of the employer
- the size and nature of the workplace and the employer's business
- the effect of flexible work arrangements on the workplace, including the financial impact on the school
- the consequences for the employer of having the flexible work arrangements
- the consequences for the employee of not having the flexible work arrangements.

A request for flexible work arrangements will be assessed individually, based on the unique facts and circumstances of each request.

Managers must not refuse any request for flexible working arrangements where the request is related to family responsibilities without having first discussed the matter with the applicant and with Human Resources Manager and other authorised representative of the Principal, where appropriate.

3.5. Disability

The Act places a positive obligation on the School to make reasonable adjustments for an employee or prospective employee who has a disability, as defined by the Act.

The Act requires that the School must make reasonable adjustments unless the person or employee could not or cannot adequately perform the genuine and reasonable requirements of their employment, even after the adjustments are made.

In determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, the Act provides that an employer should give consideration to all relevant facts and circumstances, including—

- (a) the person's or employee's circumstances, including the nature of his or her impairment
- (b) the nature of the employee's role or the role that is being offered
- (c) the nature of the adjustment required to accommodate the person's or employee's impairment;
- (d) the financial circumstances of the employer
- (e) the size and nature of the workplace and the employer's business
- (f) the effect on the workplace and the employer's business of making the adjustment including—
 - (i) the financial impact of so doing
 - (ii) the number of persons who would benefit from or be disadvantaged by so doing
 - (iii) the impact on efficiency and productivity and, if applicable, on customer service of so doing
- (g) the consequences for the employer of making the adjustment
- (h) the consequences for the person or employee of not making the adjustment.

Prior to any decisions pertaining to an employee request for adjustment/s on the basis of disability being determined it is expected that the relevant manager or supervisor will have sought appropriate advice from Human Resources Manager or other authorised representative of the Principal, where appropriate.

4. Harassment

Harassment is a form of discrimination. Harassment is unwelcome and unwanted conduct based on one of the attributes listed above that causes a person to be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

Harassment can take many forms and may include physical contact, verbal comments, electronic messages, jokes and gestures and other behaviour that creates an uncomfortable or hostile environment. Unacceptable behaviour includes but is not restricted to:

- the display of offensive materials (e.g., based on race)
- visiting and/or displaying internet sites containing offensive materials (e.g., sexually explicit)
- electronic messages that are sexually offensive or offensive in relation to race or disability
- derogatory comments about any particular personal attribute or about a person or a group on the basis of race or gender
- intimidation or verbal abuse oriented at a person with a disability or using aids or with different capabilities, or at the person's carer
- practical jokes about a person's disability or about a person's or a group's race
- segregation or humiliation of a person with a disability or a person or group based on race on any other personal attribute
- derogatory comments or jokes about a person or group on the basis of their personal characteristics.

The reasonable person test applies. That is, would a reasonable person, given all the circumstances, have anticipated that the behaviour would be found offensive, humiliating or intimidating.

5. Sexual harassment

A person sexually harasses another if he or she:

- makes an unwelcome sexual advance;
- makes a request for sexual favours; or
- engages in any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature;

in circumstances in which a reasonable person, aware of all of the circumstances, would have anticipated that the conduct would cause offence, humiliation or intimidation.

Sexual harassment is unwelcome, uninvited conduct that is offensive from the perspective of the person harassed, regardless of any innocent intent on the part of the offender.

It is not behaviour that is based on mutual attraction between people or friends.

Sexual harassment may occur as a single incident or involve a series of incidents.

Types of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment can take many forms and can be physical, verbal or written. It is not just the obvious harassment of unwelcome physical behaviour such as inappropriate touching, patting, brushing up against someone or offensive gesturing. Sexual harassment can either be direct or indirect.

Sexual harassment takes a variety of forms, including:

- sexual or suggestive remarks
- sexual propositions or requests for dates
- repeated questions or speculation about a person's private life
- sexual jokes and innuendo
- unnecessary intrusion into a person's personal space
- physical contact such as touching, deliberate brushing up against a person, hugging etc. against a person's will
- offensive telephone calls, reading matter, email, screen savers, pictures, calendars etc.
- suggestive looks or leers
- sexually explicit conversations
- displaying or sending sexually explicit material.

6. Bullying

Bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards an employee or a group of employees that creates a risk to health and safety.

Unreasonable behaviour is behavior that a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine or threaten another.

Behaviour includes: actions of individuals or a group, and may involve using a system of work as a means of victimising, humiliating, undermining or threatening.

Risk to health and safety includes risk to the psychological or physical health of the employee.

Unacceptable behaviour makes the workplace uncomfortable, unpleasant and often unsafe. The following types of behaviour, where repeated or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour, could be considered bullying:

- verbal abuse (including threats, shouting, sarcasm or other forms of demeaning language)
- excluding or isolating employees
- psychological harassment
- intimidation
- assigning meaningless tasks unrelated to the job
- giving employees impossible assignments
- deliberately changed work rosters to inconvenience particular employees
- deliberately withholding information vital for effective work performance.

The list is not exhaustive. Other types of behaviour may also constitute bullying. Bullying is usually not a once-off incident but could be if the once-off incident is sufficiently serious.

Bullying does not include reasonable and legitimate actions of Geelong Grammar School in managing an employee's performance, managing or altering an employee's workload, reporting structure or duties or counselling an employee.

Bullying may breach occupational health and safety law. Monetary penalties may be imposed.

Bullying may constitute a crime under the *Crimes Amendment (Bullying) Act 2010 (Vic)*, which amended the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*, and extended the scope of the current stalking laws to capture the behaviour associated with workplace bullying. If convicted a maximum penalty of ten years imprisonment applies.

7. Vilification

Vilification is behaviour, through word or action, that incites hatred, contempt or ridicule of another person or group, generally because of that person's or group's race or religious belief.

Examples of vilification include but are not restricted to:

- public threats of harm
- encouraging others to hate someone because of that person's religion
- a racist statement in a public meeting
- racist graffiti.

8. What can you do if you feel that you are being discriminated against, harassed, sexually harassed or bullied?

If you feel you have been discriminated against, harassed or bullied, you should not ignore it. You should keep notes on all instances of discrimination, harassment or bullying – dates, times, places, witnesses (if any), together with what you said, did or felt.

If you feel comfortable doing so, then you may wish to address the issue with the person concerned and request that the behaviour ceases. If you do not feel comfortable confronting the person and the behaviour continues, then you should go to one of Geelong Grammar School's Contact Officers or Human Resources Manager and discuss your complaint.

You may wish to contact the School's Employee Assistance program (EAP) provider for your campus for confidential counselling or to discuss your complaint.

All complaints of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or bullying will be dealt with in accordance with Geelong Grammar School's procedure which is set out below. Geelong Grammar School's goal is to resolve all issues and complaints in-house where possible. However, you can seek the assistance of an outside agency, at any stage, if you wish.

9. What should you do if you consider you have witnessed bullying?

You should report the matter to the Principal, Vice Principal, Head of Campus, Commercial Director, your direct manager or immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Manager who will take appropriate action in accordance with Geelong Grammar School's procedure which is set out below.

10. Complaints procedure

Geelong Grammar School will take any complaint under this policy seriously and will invoke either the informal or formal complaints procedure outlined below.

If an informal approach is taken but the desired result is not achieved, then a formal approach can be adopted. If the complaint is sufficiently serious, then a formal approach may be taken without first invoking the informal approach.

10.1. Informal complaint procedure

- ***Raising your complaint with the Contact Officer and/or Human Resources Manager***

The Contact Officer and the Human Resources Manager are people with whom you can discuss your situation and lodge your complaint.

When you meet with the Contact Officer or the Human Resources Manager to discuss your complaint, he or she will explain the relevant steps that will be taken to address your complaint. The Contact Officer will not act as a mediator or investigator and will not make disciplinary decisions in relation to your complaint. The Contact Officer may assist you in handling your complaint indirectly with the person(s) involved or in making a formal complaint. The Contact Officer may seek advice from the Human Resources Manager.

The Human Resources Manager may assist you in handling your complaint directly with the person(s) involved to resolve your complaint and may seek the assistance of the relevant manager and/or Head of Campus, where appropriate. This may involve mediation or conciliation with the person(s) involved. The Human Resources Manager may also assist you in making a formal complaint if the desired result is not achieved or where the complaint is sufficiently serious.

10.2. Formal complaint procedure

- ***Investigation of the complaint***

In this situation, the Principal (for complaints about the behaviour of teaching staff) or the Commercial Director (for complaints about the behaviour of non teaching staff, student placements, contractors, subcontractors and volunteers) or a formally delegated senior staff member, is appointed to take details of the complaint. A senior employee (such as Head of Campus or Human Resources Manager) or an external person or organisation,

delegated by the Principal or Commercial Director will formally investigate the matter. The investigation will be undertaken in a timely manner and will be conducted as confidentially as possible.

The investigation is a process where details of the complaint are taken and provided to the respondent for a formal response. The complaint is investigated by an independent and impartial person whose task is to establish what evidence or facts can be found that may either substantiate or refute the allegations.

The parties involved in the investigation process will be asked to maintain confidentiality with respect to the complaint and the investigation. Geelong Grammar School may, however, need to divulge the contents of the complaint and responses in order to complete a full investigation. The parties will be entitled to be supported by a person of their choice.

The principle of natural justice demands that the process be based upon an assumption of innocence unless and until evidence shows otherwise.

Reported findings then form the basis of appropriate action by Geelong Grammar School to respond to both the individual and organisational matters addressed in the findings.

- *An individual may contact the Victorian Equal Opportunity Human Rights and Commission (VEOHRC) regarding a dispute or lodge a complaint with the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)*

It is possible to contact the VEOHRC to seek external assistance regarding the dispute. Alternatively, a complaint may be lodged with VCAT.

However, the goal of Geelong Grammar School is to resolve all issues and complaints in-house where possible. Geelong Grammar School appreciates being given the opportunity to resolve any matter of alleged discrimination, harassment or bullying before a complaint is lodged with the VEOHRC. If a complainant is not satisfied with Geelong Grammar School's actions, then the right to raise a dispute with the VEOHRC or lodge a complaint with VCAT remains.

Possible outcomes

The possible outcomes will depend upon the nature of the complaint. Where an investigation has found that a complaint is substantiated, appropriate action will be taken against the person about whom the complaint was made. This may include disciplinary action (in accordance with the School's Discipline and Misconduct Policy) up to and including termination of employment in serious cases. Other possible outcomes may include:

- an apology where appropriate;
- mediation between the parties where appropriate;
- an agreement to refrain from the offending conduct or behaviour;
- training for individuals or relevant sections, where appropriate;
- changed work arrangements;

11. Victimisation

Victimisation is treating someone unfairly because that person, or someone they associate with, has made, or intends to make, a complaint under this policy. It is unlawful to victimise or penalise a person for making a complaint in good faith. Geelong Grammar School is committed to making sure that anyone who makes a complaint or assists in making a genuine complaint is supported and not penalised in any way.

Immediate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who victimises or retaliates against a person who has made a complaint.

12. Vexatious complaints

Inaccurate, misleading, malicious or false accusations have negative consequences for the person(s) concerned, interpersonal relationships and the morale of the School community.

Where it is found that a complaint has been made to cause distress to one or more persons, or as a practical joke, disciplinary measures may be taken.

13. Further information

Further information concerning any aspect of this policy may be directed to Human Resources Manager or Contact Officer.

14. Record management

All documentation in relation to complaints of discrimination, harassment and bullying, whether dealt with informally or formally, must be taken in a strictly factual and professional manner, kept to a minimum and stored in accordance with the following protocol:

- central, secure and confidential file by the Principal
- accessed, if required, on a strictly 'needs' basis (for example, in relation to further complaints or evidence in any subsequent legal proceedings); and
- destroyed after a period seven years after the end of employment at the discretion of the Principal.

15. Contact Officers

The School has trained the Contact Officers at each campus. Names of Contact Officers at each campus are to be displayed on staff notice boards, on the School intranet website, Blackboard (refer to the Human Resources tab) or can be obtained from the relevant Head of Campus or the Human Resources Manager:

A Contact Officer is not appointed to help write a complaint or to resolve a complaint. A Contact Officer is appointed to provide information about the avenues available for addressing a complaint and to provide support to a person who feels discriminated against, harassed or bullied.

In lieu of speaking with a Contact Officer, an employee may discuss a complaint with the Human Resources Manager.

16. Other relevant School policies and documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies and documents, including:

- Geelong Grammar School Code of Conduct
- Geelong Grammar School (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement, 2006
- Geelong Grammar School Electronic Communications Policy
- Geelong Grammar School Discipline and Misconduct Policy

Employees who are teachers are referred to the Victorian Institute of Teaching Code of Conduct for information about their obligations as members of the teaching profession.