

AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF DERMATOLOGISTS

Bullying Policy for Fellows on the College Board or College Committees

Purpose

The College considers bullying unacceptable behaviour that will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Fellows acting as College representatives (on the Board or College Committees) are responsible for their behaviour and should ensure an environment free of bullying.

Obligations of Fellows in these circumstances are generally set out in the College's **Code of Ethics**. This policy applies where Fellows act on behalf of the College or undertake College functions, such as Fellows on the Board or on College Committees.

Board members particularly are expected to set an example for College staff, contractors and representatives. Board members often act as the representative or agent of the College and, accordingly, liability for the conduct of Board members may be borne by the College as well. It is important that the College meets its legal obligations as well as establish an appropriate Code of Conduct.

This policy amplifies the College **Code of Ethics** in relation to professional conduct and bullying.

This policy also details the rights of all Fellows, staff and contractors to object to bullying. Individuals who use this right responsibly will not be subjected to subsequent unfair treatment or victimisation.

Legislative Obligations

The College has a statutory obligation to provide a safe workplace for its staff and representatives - free from the stress and harassment that bullying can cause. Some bullying will also constitute discrimination and harassment, in contravention of equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws.

Definitions

Bullying

Workplace bullying is repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person, or group, that creates a risk to health and safety.

Within this definition:

"unreasonable behaviour" means behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine or threaten;

"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 mental or physical health of the person.

The following types of behaviour, **where repeated or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour**, could be considered bullying:

- verbal abuse
- excluding or isolating employees
- psychological harassment
- intimidation;
- assigning meaningless tasks unrelated to the job
- giving employees impossible assignments
- deliberately changing work rosters to inconvenience particular employees
- deliberately withholding information that is vital for effective work performance;
- manipulation;
- belittling remarks;
- persistent, unwarranted criticism;
- verbal or physical abuse;
- isolation from colleagues;
- withholding information, benefits or privileges;
- setting unrealistic targets or unreasonable tasks.

Bullying is not just poor communication or inter-personal skills. It is not just unsatisfactory management or supervision skills.

Conduct

- 1 A Fellow shall not, in the course of their duties for the College, bully:-
 - an employee of the College;
 - a contract worker of the College;
 - a member of the public;
 - another Fellow or Board member.
- 2 A Fellow must not bully another Fellow, or a member of the Board or a member of a Committee of the College (who may not be a Board member) in the performance of his or her functions for the College.
- 3 A Fellow shall not victimise another person, or subject a person to any detriment because that person:-
 - has made a complaint under College Policies;
 - has brought proceedings under College Policies;
 - has, or proposes to, give evidence or information in connection with proceedings, under College Policies.

Responsibility

The College has a duty to prevent bullying.

If Bullying Occurs

A complaint against a Fellow, in relation to bullying will be dealt with through the office of the Secretary.

A complaint against a Fellow under this Policy will be dealt with under the College's Policy "*Procedures for Resolving Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Complaints Against Fellows*".

All grievances relating to bullying will be dealt with promptly, sensitively and confidentially. Any investigation will be carried out in an impartial and fair manner.

Confidentiality

Any allegation of bullying will be treated confidentially as outlined in the College's "*Procedures for Resolving Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Complaints Against Fellows*".

Any records made during the investigation will be stored in secure environment.

Defamation

A person should not necessarily be deterred from making a complaint of bullying because of concerns about defamation laws.

Generally, if an aggrieved person confines discussions to the appropriate people and is acting in good faith, ie: is not making the complaint out of spite or malice, then the person is not likely to be liable for defamation.

False Accusations

False allegations of bullying will be viewed seriously and if found to be malicious may expose the person to risk of defamation proceedings and other action.

General

Fellows are responsible for ensuring that their own behaviour and conduct in the course of their duties, or while representing the College, are free of bullying behaviours.