

QTIC Cyberbullying & Harassment Prevention Policy

As an organisation offering professional services, Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) is committed to creating and maintaining a workplace and educational environment that is free of harassment, bullying, cyber-bullying and discrimination at each level of operations. Our emphasis is to provide a work and training environment, which values and fosters good relationships that enable all staff and students to be treated with dignity and respect. Any form of harassment is unacceptable and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Introduction

Cyberbullying and harassment whether occurring in the workplace or in a setting connected with employment, or study is prohibited. Any retaliation against an individual who has complained of harassment, or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a complaint, will also not be tolerated.

QTIC takes allegations of cyberbullying and harassment seriously. To achieve our goal of providing an environment free from cyberbullying and workplace harassment, we have established procedures by which allegations of inappropriate conduct will be addressed. Where it is determined that cyberbullying or harassment has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the improper conduct and take corrective action as is necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate. This policy and the complaint procedure apply to all forms of harassment.

This policy applies to all employees of, students in training, board and committee members, training organisations and contractors to QTIC.

QTIC relies on employees, board and committee members, suppliers and students at all levels to facilitate and encourage proper standards of personal and ethical conduct in the workplace and in all external and online settings.

Cyberbullying and workplace harassment complaints will be taken seriously and handled with sensitivity and impartiality. Behaviour, words and gestures have different meanings in different cultures. What may be acceptable in one culture may not be in another. This needs to be considered in the workplace.

Definition of workplace harassment

A person is subjected to 'workplace harassment' if the person is subjected to repeated behaviour, other than behaviour amounting to sexual harassment, by a person, including the person's employer or a co-worker or group of co-workers or fellow students of the person that:

- is unwelcome and unsolicited; and
- the person considers to be offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening; and
- a reasonable person would consider to be offensive, humiliating, intimidating or threatening.

Some characteristics of harassment:

- May be verbal, written, visual, physical or electronic
- Will be uninvited and unwelcome
- May occur as a single incident or as a series of incidents
- May be subtle and implicit rather than explicit
- Frequently involves an abuse of power or trust and is often directed at a person who is unable to stop the behaviour
- Covers a range of behaviours that may be expressed in verbal, written, physical or psychological terms. This includes sexual and racial harassment, and harassment on grounds of colour, ethnic or national origin, marital status, religious or ethical belief, disability, political status, family status and sexual orientation.

Definition of Cyberbullying

While cyberbullying is like real life bullying, it differs in the following ways:

- It can be difficult to escape. It can occur 24/7 and a person can be targeted at home or, indeed, almost anywhere.
- It can involve harmful material being widely and rapidly disseminated to a large audience, for example, rumours and images can be posted on public forums or sent to many people
- It can provide the bully with a sense of relative anonymity and distance from the victim so there is a lack of immediate feedback or consequences.

Cyberbullying might occur over the Internet, in instant messaging (IM), chat rooms / bash boards, social networking sites, blogs, gaming sites, over the phone by SMS or MMS, by email or via other technologies.

Examples of workplace harassment/cyberbullying

Detailed below are some examples of behaviours that may be regarded as cyberbullying/workplace harassment, if the behaviour is repeated or occurs as part of a pattern of behaviour.

Examples include:

- abusing a person loudly, usually when others are present
- constant ridicule and being put down
- Cyberbullying-i.e. the use of information and communication technology to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or a group, that is intended to harm others*
- leaving offensive messages on e-mail, online platforms or the telephone
- sabotaging a person's work or study, e.g. by deliberately withholding or supplying incorrect information, hiding documents or equipment, not passing on messages and getting a person into trouble in other ways
- maliciously excluding and isolating a person from activities
- persistent and unjustified criticisms, often about petty, irrelevant or insignificant matters
- humiliating a person through gestures, sarcasm, criticism and insults, often in front of management or other workers
- spreading gossip or false, malicious rumours about a person with an intent to cause the person harm
- Remember if you have to ask yourself whether it is offensive, it probably is
- In some instances, the harassment might take place outside the workplace; a company function for example, or when an employee/student makes unwelcome phone calls to another employee/student at their home or follows them to work



Actions that are not workplace harassment

Legitimate and reasonable management actions and business processes, such as actions taken to demote, discipline, redeploy, retrench or dismiss a worker based on previous performance are not considered to be workplace harassment, provided these actions are conducted in a fair and just way.

Where people can go for assistance

A staff, board or committee member or student who is being harassed can contact the Chief Executive of QTIC for information and assistance in the management and resolution of a workplace harassment complaint. If a complaint involves the Chief Executive, a worker may alternately contact the Board Chairman to make a complaint.

Commitment to promptly investigate complaints

QTIC has a Grievance and Dispute Settling Procedure. Any reports of cyberbullying/workplace harassment will be treated seriously and investigated promptly, fairly and impartially. A person making a complaint and/or who is a witness to workplace harassment/cyberbullying will not be victimised.

Responsibilities of staff, board and committee members

QTIC requires all staff, board and committee members to behave responsibly by complying with this policy, to not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, to maintain privacy during investigations and to immediately report incidents of workplace harassment/cyberbullying to the Chief Executive or their nominated deputy. Management must also ensure that workers, board members and committee members, students and representatives of QTIC are not exposed to workplace harassment/cyberbullying. Management are required to personally demonstrate appropriate behaviour, promote the cyberbullying/ workplace harassment prevention policy, treat complaints seriously and ensure where a person lodges or is witness to a complaint, that this person is not victimised.

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