

Australian Evangelical Alliance Inc. (Missions Interlink)

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Policy number	AEA Pol. 007	Version	1
Drafted by	Pam Thyer	Approved by Board on	3 March 2016
Responsible person	Pam Thyer	Scheduled review date	

INTRODUCTION

AEA is committed to providing, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of the working environment for all its staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors. It is a Christian organisation that operates on value-based behaviour and seeks to ensure that individuals at all levels are prepared to accept responsibility and accountability for their actions, and to think clearly about the consequences of those actions for others.

AEA recognises that safety and well-being includes psychological and psychosocial aspects of a person.

POLICY

Safety is everyone's responsibility and strategies to promote health and safety are most effective when a collaborative approach is used to identify and solve problems.

The responsibility for identifying hazards, assessing risks and taking action to ensure a safe and healthy work environment belongs to everyone, and safety considerations must include contractors, volunteers and visitors as well as other staff.

AEA Health and Safety Strategies

AEA recognises its moral and legal responsibilities to provide a safe and healthy working environment by:

- a. Providing a safe and healthy workplace and working conditions for all, including employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors;
- b. Ensuring training, support and resources to enable employees and volunteers to work safely.
- c. Involving individuals in occupational health and safety matters and consulting on a regular basis with them on ways to recognise, evaluate, control, eliminate or minimize workplace hazards.
- d. Ensuring that everyone (including visitors and contractors) complies with appropriate standards and workplace directions to protect their own and others' health and safety.
- e. Providing inclusive systems to effectively manage rehabilitation and return to work processes.

Responsibilities of Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers are expected to:

- a. Take care to follow safe work practices, procedures and directions and actively participate in any safety improvement activities;
- b. Take reasonable care for their own safety and the safety of those around them.
- c. Report all risks, hazards, injuries, safety incidents and near misses to their supervisor. Reporting a hazard may include reporting another person who is behaving in an unsafe manner or posing a risk.
- d. Conduct a "Working from Home Safety Checklist" if they are regularly working from home.
- e. Maintain a clean and orderly work area to ensure WHS standards are met.
- f. Any breach of this policy will initially be discussed with the person(s) involved. If resistance occurs, than a disciplinary procedure may be applied.

Bullying

AEA regards the dignity and autonomy of all people as a core value of the organisation. Bullying behaviour is based on the misuse of power in human relationships, and negates the dignity and autonomy of its victims. Bullying can affect health and wellbeing..

AEA is fully committed to eliminating, as far as possible, all forms of bullying in the workplace and in its relationships with its users through a culture of openness, support, and accountability.

Sexual Harassment

AEA will not tolerate sexual harassment (refer definition below) under any circumstances. Responsibility lies with every manager, employee and volunteer to ensure that sexual harassment does not occur.

A breach of this Policy will result in disciplinary action.

Both federal and state Equal Employment Opportunity legislation provide that sexual harassment is unlawful. AEA considers that legislative obligations under the Acts establish minimum standards of behaviour for all employees.

The principles set out in this Policy are intended to apply to any work-related context, including conferences, work functions, social events and business trips.

No employee or volunteer at any level should subject any other employee, volunteer, customer or visitor to any form of sexual harassment.

Details relating to reporting, investigation and resolution of alleged sexual harassment are outlined in the Work Health and Safety Procedures

Definitions

Hazard is a situation that could cause harm to someone or something.

Risk refers to the likelihood of harm arising from exposure to hazards and the consequences of that harm.

Workplace refers to the space where staff, volunteers, and contractors conduct their AEA activities, including vehicles.

Bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person or group of persons. It includes behaviour that could be expected to intimidate, offend, degrade, humiliate, undermine or threaten.

Workplace bullying can occur between:

- Two or more employees/volunteers
- Manager(s) and employees(s)/volunteer(s)
- Employees/volunteers and other persons at the workplace (apprentices, students, clients).

Unreasonable behaviour is behaviour that is offensive, humiliating, intimidating, degrading or threatening. It includes, but is not limited to,

- Verbal abuse
- Initiation pranks
- Excluding or isolating employees
- Giving a person the majority of an unpleasant or meaningless task
- Humiliation through sarcasm, or belittling someone's opinions
- Constant criticism or insults
- Spreading misinformation or malicious rumours
- Deliberately setting work routines or procedures to inconvenience certain employees
- Displaying written or pictorial material which may degrade or offend certain employees

Repeated ... behaviour refers to the nature of the behaviour, not the specific form of that behaviour. "Repeated unreasonable behaviour" may thus be a pattern of diverse incidents.

Sexual Harassment means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, made or engaged in by a member or employee to or in relation to another person. Without limiting the generality of this description, sexual harassment includes the following conduct:

- Ongoing pressure to enter into a relationship after receiving a negative response;
- Displaying pornographic material, staring sexually and delivering unwelcome love letters or notes;

- Telling sexually explicit jokes, making sexual comments about a person's anatomy or dress, and making other offensive, derogatory, or demeaning remarks of a sexual nature about a person; and
- With sexual intent restricting a person's freedom of movement or brushing up against a person; unwanted sexual touching, pinching, patting and physical assault or stalking.

Related Documents

AEA Pol 0014 Personnel Policy

AUTHORISATION



Pam Thyer

Australian Evangelical Alliance Inc.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

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RESPONSIBILITIES

The National Director (ND) will ensure that other AEA staff, and Missions Interlink state and ministry leaders:

- understand the AEA Work, Health and Safety Policy and procedures;
- are responsible for the implementation of the AEA Health and Safety Strategies are implemented in their area of ministry;
- monitor the health and safety of AEA personnel, including volunteers and contractors, under their supervision;
- maintain a record of any work-related incidents or injuries;

It is particularly important that procedures relating to Bullying and Sexual Harassment are import to maintaining a safe workplace for all.

PROCESSES

Bullying

Complaints Procedures

Employees or volunteers who believe they are the subject of bullying should take firm, positive and prompt action.

If deemed appropriate, the employee or volunteer should make the perceived bully (or bullies) aware that they find their behaviour offensive, unwelcome and unacceptable, and that it needs to stop immediately.

If the behaviour continues, or if the employee or volunteer feels unable to speak to the person(s) directly, they should contact the ND or the Chairman of the AEA Board. The ND or Chairman will provide support and ascertain the nature of the complaint and the wishes of the complainant. The complainant does not have to request a full formal investigation if they will be satisfied by less formal treatment of the issue.

Informal Intervention

The ND will explain the employee's or volunteer's rights and responsibilities under AEA Policy and Procedures.

Informal intervention may be done through a process of either mediation or conciliation. During informal intervention the respondent will be made aware of the

allegations being made against them and given the right to respond. Interventions at this stage should adopt a confidential, non-confrontational approach with a view to resolving the issue.

This procedure will be complete when the alleged harasser respects the individual's request to cease unwanted and unwelcome behaviour, or when the complainant accepts that the behaviour is not properly described as bullying. If neither of these outcomes occurs, AEA's formal procedure should be followed.

Formal Complaints Procedure

Proceeding with a formal complaint requires the consent of the person complaining, particularly as witnesses or other staff may become involved. The ND will coordinate the formal procedure.

The ND shall clarify the complaint and obtain a step-by-step account of the incident. In serious cases, more than one interview may be necessary.

The ND will document all such interviews accurately and avoid irrelevant information. This record will include parties involved, timing, location, and nature of conduct complained against.

Records will be kept and filed in a confidential and secure place. These records are kept for a period of seven years. Under no circumstances will records be placed on the complainant's personnel file.

The ND will organise an investigation, which in most cases will involve (but is not be limited to):

- a private interview to ascertain the facts and to find what the complainant expects to happen as a result of making the complaint;
- an interview with the alleged harasser(s) to ascertain their defence;
- interviews with other employees, volunteers or individuals who may be able to assist; and
- examination of any relevant documents.

The person conducting the investigation will consider all relevant evidence. Such evidence may include:

- supporting (or contradictory) evidence provided by medical practitioners, counsellors, family members, friends, or co-workers;
- Supervisors' reports and personnel records;
- records kept by the person claiming to have been bullied;
- information on whether the evidence was presented by the parties in a credible and consistent manner; and
- information on the absence of evidence where it should logically exist.

It may be necessary to provide affected employees/volunteers with alternative working arrangements to avoid further conflict while the bullying complaint is being

investigated. The complainant may also require counselling to develop coping strategies for dealing with the situation while the problem is being resolved.

The person conducting the investigation should keep all affected parties informed and document all investigation actions and outcomes.

On completion of the investigation, the complainant and the ND will determine a course of action to be taken.

Possible courses of action may include, but will not be limited to, any combination of the following:

- counselling;
- disciplinary action against the bully or bullies (e.g. demotion, transfer, suspension, probation or dismissal);
- official warnings that are noted in the bully or bullies' personnel file;
- if there is strong evidence that the complaint was vexatious or malicious, disciplinary action against the person who complained;
- formal apologies and undertakings that the behaviour will cease;
- conciliation/mediation conducted by an impartial third party, where the parties to the complaint agree to a mutually acceptable resolution;
- compensation from the organisation.

Determination of whether bullying has occurred will rest solely on the weight of the evidence. If it is determined that bullying has taken place then outcomes will depend upon factors such as:

- the severity and frequency of the bullying;
- the wishes of the person who was subjected to the offensive behaviours;
- whether the bully could have been expected to know that such behaviour was a breach of policy;
- the level of contrition shown by the bully;
- whether there have been any prior incidents or warnings.

The relevant manager will advise all relevant parties of the outcome.

If the investigation determines that bullying has occurred, or that vexatious or malicious accusations have been made, the manager must place on file a summary of the complaint and the action taken. A copy may be placed in the respondent's personnel file in accordance with performance counselling procedures.

If there is insufficient proof to decide whether or not bullying has occurred, the manager concerned will:

- remind those involved of expected standards of conduct;
- conduct further training awareness raising sessions for staff and volunteers;
- monitor the situation carefully.

The manager will monitor the outcome to ensure that the offensive behaviour has ceased, and that neither party has been victimised. This may involve follow-up interviews. If there has been any substantiated victimisation, appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed.

Procedures for Dealing with Criminal Conduct

Some forms of severe bullying (physical attack, for example, or obscene phone calls) may constitute criminal conduct. While AEA is committed to treat most complaints about bullying at an organisational level as far as possible, this type of conduct is not suited to internal resolution. Such complaints should be treated by the criminal justice system. Employees or volunteers should be advised of the option of police support or intervention. It is not the obligation or duty of the organisation to report such matters to the police on behalf of the complainant.

Sexual Harassment

A breach of this Policy will result in disciplinary action. Depending upon the severity of the case, consequences may include apology, counselling, transfer, demotion, dismissal, or other forms of disciplinary action deemed appropriate.

AEA strongly encourages any employee who feels they have been sexually harassed to take immediate action, preferably by making it clear that such behaviour is unwelcome and offensive; alternatively, or in addition, they may follow the procedures for reporting the behaviour.

Any reports of sexual harassment will be treated seriously and promptly with sensitivity. Such reports will be treated as completely confidential up to the point where a formal or informal complaint is lodged against a particular person, at which point that person must be notified under the rules of natural justice.

The actual process followed in investigating complaints will follow the course set out for Bullying allegations as set out in the previous section of these Procedures.

Complainants have the right to determine how to have a complaint treated, to have support or representation throughout the process, and the option to discontinue a complaint at any stage of the process.

The alleged harasser also has the right to have support or representation during any investigation, as well as the right to respond fully to any formal allegations made. There will be no presumptions of guilt and no determination made until a full investigation has been completed.

No employee or volunteer will be treated unfairly as a result of rejecting unwanted advances. Disciplinary action may be taken against anyone who victimises or retaliates against a person who has complained of sexual harassment, or against any employee or volunteer who has been alleged to be a harasser.

All employees and volunteers have the right to seek the assistance of the relevant tribunal or legislative body to assist them in the resolution of any concerns.

Managers or Supervisors who fail to take appropriate corrective action when aware of harassment of a person will be subject to disciplinary action.

Members and employees must dress modestly and carefully.

A member or employee must not maliciously make false allegations of sexual misconduct or sexual harassment against another member or employee.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

AEA Pol 0014 Personnel Policy

LEGISLATION & AWARDS

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

AUTHORISATION



Pam Thyer
12 April 2016

ATTACHMENTS

- Working from home check
- Incident/injury Report form