

---

## CODE OF CONDUCT

### INTRODUCTION

This Code of Conduct is intended as a guide to Mater Dei staff to identify and resolve issues of ethical conduct that may arise during the course of their employment. It is designed to guide staff in their dealings with colleagues, students, families, carers, advocates and the community. The Code is written as a set of general principles which work alongside the rights and obligations of employees under common law.

Mater Dei is a multi faceted organisation employing a range of staff with differing relationships to one another. Therefore it is essential in such a community that all members recognise and respect not only their own rights and responsibilities, but also the rights and responsibilities of other members of the organisation, and those of the organisation itself.

Each Mater Dei staff member has two primary obligations

- a duty of care to recognise and observe standards of equity and justice in dealing with every member of the Mater Dei community;
- an obligation to Mater Dei in terms of responsible stewardship of its resources and protection of its reputation in the local and wider community;

With respect to duty of care and their obligations to Mater Dei, staff members will

- treat students, families, carers/advocates and other staff with respect;
- not allow personal relationships to affect professional relationships;
- refrain from all forms of harassment;
- consider the impact of decisions on the well being of others;
- refrain from acting in any way that would unfairly harm the reputation and career prospects of other staff members;
- respect individuals' rights to privacy and undertake to keep personal information, in writing or otherwise, in confidence;
- refrain from engaging in any outside work that would compromise their integrity and independence;
- avoid improper use of Mater Dei resources for private gain or the gain of a third party;
- foster collegiality among members of the Mater Dei community.

This Code of Conduct contains the following policy guidelines in detail

- 1.0 Alcohol or Other Drug Use in the Workplace
- 2.0 Behaviour Standards and Workplace Practices
- 3.0 Child Protection
- 4.0 Complaints Handling
- 5.0 Confidentiality/Privacy
- 6.0 Conflict of Interest
- 7.0 Harassment and Discrimination
- 8.0 Staff Development
- 9.0 Workplace Bullying

---

**Revised**

**Authorised**

---

---

## 1.0 ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUG USE IN THE WORKPLACE

### BASIC BELIEF

Mater Dei recognises that alcohol and other drug use can sometimes become a social and health problem, which can have a negative impact on the working and private lives of those it affects.

### A GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. The effect of alcohol or other drugs on employees in the workplace may put at risk people, property and the reputation of the organisation. It is possible that its use could create problems in the workplace such as increased risk of accidents, inappropriate conduct, absenteeism, diminished performance and interpersonal conflict.
2. It is also possible that the use of alcohol and other drugs by an employee may be inconsistent with their obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (NSW) 2000 and the Mater Dei OHS Policy and Program which states that employees have a duty to

*“...take reasonable care for the health and safety of people who are at the employee’s place of work and who may be affected by an employee’s acts or omissions at work.”*

3. It is not the intention of this policy to in any way, prohibit the use of alcohol or other drugs, but rather to ensure that as much as possible, any potential negative impact on the workplace arising from their use is minimised. Additionally this policy should assist both staff and management in understanding their respective obligations when issues with respect to the negative impact of the use of alcohol or other drugs in the workplace arises.

### B GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

1. To attend work unimpaired by alcohol or other drugs so that in carrying out normal work activities, employees do not expose themselves or others to unnecessary health and safety risks.
2. As some prescribed medication may affect an employee’s work, it is the responsibility of each staff member to discuss the use of such medication in the workplace with their doctor and inform the Program Manager/supervisor who will ensure confidentiality and privacy at all times.
3. Where suspected alcohol or drug use by another employee may affect the safety of that employee or others, all employees have a strict obligation to report these concerns to the Program Manager/supervisor in the first instance. They should also attempt to dissuade the employee from using plant machinery or from engaging in other activities that may pose a risk to safety. Where possible, confidentiality and privacy will be maintained.
4. The decision to seek advice or treatment for an alcohol or other drug related problem is the responsibility of the affected employee. Such employees are encouraged to make use of the Mater Dei Employee Assistance Program (EAP). All efforts will be taken to resolve problems or gain assistance in this manner, however, certain circumstances may warrant the initiation of disciplinary proceedings with an employee.

---

## 1.0 ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUG USE IN THE WORKPLACE

### C GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYERS AND PROGRAM MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS

1. To ensure that all employees, volunteers and contractors employed or engaged by Mater Dei are familiar with this policy as Program Managers/supervisors have a clear obligation under OHS legislation to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees.
2. To manage any change in an employee's work performance that may be due to alcohol or other drug use issues in keeping with the Mater Dei Staff Management policy and procedures. In most cases, Program Managers/supervisors may not have the appropriate qualifications to diagnose an employee who is affected by alcohol or drugs in the workplace, however they should be able to identify diminished or impaired work performance.
3. If it is identified that a staff member's performance may be impaired due to the influence of alcohol or other drugs, and there is a potential risk to the individual or others, such as in plane, machinery, or vehicular operations, the Program Manager/supervisor should ask the staff member to cease from their work immediately and if necessary remove themselves from the workplace. Advice should also be sought from the Catholic Commission for Employee Relations (CCER) in such circumstances.

#### NOTE

**Some illnesses or disabilities such as the onset of diabetic coma or narcolepsy, petit mal epilepsy and the like, may present as though the employee is under the influence of alcohol or other substances. In such instances the employee has an obligation to communicate relevant health information to their Program Manager/supervisor who will treat such information confidentially and in keeping with relevant legislative responsibilities eg Anti Discrimination, privacy etc.**

The following points should be communicated to employees and volunteers prior to all social functions to ensure that they exercise a degree of responsibility that is consistent with the standards of the organisation

- excessive consumption of alcohol is to be avoided as this is both a safety issue and a social responsibility;
- organisation polices eg harassment, apply at all social functions regardless of the fact that these may occur outside of the workplace;
- respect for Program Managers' and/or CEO/Principals' reasonable directions is expected;
- reasonable care of the facilities and equipment provided is expected;
- disregard of these guidelines is considered to be a disciplinary matter and, in serious cases, may result in dismissal;
- appropriate measures regarding staff getting home from functions should be considered and discussed.

---

## 2.0 BEHAVIOUR STANDARDS AND WORKPLACE PRACTICES

### BASIC BELIEF

Mater Dei is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for students, families, carers, advocates, staff, volunteers and the wider community. It is therefore essential that in such a community, all members recognise and respect not only their own rights and responsibilities but also the rights and responsibilities of other members of the organisation and those of the organisation itself.

### A GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Mater Dei staff and volunteers will support the core values of the organisation in accordance with, and adherence to, the principles of the Catholic faith and Good Samaritan ethos at Mater Dei.
2. Mater Dei staff and volunteers have a responsibility to meet the high standards of professional and ethical behaviour required by the organisation, families, carers, advocates and the wider community.
3. Mater Dei staff and volunteers undertake their professional responsibilities within the framework of the law and the lawful instructions from Mater Dei in order to comply with legislative and industrial requirements and the policies and procedures implemented by the organisation.

### B GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

1. To behave in a **courteous and professional manner** when interacting with fellow employees, students, families, carers, advocates, contractors, external personnel/agencies and the wider community at or outside the workplace.
2. To cooperate with the Mater Dei **Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)** Policy and Program to ensure their own health and safety and the health and safety of others in the workplace which includes the reporting of any injuries/accidents to the relevant Program Manager/supervisor and/or nominee.
3. To respect the organisation's policy on **confidentiality** which includes information and documents to which you have access in the course of, or arising from, your employment.
4. To cooperate with the organisation's policy on **Complaints Handling** which ensures a just resolution of all grievances without fear of retribution for the person(s) making the complaint;
5. To inform the relevant Program Manager or nominee of **absence from work** due to illness or any other reason, as soon as possible. An Application for Leave Form must then be completed and forwarded to the Program Manager/supervisor upon return to work.
6. To adhere to the organisation's policy on the **use of email** which is designed to encourage users to make responsible choices when using email in order to maintain an ethical and amicable working environment.

---

## 2.0 BEHAVIOUR STANDARDS AND WORKPLACE PRACTICES

7. To notify the relevant Program Manager/supervisor or nominee of **changes to staff personal information** eg address, telephone numbers etc. via the Change to Staff Personal Information Form.
8. To adhere to the organisation's policy on **harassment and discrimination** which provides guidance on the standards of behaviour expected of staff and volunteers and the responsibilities of the organisation in dealing with discrimination and harassment issues.

### C GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYERS AND PROGRAM MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS

1. In addition to their obligations as employees, all Program Managers, supervisors and staff who oversee the direct work of others are responsible for taking reasonable steps to support their staff and volunteers to meet the high standards of professional and ethical behaviour required by the organisation through appropriate management practices. This includes undertaking training in staff management and related areas, ensuring all staff and volunteers under their supervision are aware of their obligations and seeking advice from the CEO/Principal and/or nominee as needed.
2. It is expected that Program Managers and supervisors will, in their own behaviour, provide an appropriate model with regard to behaviour standards and workplace practices to all members of the Mater Dei community.

## 3.0 CHILD PROTECTION

### BASIC BELIEF

Mater Dei is committed to fostering dignity, self-respect and integrity of everyone it serves, including students, staff, families/carers, advocates and other members of the Mater Dei community. The emphasis on providing a safe environment for each student entrusted in our care, is affirmed through the recognition of each student's dignity and worth as a person and by the development of skills in building positive relationships.

It is expected that all employees ie management, staff and volunteers endorse the principles of Child Protection as a vitally important responsibility of their work, with the aim of such principles being to assist employees and volunteers in fulfilling their legal and professional responsibilities in this critical area of their work.

### A GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Mater Dei recognises that it is responsible for the care, education and well being of all its students, families and staff and has therefore developed an effective system of oversight and accountability which assists the organisation and its staff in fulfilling the requirements of the following legislation
  - Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998;
  - Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998;
  - Ombudsman Amendment (Child Protection and Community Services) Act 1998;
  - Child Protection Legislation Amendment Act 2003
2. Mater Dei ensures that there is sound practices in place to ensure that any incident or allegation is determined and investigated appropriately so that children's rights to a safe environment are balanced with the employee's rights to a fair and proper investigation.
3. Mater Dei recognises the need to have in place a code of conduct, professional standards and workplace employment procedures to assist the organisation in its primary responsibility for investigating allegations, while reflecting the view that the Ombudsman continues to oversee the investigation and handling of all allegations

### B GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS, PROGRAM MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS

1. The Child Protection policy and protocols need to take into account the protection and support of students, staff, volunteers and the organisation itself. Each Program Manager must identify circumstances, which have potential for incidents to take place or allegations to arise and to take practical steps to minimise the potential risk to all concerned. Child Protection information must be documented and given to new staff during induction training and current staff at least once a year.

There are a number of operating principles which are be included in the Child Protection Code of Professional Standards to protect all parties and to ensure fairness, natural justice and the most

### **3.0 CHILD PROTECTION**

2. appropriate outcome should an allegation be made. Mater Dei is ultimately accountable for ensuring that the operating principles form the basis of any action that is taken.

The principles to be included are

- Professional Responsibilities of Employees
- Professional Relationships
- Interactions with Students
- Maintaining professional Boundaries
- Duty of Care
- Risk Management
- Student Management
- Physical Contact with Students
- Confidentiality
- Unacceptable Conduct

---

## 4.0 COMPLAINTS HANDLING

### BASIC BELIEF

Mater Dei is committed to providing a workplace that is a safe, fair and productive environment where all staff and volunteers are encouraged to come forward with their complaints in the knowledge that the Program Manager/supervisor responsible will take appropriate action to address and resolve their complaint.

#### A. GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. The following guidelines apply to all forms of staff complaints with the exception of complaints/grievances that may constitute unlawful conduct which will be dealt with through appropriate mechanisms. Examples include Child Protection, Performance Review, Staff Discrimination and Harassment, Workplace Bullying, etc.
2. Grievance resolution is an integral part of all Program Manager's/supervisor's duties who have an agreed responsibility to identify, prevent and address problems in the workplace.
3. Any staff member or volunteers may lodge a grievance regarding a work related problem, however if other procedures exist that address the grievance more appropriately eg sexual harassment or unlawful discrimination, then that mechanism will be used.

#### B. GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

If you would like to raise a grievance or make a complaint, the following processes should be followed.

1. Talk or write to the Mater Dei staff member concerned.
2. If you are not happy with the outcome, talk or write to the Program Manager.
3. Once again if you are not satisfied, talk or write to the CEO/Principal who may initiate a mediation process.
4. If your complaint has still not been resolved, talk or write to the Chairperson of the Mater Dei Board of Directors. You can contact Administration or a person of your choice at Mater Dei for the details of the current Chairperson.
5. Alternatively, if you would like to remain anonymous, record your grievance/complaint and forward it to the attention of a person of your choice at Mater Dei.
6. Staff and volunteers making a complaint (**complainants**) or against whom a grievance has been lodged (**respondents**) have a responsibility to participate seriously in attempts to resolve the issue(s), not to make claims of a vexatious nature or to victimise or harass personnel involved in resolving the grievance, in any way.

---

## **4.0 COMPLAINTS HANDLING (continued)**

### **C. GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYERS AND PROGRAM MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS**

1. All staff and volunteers have the right to raise a complaint and to have it handled well.
2. Internal and external mechanisms are in place and are known by all staff, volunteers, Program Managers/supervisors.
3. Support is offered to employees and volunteers to formulate and lodge complaints.
4. All documents used in the process of resolving any complaint are distributed on a need-to-know basis only.
5. Complainants and other people who provide information are protected from any repercussions, reprisals or victimisation, which may occur as a result of making a complaint.
6. All personnel involved treat all information as confidential.
7. The process is easy to follow and written in a plain English format appropriate to the needs of all staff and volunteers.
8. The complaints handling brochure and language poster is given to all employees every 12 months.
9. The Complaints Handling Policy is reviewed on a regular basis and more formally at the end of each year.
10. The data from complaints is incorporated into each Program areas planning and review mechanisms eg are presented at monthly Board/Committee meetings.
11. The Program Manager consults with staff members on a regular basis to monitor and receive feedback regarding the Complaints Handling process.

---

## **5.0 CONFIDENTIALITY**

### **BASIC BELIEF**

Mater Dei believes that all students, families/carers, advocates and staff have the right to confidentiality in all aspects of their relationship with the organisation. 'Confidentiality' protects personal information from unauthorised use or disclosure by placing a responsibility on the individual(s) and the organisation who obtains information to keep it private.

#### **A. GENERAL GUIDELINES**

1. Mater Dei will ensure that the National Privacy Principles contained in the Commonwealth Privacy Act which came into effect in December 2001 will be strictly adhered to.
2. Mater Dei will ensure that all students, families/carers, staff and volunteers will be given, as far as the organisation is able, the same level of privacy afforded all Australian citizens in personal and professional matters.
3. Mater Dei will ensure that all information recorded in the personal files of students, families/carers staff and volunteers and information which is not written down, is kept confidential.

#### **B. GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEEES AND VOLUNTEERS**

1. All staff and volunteers agree to respect the confidentiality of information and documents to which you have access in the course of, or arising from, your employment.
2. You must not, during your employment or after the termination of your employment for any reason, directly or indirectly, use or disclose (or attempt to use or disclose) Confidential Information for your own benefit or the benefit of any person.
3. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to
  - information about the former, current and future students of Mater Dei;
  - student names and addresses;
  - computer data bases and computer software; and
  - all other information obtained from or in the course of your employment with Mater Dei that is, by its nature, confidential.

#### **C. GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYERS AND PROGRAM MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS**

1. All employees and volunteers sign a confidentiality agreement upon commencement of employment and receive updated information on a regular basis during employment.
2. Only information which is deemed relevant to providing effective management of employees and volunteers will be gathered.
3. All staff and volunteers have a personal file which is kept in a locked file in the CEO/Principal's office and updated as needed.

## **5.0 CONFIDENTIALITY (continued)**

4. Written permission from staff and volunteers is required prior to information being released to other agencies.
5. Families/carers, staff and volunteers may see their child's/individual personal files and have access to other information on request.

---

## 6.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

### BASIC BELIEF

Mater Dei is committed to providing an environment that supports standards of equity and justice and supports its staff and volunteers to fulfil their duty of care and obligations accordingly.

#### A. GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Mater Dei staff and volunteers will be supported to observe standards of equity and justice when interacting with every member of the Mater Dei community.
2. Mater Dei staff and volunteers will be supported to recognise their obligation to act appropriately when a conflict arises between their own self interest and their duty to the organisation.

#### B. GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS, PROGRAM MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS

With respect to conflicts of interest, employers, Program Managers/supervisors, employees and volunteers should take reasonable measures to avoid, or appropriately deal with, any situation in which they have or are seen to have, a conflict of interest arising from their relationship with another staff member.

Such measures may include

1. Where staff members with a personal or significant relationship are involved in a supervisory/subordinate position they should develop formal strategies to minimise at all times, potential conflicts of interest (whether real or perceived) and potential friction between staff members. For example consideration may be given to introducing a third party into the supervisory and/or decision making process.
2. Under NSW Anti Discrimination legislation it is unlawful to disadvantage a person or organisation on the basis of marital status or other relationships. It may therefore be unlawful for Mater Dei to seek information on the relationship status of applications for positions and/or give any consideration to this factor in employment, promotion, transfer or decision making.
3. The knowledge of a personal relationship is not meant to influence the actions or conduct of any staff member in the performance of their job. Where a personal relationship affects the effectiveness of the organisation, or where staff members(s) abuse the responsibilities of their positions, normal disciplinary measures will apply.
4. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the integrity of staffing and other contractual decisions is maintained and that conflict of interest is at all times avoided when implementing the recruitment and selection process.

#### NOTE

**The term “personal relationship” refers primarily to married/de facto partners, partners in same sex relationships or near relatives ie children, siblings, brother, sister etc. Significant relationship refers to business relationships or partnerships, interest in private companies or business names.**

---

---

## 7.0 HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

### BASIC BELIEF

Mater Dei is committed to providing a work environment that is safe, fair and free from harassment and discrimination for all members of the Mater Dei community. The organisation has a responsibility under State and Federal legislation to ensure that all staff and volunteers are not subjected to behaviour that may constitute unlawful discrimination, harassment, vilification or victimisation.

**Harassment** can be defined as behaviour that

- you do not want
- offends, humiliates or intimidates you

In NSW it is against the Anti Discrimination Act 1977 for employees to be harassed during their work because of sex, race, pregnancy, marital status, disability, pregnancy carer's responsibility and homosexuality or transgender status.

**Discrimination** in employment occurs when a person is unfairly treated at work. In NSW many types of discrimination are against the law including sex, age, race, marital status, disability, pregnancy carer's responsibility, homosexuality or transgender status or because of who you are related to or associate with.

### A. GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Mater Dei recognises that harassment can be harmful to organisational effectiveness and may also be unlawful.
2. Mater Dei staff and volunteers will be supported to observe standards of equity and justice which are free from all forms of harassment when interacting with other members of the Mater Dei community.
3. Mater Dei staff and volunteers will be supported to recognise their obligation to act appropriately in situations where they feel harassment or discrimination may be occurring and to come forward with theirs or others' grievances in the knowledge that the complaint will be addressed effectively.

### B. GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

1. All members of the Mater Dei community including staff and volunteers are responsible for ensuring that their own behaviour contributes to an environment which is free from discrimination and harassment.
2. All staff and volunteers are therefore obliged to observe standards of equity and justice in dealing with other members of the organisation, to treat each other with respect and refrain from all forms of harassment.

---

## **7.0 HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION (continued)**

3. Staff and volunteers making a complaint (**complainants**) regarding harassment or discrimination or against whom a grievance has been lodged (**respondents**) have a responsibility to participate seriously in attempts to resolve the issue(s), not to make claims of a vexatious nature or to victimise or harass personnel involved in resolving the grievance, in any way.
4. Staff and volunteers who witness behaviour that they feel is harassing or discriminating towards another member(s) of the Mater Dei community are encouraged to report the incident(s) to the relevant Program Manager or supervisor of their choice.

### **C. GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYERS AND PROGRAM MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS**

1. In addition to their obligations as employees, all Program Managers, supervisors and staff who oversee or direct the work of others are responsible for taking all reasonable steps to prevent harassment and discrimination. This includes undertaking training in grievance management and mediation, ensuring all staff and volunteers under their supervision are aware of these procedures and related organisation policies and seeking advice from the CEO/Principal when a staff member or volunteer has had repeated complaints made against them.
2. It is expected that Program Managers/Supervisors will, in their own behaviour, provide a model of good conduct to all members of the Mater Dei community.
3. Program Managers/Supervisors are also responsible for identifying and addressing problems through appropriate management practices. Resolution of discrimination and harassment grievances is an integral part of a Program Manager's and supervisor's duties.
4. Under State and Federal law, Mater Dei and individual Program Managers/Supervisor's may be found vicariously liable for harassment or discrimination that occurs unless they can show that they have taken all reasonable steps to prevent and deal effectively with grievances.

---

## 8.0 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

### BASIC BELIEF

Mater Dei values and encourages staff development and is committed to enhancing the organisation's service delivery through the development of highly skilled staff. It also recognises that quality staff development is integral to the achievement of the organisation's strategic goals and future growth.

**Staff development** encompasses both development and training and most staff development activities combine both of these. Training focuses on skills and knowledge directly connected to a specific position or role, whereas development refers to learning or the acquisition of skills that may or may not be related specifically to current duties/responsibilities.

### A. GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Mater Dei supports an integrated approach to staff development so that it is an essential part of planning, management and day to day working practice. Staff development programs and activities are based on identified needs, developed collaboratively and reflect a balance of individual and organisational priorities.
2. Mater Dei is committed to the fair and equal provision of opportunities for all staff to learn and develop personally and professionally.
3. Mater Dei ensures that personnel responsible for developing, conducting and organising training and development activities do so in keeping with the organisation's Code of Conduct and other relevant policies and procedures.

### B. GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

1. Mater Dei recognises that responsibility for performance and development lies with the individual employee and their Program Manager/supervisor. The organisation's responsibility is to ensure the effective implementation, coordination and monitoring of these guidelines including the provision and distribution of resources to support staff development.
2. The individual employee's responsibilities are to
  - take ultimate responsibility for their career
  - seek and use opportunities for development and learning
  - develop training and development goals that meet the organisation's and their individual needs in consultation with their Program Manager/supervisor
  - assist as required, with workplace training and development initiatives, which may involve mentoring and coaching other staff through on the job training

### C. GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAM MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS

1. In addition to their obligations as employees, all Program Managers, supervisors and staff who oversee or direct the work of others are also responsible to

## **8.0 STAFF DEVELOPMENT (continued)**

- ensure equity in the management of staff development
- discuss development needs with individual employees
- influence performance with coaching and support
- provide feedback on performance and potential career development
- through the performance review and development process, identify training and development needs in consultation with employees
- ensure that relevant information arising from Complaints Handling procedures is, in consultation with employees concerned, incorporated into training needs identification.

---

## 9.0 WORKPLACE BULLYING

### BASIC BELIEF

Mater Dei is committed to providing a working environment that is free from bullying for all members of the Mater Dei community, in keeping with OHS and other discrimination legislation. Working relationships and standards of behaviour between all staff are important workplace issues and the principles for behaviour required in the workplace include

- all people should be treated with respect;
- all staff should develop an awareness about the impact of their behaviour on others; and
- a fundamental obligation of all employee's to behave appropriately in the workplace.

**Bullying** is defined as the repeated less favourable treatment of a person(s) by another or others in the workplace which may be considered unreasonable and inappropriate in workplace practice. It includes behaviour that could be expected to intimidate, offend, degrade, humiliate, undermine or threaten.

Bullying is normally associated with an ongoing systematic pattern of behaviour and can be overt or covert. An isolated incident of behaviour is not considered bullying, but may of course lead to action being taken against the perpetrator based on that single incident.

Bullying may be perpetrated by an individual who may be a work colleague, a Program Manager/supervisor, senior management or a person who reports to the individual subject to the alleged bullying. A bully is equally likely to be male or female.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Mater Dei recognises that bullying in the workplace is inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour and that staff found to have either committed or condoned such behaviour may be subject to disciplinary action.
2. Mater Dei staff and volunteers will be supported to observe standards of equity and justice which are free from all forms of workplace bullying when interacting with other members of the Mater Dei community.
3. Mater Dei staff and volunteers will be supported to recognise their obligation to act appropriately in situations where they feel workplace bullying may be occurring and to come forward with theirs or others' grievances in the knowledge that the complaint will be addressed effectively.

### A. GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

1. All members of the Mater Dei community including staff and volunteers have an obligation to ensure that their actions do not negatively affect another staff member's career, health, or wellbeing and are consistent with organisation policies and legislative requirements. This includes not condoning bullying by failing to do anything about it, such as raising the matter with the relevant Program Manager/Supervisor.

---

## **9.0 WORKPLACE BULLYING (continued)**

2. A staff member found to have bullied another staff member or to have condoned workplace bullying may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.
3. Ideally, staff should attempt to resolve issues of workplace bullying at the local level by
  - Raising the issue directly with the person they believe is responsible for the bullying. Often this informal approach can quickly resolve an instance of workplace bullying; or
  - Involving his/her Program Manager/supervisor.

If the issue is not resolved in this way, an employee may

- Raise the matter with another relevant Program Manager/supervisor;
- Lodge a formal complaint in accordance with the organisation's Complaints Handling Policy;
- Seek advice from the Human Resources Officer as appropriate;
- Seek the advice of the organisation's Employee Assistance Program (EAP);
- Seek advice from their Union Representative and/or body.

### **B. GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYERS AND PROGRAM MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS**

1. In addition to their obligations as employees, all Program Managers, supervisors and staff who oversee or direct the work of others have a responsibility to provide a safe work environment that enables staff to carry out their work free from bullying. This includes investigating complaints of bullying expeditiously, thoroughly and in accordance with due process. Supervisors should be fully aware of the adverse consequences of not dealing with instances of bullying as outlined above.
2. Program Managers/supervisors should be alert to the possibility of workplace bullying and should monitor key indicators such as workplace culture factors, high absenteeism and high staff turnover.
3. Program Managers/supervisors are encouraged to identify training needs for themselves and their staff. It is recommended that supervisors seek advice from the CEO/Principal and/or nominated person when dealing with actual or potential workplace bullying.