



## **WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION & HARASSMENT POLICY**

### **Scope & Purpose**

The purpose of this Policy is to assist Board members to effectively perform their duty of care to achieve a safe, flexible and respectful workplace free from all forms of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment wherever Reading Friends Australia Ltd (RFA) is providing its service.

This Policy applies to all members, employees and volunteers of RFA.

### **Definitions**

Discrimination is treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic protected by law.

Discrimination can be direct – when a personal is treated less favourably than another person because of a personal characteristic protected by law, or indirect – when an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice is imposed that has, or is likely to have, a disadvantaging effect on a person with a personal characteristic protected by law.

Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual behaviour which could be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated.

Bullying is a form of discrimination that can take many forms including, but not limited to, jokes, isolation, verbal abuse, threats or unfair criticism.

### **Policy**

RFA is committed to providing members, employees and volunteers with a safe and healthy working and learning environment free from discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment.

RFA has zero tolerance of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment.

RFA will comply with all relevant Commonwealth legislation in regard to discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment.

RFA expects all Board members, managers and supervisors to display appropriate standards of behaviour.

All members, employees and volunteers are expected to:

follow the standards of behaviour outlined in this Policy;

offer support to a colleague if they experience discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment;

avoid gossip and respect the confidentiality of information given to them;



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treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect;  
report inappropriate behaviour to an appropriate person at RFA.

All members, employees and volunteers are entitled to:

- a workplace free from discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment;
- raise issues or allegations or make a complaint free from victimisation;
- make a reasonable request for flexible arrangements in working hours, etc.

## **Discrimination**

The following are protected personal characteristics under the law:

- disability, disease or injury or medical record
- parental status or status as a carer
- ethnic background, race, Indigenous origin, national origin or social origin
- sex, gender or sexual orientation
- religion
- pregnancy or breastfeeding
- marital status
- political opinion or industrial activity (e.g. member of a union).

Discrimination on any of these grounds, either directly or indirectly, is unacceptable to RFA.

## **Bullying**

Behaviour that is regarded as bullying can be, but is not limited to:

- verbal abuse, threats or shouting
- sarcasm or demeaning language
- jokes, teasing, nicknames
- written abuse such as emails, text messages or pictures
- coercion or ganging up
- social isolation
- inappropriate blaming or unconstructive criticism
- deliberate withholding of information or equipment
- unreasonable refusal of requests for additional training or workplace benefits.

Bullying on any of these grounds, either directly or indirectly, is unacceptable to RFA.

## **Sexual Harassment**

Behaviour that is regarded as sexual harassment can be, but is not limited to:

- comments or questions on a person's looks or private life
- sexually suggestive behaviour such as leering or staring
- sexually suggestive comments, insults or jokes
- physical contact such as touching, fondling or hugging
- displaying offensive photographs, screen savers or objects
- sending sexually explicit emails, text messages
- requests for sex or unwanted requests for a date
- sexually explicit posts or inappropriate advances on social networking sites



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- criminal behaviour such as sexual assault, indecent exposure or stalking
- any of the above at work, at work-related events, between people sharing the workplace or between colleagues outside of work.

If a person does not object to the inappropriate behaviour at the time, this does not mean they are consenting to the behaviour.

Sexual harassment on any of these grounds, either directly or indirectly, is unacceptable to RFA.

## **Victimisation**

RFA has zero tolerance of victimisation of a person simply because they have made a complaint, assisted someone making a complaint or refused to do something because it would be discrimination.

## **Gossip**

RFA has zero tolerance of gossip whereby a member, employee or volunteer discusses with other members, employees or volunteers a particular complaint, allegation or investigation of discrimination or harassment.

## **Breach of this Policy**

A breach of this Policy will be considered a breach of the RFA Code of Conduct and accordingly, may result in disciplinary action including termination.

## **References**

RFA Code of Conduct

Relevant Commonwealth legislation –

- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986

RFA Work Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy

RFA Disciplinary, Disputes & Grievances Policy

RFA Constitution