

FACT SHEET

Information for Supervisors managing reports of Bullying

Division of People and Culture (Fact Sheet reviewed July 2026)

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Information for Supervisors managing reports of Bullying

This fact sheet provides guidance for supervisors who witness or receive reports of bullying in the workplace. It outlines key responsibilities, processes, and support options available when the University receives and accepts a complaint of alleged bullying.

About bullying complaints

1. The University expects all staff to act respectfully and professionally at all times. If a staff member believes they are being bullied, they are encouraged to:
 - Raise the matter directly with their supervisor (where appropriate).
 - Contact their Business Partner in the Division of People and Culture (DPC), and/or
 - Submit a complaint through the University's [complaint management system](#).
2. Terminology used in this document:
 - **Complainant** - the person making the complaint.
 - **Respondent** - the person the complaint is about.
3. **Supervisors play a critical role in prevention and response.** You have a workplace obligation to take all reasonable steps to prevent bullying within your area of responsibility.

What is bullying?

4. Bullying can take many forms, including (but not limited to) a misuse of power (real or perceived), usually repeated, persistent behaviour which cause distress, disadvantage or harm and may escalate over time.
5. Common bullying behaviours can include:
 - i. Offensive language, insults, intimidation or threats
 - ii. Aggression (e.g. shouting, pushing, throwing objects)
 - iii. Rumours, ridicule or repeated teasing
 - iv. Excluding someone or withholding information
 - v. Undermining work or ignoring contributions
 - vi. Unreasonable workloads, deadlines, or tasks
 - vii. Excessive monitoring or unfair treatment
 - viii. Denying opportunities without justification
 - ix. Interfering with personal property
6. When done appropriately, these are not bullying:
 - i. Performance management or disciplinary action
 - ii. Constructive feedback or academic guidance
 - iii. Respectful differences of opinion
 - iv. Allocating work within a person's role.

How can you support a worker that has reported bullying?

7. For supervisors, managing workplace bullying involves proactive prevention teamed with a prompt, fair response in line with [SafeWork NSW guidelines](#). You should:
 - Model the highest standards of conduct in line with the University's Code of Conduct, policies, and procedures.
 - Address unwanted or inappropriate behaviour early or seek advice from your DPC Business Partner if unsure.
 - Act promptly and document relevant incidents.
 - Communicate the University's reporting process.
 - Maintain confidentiality and handle information sensitively and on a need-to-know basis.
 - Protect all parties from victimisation.
 - Encourage staff to report incidents to management or DPC.
 - Provide or refer staff to support services such as the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
8. If an employee discloses bullying to you in confidence, you **must** report the information to DPC. The safety and welfare of staff take precedence over any express or implied requests for confidentiality.

What happens after a complaint of bullying is received by DPC?

9. Upon receiving a complaint of bullying, DPC conducts an initial assessment. This includes reviewing the concerns raised, any supporting evidence, and other relevant factors. The terms 'alleged' and 'allegation' are used to reflect the University's commitment to the principles of procedural fairness. Complaints are treated as allegations until they are substantiated.
10. Complaints that fall within the scope of University policies are managed under the [complaints framework](#). If the assessment suggests the alleged behaviour may constitute bullying, DPC will proceed in line with relevant policies and procedures. If the behaviour is deemed low-level conflict or not bullying, the matter will be managed by the relevant School or Division.

How will the University manage complaints?

11. Interim measures may be implemented to support safety and workplace continuity. These may include:
 - Temporary changes to reporting lines.
 - Adjustments to work locations.
 - Allocation of an alternative manager if the complaint involves a supervisor.
 - Other operational adjustments.
12. Respondents are generally instructed not to contact the complainant, and complainants are expected not to contact the respondent. Both parties must maintain confidentiality to protect the integrity of the process.
13. Complainants and respondents may have a support person present during discussions. Support persons provide emotional support only. See the [Support Person Fact Sheet](#) for more detail.

Timeframes

14. All complaints are managed in accordance with procedural fairness. This includes interviewing relevant witnesses, gathering evidence, and allowing the respondent to respond to the allegations.
15. DPC aims to complete investigations promptly. However, the timeframe may vary depending on the complexity of the matter. Supervisors will be kept informed throughout the process.

Confidentiality

16. Discussions with DPC, whether you are a complainant, respondent, supervisor, or witness; are confidential. You must not disclose the content or existence of these discussions with other staff members.
17. The University has legal obligations, including a duty of care. Personal information will only be shared when necessary to manage the complaint, when required by law, or if there is a serious threat to health or safety.

Further information

18. Relevant documents include:

- [Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy](#)
- [Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Management Policy](#)
- [Complaints Procedure – Workplace](#)
- [Charles Sturt University Enterprise Agreement 2023-2025](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)

Support available

19. The University recognises that involvement in a complaint process can be challenging. Staff are encouraged to access the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for confidential support, counselling, and specialist helplines. Call 1300 687 327 or visit the [Employee Assistance Program](#) page for more information.

Questions or assistance

20. For further advice, contact the DPC staff member managing the matter, or your assigned HR Business Partner.