

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Approval Authority: Board of Directors

Applies To: All Members, Directors, Office Bearers, Committee Members, Contractors, Volunteers, and Representatives

Review Cycle: Every two (2) years or earlier if required

Effective Date: March 2026

1. Purpose

The Australian and New Zealand Society of Blood Transfusion Limited (the Society) is committed to providing a respectful, psychologically safe and inclusive environment that supports professional interaction and the advancement of transfusion medicine.

This Policy outlines the Society's expectations regarding conduct, defines bullying and harassment, and sets out processes for reporting and resolving concerns.

This Policy reflects Members' obligations to act with courtesy and not engage in conduct prejudicial to the Society's interests.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all individuals engaged with or representing the Society in any capacity, including but not limited to:

- Events, meetings, conferences, workshops and training (face-to-face or virtual)
- Committee and working group activities
- Written, verbal and digital communications, including email, messaging and social media
- Interactions with stakeholders where individuals are acting in a Society capacity

Wherever this policy mentions staff, this includes employees, Directors, and members.

3. Policy Statement

All individuals are expected to:

- Conduct themselves professionally, courteously and respectfully at all times
- Uphold the reputation, objects and interests of the Society
- Avoid behaviour that is intimidating, belittling, discriminatory or otherwise detrimental to others or to the Society

Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

4. Definitions

4.1 Bullying

Bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed at an individual or group that creates a risk to health, safety, wellbeing or professional dignity.

Examples include:

- Verbal abuse, insults or threats
- Deliberate exclusion, isolation or undermining of contribution
- Persistent or public criticism intended to embarrass or degrade
- Misuse of power or position to intimidate or control

4.2 Harassment

Harassment is any unwelcome behaviour that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment.

This includes, but is not limited to, conduct relating to:

- Sex, gender, sexuality or sexual orientation
- Race, culture or ethnicity
- Disability or illness
- Age, profession or employment status

4.3 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual behaviour that could be reasonably expected to make someone feel offended, humiliated or intimidated.

Examples include:

- Inappropriate or unwelcome deliberate physical contact
- Sexual comments, jokes, taunts or insinuations
- Sharing or displaying sexually explicit material
- Repeated requests for social or sexual contact
- Staring or leering
- Displaying images of a sexual nature
- Sending sexually explicit emails or text messages
- Inappropriate advances or posts on social networking sites
- Accessing sexually explicit internet sites
- Behaviour that may also be considered to be an offence under criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications

Behaviour that is based on mutual attraction, friendship and respect is not sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment can occur even if there is no intention to sexually harass.

A person can be subject to sexual harassment even if the behaviour is not directed at them because they work in a hostile work environment where a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated the possibility of the conduct being offensive, intimidating or humiliating to a person of the sex of the person impacted by the conduct.

If someone does not object to inappropriate behaviour in the workplace at the time, it does not mean that they are consenting to the behaviour.

A single incident is enough to constitute sexual harassment, it does not need to be repeated.

Victimisation means treating or threatening to treat someone badly because

- they have made a complaint of sexual harassment
- it is believed they might make a complaint of sexual harassment
- they have assisted someone else make a complaint of sexual harassment
- they refused to do some act because it would amount to sexual harassment or victimisation.

Victimisation is unlawful under the anti-discrimination legislation and may also be unlawful discriminatory conduct under the workplace health and safety legislation. It may also be Adverse Action under the Fair Work Act.

4.4 Psychological Safety

The organisation is committed to maintaining a workplace where all people feel safe to speak up, contribute ideas, ask questions, and raise concerns without fear of ridicule, exclusion, or negative consequences.

Psychological safety means that individuals feel respected, accepted, and able to participate fully at work. Behaviours that undermine psychological safety—including intimidation, persistent criticism, belittling comments, spreading rumours, social exclusion, or other actions that create fear or distress—are not acceptable.

Any behaviour that impacts a person's mental wellbeing, confidence, or sense of safety may be considered bullying or harassment, even if it is subtle or not intentional. The organisation will respond to concerns promptly and supportively.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 All Individuals Must:

- Comply with this Policy and the Constitution
- Act professionally and respectfully
- Report concerns of bullying or harassment where appropriate

5.2 The Board Will:

- Ensure this Policy is maintained and enforced
 - Oversee investigations where required
 - Take appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Constitution
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6. Reporting and Complaints Process

The Society strongly encourages any staff member who feels they have been bullied, harassed, sexually harassed, victimised, or believes they have observed such behaviour, to take immediate action. If a staff member feels comfortable in doing so, they can raise the issue with the person directly with a view to resolving the issue by discussion. The staff member should identify the harassing or victimizing behaviour, explain that the behaviour is unwelcome and offensive and ask that the behaviour stops.

Alternatively, or in addition, they may report the behaviour. Once a report is made the organisation will determine how the report should be dealt with in accordance with its obligations and this policy.

Complaints may be made to:

- The President
- The Vice President
- The Executive Officer

Complaints should be submitted in writing where possible. Anonymous complaints may be considered but may limit available actions.

7. Complaint Management

The Society will ensure that:

1. Complaints are acknowledged promptly.
2. Matters are assessed objectively and fairly.
3. Both parties have the opportunity to respond.
4. Investigations are conducted in a confidential and impartial manner.
5. Decisions and outcomes are documented.

Where appropriate, matters may be referred to the Standards and Discipline mechanisms provided under Section 8.2 of the Constitution.

8. Outcomes

Substantiated breaches of this Policy may result in:

- Mediation or facilitated resolution
 - Formal written warning
 - Removal from committees or positions
 - Termination of employment, with or without notice (for employees)
 - Removal from office under 11.16(g) of the Constitution (for Directors)
 - Suspension or termination of membership in accordance under section 7.10 of the Constitution
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9. Protection from Victimisation

No person shall suffer any disadvantage for making a complaint in good faith.
Retaliation or victimisation will be treated as a further breach of this Policy.
