



australasian society of clinical immunology and allergy

# Code of Conduct

## WORKING TOGETHER TO PREVENT BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

ASCIA relies on the highly valued work from employees, contractors and the voluntary contributions of members (on ASCIA Council, committees and working parties). In the course of doing this work, ASCIA is committed to ensuring that all ASCIA employees, contractors and members behave towards each other with fairness, dignity, courtesy and respect, without bullying, harassment or discrimination.

### How should bullying, harassment and discrimination be reported?

Inappropriate behaviour that is regarded as bullying, harassment or discrimination (refer to pages 2-3 for definitions) of ASCIA employees, contractors and members (involved in ASCIA, AIFA or National Allergy Strategy activities) should be reported to the ASCIA CEO by emailing [education@allergy.org.au](mailto:education@allergy.org.au) and/or the ASCIA President.

ASCIA will respond to any report of inappropriate behaviour seriously, sympathetically, quickly, fairly and confidentially. We will encourage local resolution of issues and prevent repercussions for reporting (refer to clause 23 of the ASCIA Constitution [www.allergy.org.au/members/constitution](http://www.allergy.org.au/members/constitution))

If an ASCIA member experiences problems with bullying, harassment or discrimination in their own workplace, their employer has primary responsibility, so any inappropriate behaviour should be reported by them. However, in some instances the issue may be referred to ASCIA when it overlaps with their voluntary work on ASCIA, AIFA or National Allergy Strategy activities.

### How can bullying, harassment and discrimination be prevented?

ASCIA strives to ensure that all employees, contractors and members (involved in ASCIA, AIFA or National Allergy Strategy activities) work in a motivating, productive and healthy environment, where they feel safe and are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. It is therefore the responsibility of all ASCIA employees, contractors and members to respect the rights of others and not get involved in, or encourage bullying, harassment or discrimination.

To prevent bullying, harassment or discrimination it is important to follow these ASCIA procedures:

1. ASCIA members with any feedback or concerns about ASCIA employees or contractors (working on ASCIA, AIFA or National Allergy Strategy activities) must be sent directly to the ASCIA CEO and/or the ASCIA President, and not directly to the individual.
2. Behaviour that is regarded as bullying, harassment or discrimination should be promptly reported to the ASCIA CEO and/or the ASCIA President, to allow ASCIA to address the issue. This includes witnessing this behaviour being inflicted on someone else.
3. Do not send emails or make phone calls that are critical and/or abrupt (which may be regarded as bullying, harassment or discrimination) to ASCIA employees, contractors or members without consideration of the consequences. For emails, the content should always be reviewed and edited if required before sending, to prevent being regarded as bullying, harassment or discrimination.

## What is bullying?

Bullying is a form of harassment and is unacceptable to ASCIA. Workplace bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed toward an employee, contractor or member, that creates a risk to health and safety. Within this definition:

- “Unreasonable behaviour” means behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard to all circumstances, would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine or threaten.
- “Behaviour” includes actions of individuals or a group and may involve using a system of work as a means of victimising, humiliating, undermining or threatening.
- “Risk to health and safety” includes risk to the mental or physical health of the employee, contractor or member.

The following types of direct and indirect behaviour, where repeated or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour, could be considered bullying:

- Verbal comments or homophobic or racist remarks.
- Hitting, tripping or damaging property.
- Excessive criticism.
- Publicly insulting victims.
- Ignoring or devaluing another’s point of view or efforts.
- Excluding or isolating employees.
- Psychological harassment.
- Intimidation.
- Assigning meaningless tasks unrelated to the job.
- Giving employees impossible assignments.
- Deliberately changing work rosters to inconvenience particular employees.
- Deliberately withholding information that is vital for effective work performance.
- Encouraging others to professionally or socially exclude someone.
- Damaging someone’s professional or social reputation.
- Spreading rumours or lying.

This list is not exhaustive. Other types of behaviour may also constitute bullying.

## What is not bullying?

Genuine and reasonable disciplinary procedures, directions or performance related management are not bullying. Employers have the fundamental right to direct, monitor and control how work is done. For example, comments which are objective and indicate observable deficiencies in performance or conduct do not constitute workplace bullying. Constructively delivered feedback or counselling is intended to assist employees to improve their work performance or the standard of their behaviour.

## What are other forms of harassment?

Harassment can be verbal, non-verbal and physical behaviour that causes someone to feel harassed, distressed and upset. This can include behaviour such as:

- Sexual or suggestive remarks.
- Making fun of someone because of a personal attribute such as race, disability, age and/or sex.
- Imitating someone’s accent or disability (e.g. mimicking someone with a disability).
- Unwanted sexual propositions.

- Offering threats or inducements for certain behaviour.
- Repeated, unwelcome invitations to go out with someone.
- Spreading sexual rumours about someone.
- Offensive and unwelcome jokes.
- Repeated, unwelcome questions about someone else's personal life.
- Sexual, sexist, racist or anti-gay threats or insults.
- The use of language that is not suitable in the workplace (e.g. sexual, sexist, racist, anti-gay, name calling).
- Anything that would be considered an offence under the criminal law (e.g. assault, stalking or obscene communications, indecent exposure.)
- Displaying pornographic, sexual or naked images where other employees or visitors can view them.
- Displaying or circulating racist, sexist and so on cartoons or literature.
- Suggestive or offensive behaviour (e.g. leers, hand or body gestures).
- Continually ignoring or dismissing someone's contribution in a work meeting or discussion.
- Touching anyone else's sexual parts of the body or any form of indecent or sexual assault or exposure.
- Unnecessary physical contact (e.g. pinching, patting, brushing up against a person, touching, kissing, hugging against a person's will).
- Pushing, shoving or jostling.
- Initiation rites that involve anything that could be regarded as sexual, sexist or racist.

Whilst ASCIA will not intrude into the personal relations of employees, contractors and members, it does have concern if relationships represent an abuse of power in the employment environment and:

- Implicitly or explicitly becomes a condition of a person's selection, recruitment, assessment, condition of employment, promotion or salary.
- Has the effect of interfering with an individual's employment performance.
- Creates an environment that is offensive, hostile and intimidating.

Note: Behaviour that is based on mutual affection, friendship and respect, and interactions that are consensual, welcome and reciprocated do not amount to sexual harassment.

### What is discrimination?

Discrimination is the different treatment of an individual or group due to a personal attribute such as gender, marital status, pregnancy, age, disability, sexual preferences, political affiliations or race.

### Acknowledgement

ASCIA is a specialty society affiliated with the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP). This document is based on the RACP "Working Together" policy which outlines the expected code of conduct to support fair treatment for all, without bullying, harassment or discrimination.

[www.racp.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/working-together-policy.pdf?sfvrsn=2](http://www.racp.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/working-together-policy.pdf?sfvrsn=2)

**The ASCIA Code of Conduct is effective as of 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019.**