



This Guideline will assist in ensuring appropriate workplace behaviour within the NTPS. It is to be read in conjunction with Employment Instruction Number 13 (Appropriate Workplace Behaviour); section 5F (Performance and Conduct Principle) of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act* (the Act); Employment Instruction Number 3 (Natural Justice); and Employment Instruction Number 12 (Code of Conduct), but does not form part of the legislation.

1. General

Agencies should actively foster a culture of respect in the workplace, and take a timely, pro-active, early-interventionist approach to dealing with situations where employees perceive they are not being treated with respect and consideration.

Not all inappropriate workplace behaviour is correctly characterised as bullying.

2. Requirement for Appropriate Workplace Behaviour

All employees are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect, and all employees have a responsibility to behave appropriately in the workplace and treat other employees and members of the public fairly, equitably, and with proper courtesy and consideration. This is a requirement of section 5F(1)(b) of the Act, and a failure to behave in this manner could potentially be a breach of discipline under section 49(1) of the Act.

Appropriate workplace behaviour is behaviour that is respectful, fair, professional and courteous. Agencies have a responsibility to foster a culture of respect and appropriate behaviour in the workplace and during work related activities and to deal promptly and effectively with instances where employees are not treated appropriately. To assist with this task, this Guideline sets out below some examples of what is and what is not inappropriate workplace behaviour and/or bullying.

Inappropriate behaviours include, but are not limited to, behaviours such as:

- intimidation;
- threats of violence or physical abuse;
- offensive remarks about race, gender, religion or impairment;
- shouting/excess or malicious teasing/sarcasm;
- deliberately withholding information needed to perform effectively;
- isolating a person from others in the workplace;
- body language which is threatening or intimidating;



- sabotaging someone's work;
- taking credit for someone else's work;
- maliciously assigning meaningless tasks unrelated to the job;
- inappropriate comments about personal appearance;
- unrealistic and/or unreasonable workload demands;
- embarrassing or degrading work requirements;
- constant unproductive criticisms; and
- spreading gossip or sending abusive/offensive electronic messages (e.g. sms text messages, e-mail, social media).

Inappropriate behaviour does **not** include:

- setting reasonable performance goals, standards and deadlines;
- legitimate and reasonable allocation or re-allocation of work;
- refusing requests on the basis of objective criteria, or reasonable operational requirements;
- occasional differences of opinion or lively constructive debate;
- reasonable, timely performance feedback including constructive criticism and management of poor performance;
- non-aggressive conflicts and problems in normal working relations; and
- appropriate workplace counselling.

3. Workplace Bullying

When inappropriate behaviours such as those listed above are persistent and repeated, and create a risk to health and safety in the workplace, they meet the NTPS definition of workplace bullying as set out in Employment Instruction Number 13.