



ANTI BULLYING, HARASSMENT & DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Relevant to:	All staff, all students
Developed by:	Management Team
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Related Documents:	Behaviour Management Policy, Code of Conduct

OVERVIEW

This policy aims to outline a whole school approach to bullying, harassment and discrimination in the school environment, which provides effective and consistent responses and recognises the shared responsibility of us all to address and manage this issue.

The focus throughout this policy is to meet Tamar Valley Steiner School's public commitment to safety and well-being of all children and young people and to meeting the standards of the National Principles for child safety. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making, with particular attention paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability and vulnerable children.

GOAL

The goal of this document is to outline processes that provide students with a safe environment where the risk of harm is minimised, and students feel physically and emotionally secure.

BACKGROUND

At Tamar Valley Steiner School we expect and encourage all to be sensitive to the needs of others. We are committed to ensuring a safe and caring environment which promotes growth, personal achievement and positive relationships for all students and staff, and the school community. We believe effective responses to bullying, harassment and discrimination are a shared responsibility and not an individual one.

- All teachers are firmly committed to minimising acts of bullying, harassment and discrimination
- Guidelines are provided for students, teachers and parents on what to do in these situations
- Children who feel bullied, harassed or discriminated against will be supported. Everyone has a right to be free of bullying and feel safe
- Children who engage in bullying behaviour will be offered help and support
- All members of the School community are expected and encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others and demonstrate caring, considerate behaviour and to actively discourage and report bullying, harassment or discrimination, should it occur
- It is the responsibility of every member of the school community to abstain from bullying others and to respond to any bullying, harassment or discrimination of which they become aware

TERMINOLOGY:

DEFINITION OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION:

Is a pattern of behaviour by one person or a group of people towards another, which is designed to hurt, injure, embarrass, upset, or discomfort that person. It can include:

- Physical aggression;
- The use of defamatory comments or insults;
- Name-calling;
- Damage to the person's property;
- Deliberate exclusion from activities;
- Deliberately setting-up humiliating experiences.

Has these key features:

- It is deliberate;
- It causes distress;
- It is usually repeated;
- It is unreasonable and unjustifiable;
- It is directed at a specific person or group;
- There is an asymmetry of power between the bully and the target of the bullying.

These behaviours include:

- Direct physical attacks such as hitting, kicking, tripping, pushing, throwing things towards or at others.
- Name calling, mocking, setting up, belittling, humiliating and insulting someone
- Making insulting comments about race, gender, sexuality or socio-economic status.
- Trying to damage someone's reputation amongst other students by spreading rumours, exposing private information, telling lies, etc.
- Using verbal and non-verbal put-downs in a public context such as a discussion or meeting
- Playing nasty practical jokes on others
- Damaging or hiding other people's personal property
- Using covert forms of physical intimidation such as blocking the way and making the other person walk around them or bumping them and claiming it was an accident
- Encouraging others to socially exclude the recipient
- Cyber-bullying (e.g. making malicious comments or playing nasty practical jokes on someone via social media.)
- Accusing someone of things they haven't done
- Orchestrated bullying in which a person or group makes plans for bullying, selects recipients and then gets others to actually perform the bullying behaviours

WHAT IS NOT bullying, harassment or discrimination:

There are many instances of conflict, harassment and aggression which are not bullying. Some of these are:

- Mutual conflict in which there is an initial argument or disagreement between the parties and a subsequent exchange of negative feelings and behaviours. This is not characterized by an imbalance of power. Resolution to the problem of mutual conflict is best dealt with through a mediation procedure.
- Social rejection or exclusive friendships. It is quite normal behaviour for students to change friendship groups and decide they don't want to associate with a person any more. [It is categorised as bullying when the social rejection involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause a specific student distress. This is often accompanied by repeated comments about the exclusion, exclusion in a broad range of contexts and the use of repeated non-verbal gestures of exclusion and unacceptability.]

- Single-episode or random acts of meanness, intimidation or violence. As a sub-set of aggressive behaviour, bullying is characterised by these acts but they are only categorised as bullying if they are repeatedly and intentionally directed towards one person or group of people.

AGREED TERMINOLOGY:

- The terms *recipient* or *target* are preferable to the term *victim* as they do not imply powerlessness or weakness.
- The term *the student involved in bullying* or *bullying student* is preferable to *the bully*, which may demonise individual students.
- The term *in a less powerful (or more vulnerable) position* is preferable to *weaker* when talking about a student who has been the target of a bullying student.

PROCEDURES

LEVEL 1 Minor Incident or First-Time Occurrence

The teacher is to use one or more of the anti-bullying, harassment and discrimination practices (refer to the following section of this policy) and to inform the class teacher about the targeted student and the bullying student. The class teacher will meet with the student/s and keep informal written records. (Therefore class teachers are aware of all incidents of bullying towards student/s in their class and can follow up on-going incidents reported by different teachers.)

LEVEL 2 Unacceptable Behaviour Continues or More Severe Incident Occurs

Severe incidents require the completion of a Behaviour Report signed by the class teacher and the College Chair. When two reports for the same behaviour have been issued, meetings are to be held with the class teacher, College Chair and students, and parents are to be informed. Behaviour management or social/emotional support etc. will be discussed. Written reports will be placed in student's file. Copies made for class teacher and School Administrator. Submission of a third behaviour report for the same behaviour requires a meeting with parents.

LEVEL 3 On-Going Bullying, Harassment or Discrimination That Is Resistant to Change

Discuss at Faculty Meeting to establish and further develop behaviour contracts and/or social emotional support etc. Written reports are placed in student's file. Copies made for class teacher and School Administrator. Ensure on-going dialogue with parents.

LEVEL 4 Severe Unacceptable Behaviour that Resists School Efforts and Poses a Significant Threat to the Safety and Wellbeing of Other Students, Teachers or the Learning Environment

The College Chair may suspend or expel a student/s depending on the severity of the incident and may involve the police. Restorative Practice techniques may be employed in seeking a resolution.

ANTI- BULLYING, HARASSMENT OR DISCRIMINATION PRACTICES

Practices will vary according to the severity and frequency of the incidents and will dictate who is involved in the process. It is important to be able to choose from options of things to say and do when faced with an incident. The following are not sequential steps but different options depending on the severity of the incident/s.

Staff responding to bullying, harassment or discrimination (with the targeted student)

- Speak with the targeted student and bullying student as soon as possible after the incident to provide reassurance and support.
- Identify safe havens for the targeted student during non-class time before, during and after school.
- Indicate that subsequent meetings will occur until the bullying has stopped.
- Brainstorm, with the targeted student, possible responses to bullying, harassment or discrimination and to whom they can report should any further incidents of bullying occur.

- Determine through discussion with mentors/ parents/ student (varies according to age and need) whether the student would benefit from counselling sessions to assist with resilience, conflict management, friendship-making skills, etc.
- Decide if the student would benefit from a peer support relationship or teacher/ staff member as a “secret support”.
- Communicate with parents so they are informed and support the process.

Staff responding to bullying, harassment or discrimination (with bullying students)

- If bullying, harassment or discrimination is witnessed directly, increase physical proximity – teacher moves closer to the students and the bullying student is re-directed into another activity or play situation.
- Speak to the bullying student as closely as possible after the incident. Assertive communication of zero tolerance of bullying and reminder of School expectations – student told to stop the behaviour and reminded of the Behaviour Management Process.
- School-wide monitoring of safety – all staff are asked to monitor the behaviour of the bullying student and the safety of the targeted student.
- Restorative questioning – the bullying student is engaged in a series of self-reflective questions directed at increasing empathy and understanding their behaviour which is causing harm, and have them take responsibility for making the situation better (can be at the time of the incident).
- Time-out or removal from the situation – followed up by reflective questioning and new behaviour choices through behaviour monitoring and contracts with the student/s.
- Class meeting with Class teacher and College Chair – with ‘no blame’ approach.
- Impose consequences – if behaviour is being repeated (especially after reminders and discussions) impose immediate consequences suitable to the nature and severity of the bullying behaviour.
- Parents are informed of incident/s and provide support to influence the behaviour of their child.

EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES

TEACHERS

The teachers shall focus on encouraging positive, inclusive behaviours where students are sensitive to the needs of others and confident in their non-acceptance of bullying behaviour. At the same time, teachers are to set a firm example of not accepting bullying, harassment or discriminate behaviour should it occur.

General - The Steiner Curriculum and philosophy from Kindergarten to Secondary School allows for on-going and age appropriate opportunities for teachers to demonstrate and discuss attitudes, inclusive behaviours and acceptable responses to bullying, harassment or discriminate behaviour.

For example:

- Values Education
- Peer leadership & ‘Buddy’ Programmes
- Therapeutic stories
- Main lesson stories and activities
- Class teacher cycle and class guardian role

As well as the above, teachers undertake regular P.D. on bullying, harassment & discrimination issues in education, conduct child studies and support each other through mentoring.

Other avenues for countering bullying, harassment or discrimination-

- Clearly stated and maintained classroom expectations and consequences
- Pro-active and effective supervision in class and playground
- Consistent responses by all staff
- Effective recording and discussion by teaching staff of on-going incidents of bullying
- Parent education through meetings and publications

- Reflective teacher practice
- Faculty discussions concerning student behaviour and the maintenance of harmonious and inclusive school culture.

Specific

Following the observation or reporting by a teacher, student or parent of bullying, harassment or discrimination, teachers will provide support using one or more of the following strategies:

- follow up as soon as possible by investigating the report
- consult and discuss the action with the offender/s; reinforcing that the behaviour is not acceptable
- report incident/s to the class teacher
- provide opportunities and strategies for bullying student/s to modify their behaviour
- time out and /or isolation from the situation
- restrict privileges
- contact parents
- document meeting between parent, pupil and teachers
- behaviour card (Upper primary)

STUDENTS

In the course of their education at Tamar Valley, all students shall be involved in age-appropriate programs and activities which include developing an awareness of what bullying, harassment or discriminate behaviour is and the consequences of such behaviour and the development of strategies for dealing with bullying behaviour.

General

Students are involved in programs and activities which develop social skills, inclusivity, respect and empathy for others. For example:

- Kindergarten – imitation (modelling and guidance by teacher)
- Class 1 to 4 - cooperative games, therapeutic stories, main lesson activities, Buddy Program
- Class 5 & 6 - Peer Leadership Program/Camp and Buddy Program, main lesson stories and activities, Outdoor Education Program

Specific

If students observe or are involved in a bullying, harassment or discrimination situation, they are encouraged to use one or more of the following strategies:

- tell the bullying student/s that their behaviour is not fair to the recipient
- use statements such as: 'I don't like that.' or 'Please stop it.'
- not to retaliate or respond to the situation and to walk away
- report the incident to the nearest teacher
- talk to the bullying student/s with a teacher present, telling them what it feels like

PARENTS

Parents can work together with the School to reduce bullying, harassment or discriminate behaviour by encouraging and promoting positive behaviours and setting a firm example of not accepting bullying toward or by their own child/children.

General: Parents can provide positive examples to their children at home and school. Parents can work in partnership with the School to educate and support their child in positive, inclusive behaviours.

Specific: If parents observe or become aware of bullying behaviour, they should use one or more of the following strategies:

- Contact their child's class teacher and discuss their concerns
- Encourage and support their child to use the options above

- Tell their own child that bullying, harassment or discrimination behaviour is not acceptable
- Listen carefully to their child and respond calmly and positively.

END