

ANTI BULLYING, HARASSMENT & DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Relevant to:	All staff, all students
Developed by:	Management Team
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Related Documents:	Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy Child and Youth Safety and Wellbeing Policy Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy Code of Conduct and Duty of Care for Employees Critical Incident Policy Enrolment Policy and Procedure Gender and Inclusivity Policy Student Concerns, Feedback and Complaints Procedure Parent Code of Conduct Pastoral Care Policy and Procedure TVSS Student Issue Resolution Process

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.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the Tamar Valley Steiner School community, including:

- students;
- employees;
- school leaders;
- volunteers;
- contractors;
- parents and carers;
- visitors;
- board members; and
- any person engaged in school-related activities.

This policy applies:

- on school grounds;
- during school activities;

- during camps, excursions and outdoor education programs;
- during online learning;
- in digital environments connected to the School;
- at school-related events and functions;
- during transport organised by the School; and
- where behaviour occurring outside school has a significant impact on the safety, wellbeing or functioning of the school community.

GOAL

The goal of this document is to outline processes that provide students, staff and parents with a safe environment where the risk of harm is minimised, and members of our community 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

DEFINITION OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION:

WHAT IS bullying, harassment or discrimination:

For the purposes of this Policy, “discrimination” has the same meaning as in sections 14 and 15 of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* (Tas).

Direct discrimination occurs where a person treats another person less favourably, on the basis of a prescribed attribute (or an imputed prescribed attribute, or a characteristic imputed to that attribute), than a person without that attribute or characteristic would be treated in the same or similar circumstances. It is not necessary that the prescribed attribute be the sole or dominant reason for the treatment, nor that the person discriminating regards the treatment as unfavourable, nor that the person discriminating has a particular motive.

Indirect discrimination occurs where a person imposes a condition, requirement or practice which is unreasonable in the circumstances and which has the effect of disadvantaging members of a group who share (or are believed to share) a prescribed attribute, or a characteristic imputed to that attribute, more than a person who does not share that attribute.

Prescribed attributes include, but are not limited to:

- race;
- age;
- sexual orientation;
- gender;
- gender identity;
- relationship status;
- parental status;
- family responsibilities;
- disability;
- religious belief or affiliation;
- religious activity;
- irrelevant medical record; and
- association with a person who has, or is believed to have, any of these attributes.

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

The School recognises that a single serious incident—such as a physical assault, a credible threat of violence, the sharing of intimate images without consent, serious harassment or discriminatory conduct—

may not meet the definition of bullying because it is not repeated. However, such behaviour is still unacceptable and will be responded to promptly and appropriately under this policy and the Behaviour Management and Student Support Policy.

Not all conflict, disagreement, rude behaviour or isolated incidents constitute bullying. These behaviours may nevertheless breach School expectations and require intervention, restorative processes or disciplinary action.

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.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Tamar Valley Steiner School recognises that rights and responsibilities are interconnected. Every student has the right to learn, grow and participate in a safe, respectful and inclusive school community, and every student also has a responsibility to contribute to maintaining that environment for others.

The School seeks to support students to develop increasing self-awareness, empathy, accountability and social responsibility throughout their educational journey.

Student Rights

Every student has the right to:

- feel physically, emotionally and psychologically safe at school;
- be treated with dignity, respect and fairness;
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and intimidation;
- have their cultural identity, beliefs, abilities and individual differences respected;
- be heard and have concerns taken seriously;
- access support when they experience bullying, harassment or discrimination;
- receive procedural fairness when concerns about their behaviour are being addressed;

- participate fully in school life without fear of exclusion or victimisation; and
- have their privacy and personal information treated respectfully and confidentially where appropriate.

Student Responsibilities

Every student has a responsibility to:

- treat others with kindness, dignity and respect;
- contribute positively to a safe, inclusive and welcoming school community;
- demonstrate honesty, empathy and personal responsibility;
- communicate respectfully, even during disagreement or conflict;
- respect the rights, property and personal boundaries of others;
- refrain from bullying, harassment, discrimination, intimidation or abusive behaviour;
- use technology, social media and digital communication responsibly and respectfully;
- support peers who may be experiencing bullying or harassment by seeking help from a trusted adult;
- cooperate with restorative processes and behaviour support strategies where harm has occurred;
- take responsibility for repairing harm caused by their actions where appropriate; and
- contribute to a culture where everyone feels valued, included and safe.

Developing Responsibility Across the Years

The School recognises that expectations of students develop progressively according to their age and stage of development.

For younger students, responsibility is supported through modelling, guidance, therapeutic storytelling, co-regulation and restorative conversations.

As students move into the high school years, they are expected to demonstrate increasing independence and accountability by:

- exercising sound judgement in their relationships and decision-making;
- communicating respectfully with peers, staff and members of the wider community;
- understanding consent, personal boundaries and respectful relationships;
- acting as responsible digital citizens;
- recognising the impact of their behaviour on others;
- contributing positively to school culture through leadership and service; and
- actively participating in restorative processes where harm has occurred.

The School acknowledges that students develop at different rates and that behaviour may be influenced by **disability and support needs**, trauma, developmental stage or additional support needs. Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments and individual supports will be implemented in accordance with the Behaviour Management and Student Support Policy while maintaining the safety and wellbeing of the broader school community.

STAFF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff Rights and Responsibilities

Every staff member has the right to work in a safe, respectful, inclusive and supportive workplace that is free from bullying, discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Every staff member also has a responsibility to contribute to maintaining that environment through their conduct, relationships and professional practice.

The School seeks to foster a professional culture in which staff demonstrate integrity, respect, empathy, accountability and collaboration. Staff are expected to model the values and behaviours they seek to cultivate in students, contribute positively to a psychologically and physically safe workplace, and uphold the School's commitment to equity, dignity and respectful relationships in all interactions with students, colleagues, families and the wider school community.

All staff are expected to:

- maintain professional boundaries;
- act in accordance with the Employee Code of Conduct;
- uphold child safety obligations;
- model respectful communication and behaviour;
- support inclusive educational practices;
- respond appropriately to reports of bullying, harassment or discrimination; and
- contribute to a culture of safety, dignity and respect.

Allegations involving staff will be managed in accordance with:

- The Code of Conduct for Employees;
- Child and Youth Safety and Wellbeing Policy;
- Mandatory Reporting obligations;
- workplace policies and procedures; and
- relevant employment legislation.

Under section 104 of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (Tas), the School is required to:

- ensure that all members of the School community (including staff, volunteers, contractors, students, parents, guardians and visitors) are made aware of discrimination and prohibited conduct under this Policy and at law and do not engage in, repeat or continue such conduct; and
- take reasonable steps to ensure that no member, officer, employee or agent of the School engages in discrimination or prohibited conduct under this Policy and at law.

HARMFUL CONDUCT WITHIN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The School recognises that harmful conduct may occur:

- between students;
- between staff;
- from staff towards students;
- from students towards staff;
- from parents towards staff;
- from parents towards students;
- from parents towards other parents;
- between volunteers or visitors; and
- between any members of the school community.

The School is committed to preventing and responding to harmful conduct in all forms.

REPORTING CONCERNS

Concerns About Students

Concerns involving students will be managed in accordance with this policy and the Behaviour Management and Student Support Policy.

Reports may be made to:

- Class Teacher;
- Class Guardian;
- Wellbeing staff;
- Principal.

Concerns About Staff

Concerns regarding staff conduct may be reported to:

- Principal;
- Board Chair (where concerns involve the Principal), and
- In accordance with the Student complaint procedure

Concerns About Parents, Volunteers, Contractors or Visitors

Concerns regarding parents, volunteers, contractors or visitors may be reported to:

- Principal;
- Board Chair where appropriate, and
- In accordance with the Student complaint procedure

SCHOOL RESPONSE

The School will respond to reports of bullying, harassment, discrimination or harmful conduct in a manner that is:

- child-centred;
- proportionate;
- procedurally fair;
- trauma-informed;
- culturally responsive;
- restorative where appropriate; and
- consistent with the School's child safety obligations.

Responses may include:

- restorative conversations;
- mediation;
- behaviour support processes;
- counselling referrals;
- risk assessments;
- safety planning;
- workplace management processes;
- disciplinary action;
- suspension or cancellation of enrolment;
- restrictions on parent or visitor access; and
- referral to external agencies where required.

The nature of the response will depend on:

- the seriousness of the conduct;
- safety risks identified;
- the impact on others;
- the age and developmental stage of students involved;
- any support needs or reasonable adjustments;

- previous interventions; and
- legislative obligations.

Specific practices and guidelines in responding for students, staff and parents are outlined in Appendix 1: ANTI- BULLYING, HARASSMENT OR DISCRIMINATION PRACTICES AND GUIDELINES TO UPHOLD THE SCHOOL'S ETHOS.

PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS

The School is committed to procedural fairness when responding to concerns involving any member of the school community.

Individuals subject to concerns will, where appropriate:

- be informed of the concerns;
- have an opportunity to respond;
- be treated respectfully throughout the process;
- be supported by a support person where appropriate; and
- have decisions made based on available evidence and relevant circumstances.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES

Where concerns involve:

- student behaviour, the Behaviour Management and Student Support Policy will guide responses;
- staff conduct, the Staff Code of Conduct and employment procedures will apply;
- child safety concerns, the Child and Youth Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Mandatory Reporting obligations will apply;
- parent conduct, the Parent Code of Conduct and complaints procedures will apply.

This policy provides the overarching framework for maintaining respectful relationships across the entire school community.

EXTERNAL COMPLAINT PATHWAYS

Any person may make a complaint about conduct covered by this Policy to an external body. This may usually be done without first completing the School's internal complaints process.

Relevant external bodies include:

- Australian Human Rights Commission, for complaints under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth);
- Equal Opportunity Tasmania, for complaints under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* (Tas); and
- the Disability Commissioner, for reports under the *Disability Rights, Inclusion and Safeguarding Act 2024* (Tas).

The School will cooperate in good faith with any inquiry, investigation or conciliation conducted by any of these bodies.

END POLICY

APPENDIX 1: ANTI- BULLYING, HARASSMENT OR DISCRIMINATION PRACTICES AND GUIDELINES TO UPHOLD THE SCHOOL'S ETHOS

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, High school)

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 & 7 - 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 APPENDIX