



SOUTHERN MONTESSORI EDUCATION CENTRE INC. Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy and Appendices

Version: 0.02
Last Amendment: Jan 2019

Approved By: Board of Governors
Date: Feb 2019

Maintained By: Management

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POLICY STATEMENT

Everyone in the school community has the right to be safe at school or when attending a school organised activity. No one should feel at risk from any kind of physical, emotional, psychological, sexual or other form of bullying or harassment.

While the school recognises that in any organisation there is the potential for bullying or harassment to occur, any form of bullying or harassment is unacceptable and not tolerated. Bullying and harassment can sometimes be perceived as 'minor incidents' but they can often have a significant and cumulative effect.

The School recognises the seriousness and harmfulness of such behaviours and is committed to working towards minimising their occurrence within the school community. Every report of bullying or harassment will be taken seriously and will be investigated.

These guidelines to be read in conjunction with the school's Child Protection Policy

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

A safe and emotionally healthy environment for everyone will lead to:

- enhanced student performance
- increased attendance
- increased teaching and learning time
- a better understanding of acceptable social behaviours, combined with an awareness of unacceptable behaviours
- a consistent approach to student management

DEFINITIONS (see Appendix B for additional information)

Bullying

The National Safe Schools Framework defines bullying as repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyberbullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies, e.g. the internet or mobile devices. Conflicts or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

In short, bullying is a repeated pattern of harmful verbal, physical or social behaviour which involves the misuse of power. Cyberbullying is bullying through the internet or mobile devices

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Harassment

Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; marital, parenting or economic status; age; ability or disability and that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment. Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour, or it may be a single act. Harassment may be directed randomly or towards the same person(s). It may be intentional or unintentional.

Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when people are treated less favourably than others because of their race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; marital, parenting or economic status; age; ability or disability. Discrimination is often ongoing and commonly involves exclusion or rejection.

Violence

Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person(s) that results in psychological harm, injury or in some cases death. It may involve provoked or unprovoked acts and can be a single incident, a random act or can occur over time.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual conduct which makes a person (male or female, of the same or opposite gender, same-sex attracted, bisexual or transgender) feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated, where that reaction to the conduct is reasonable in the circumstances. Sexual harassment can be a single incident, repeated or continuous, direct or indirect, and take various forms.

PREVENTION -Procedures for Minimising Bullying & Harassment

The school, as a whole, shares the responsibility for creating a safe and emotionally healthy learning environment characterised by mutually respectful relationships between all members of the school community. Therefore the school will develop and review its policies and guidelines to raise awareness and provide information about the need to work towards minimising the potential for bullying and harassment.

TEACHERS are expected to:

- create and maintain learning environments that provide opportunities for students to experience success
- create a safe, caring and orderly climate where students are supported in their growth towards self-discipline
- work with students, at the beginning of each year, to discuss the school's behaviour code and formulate guidelines for the orderly management of their classroom
- promote the development of responsible behaviours by incorporating and strongly encouraging student participation in decision-making, and where possible acting on their suggestions
- acknowledge and work towards eliciting responsible behaviour from each student
- encourage students to take responsibility for their own behaviour
- act quickly, and where possible using low profile techniques, to positively redirect inappropriate student behaviour

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- model responsible and respectful behaviour
 - *to work with students to assist them in developing skills and strategies to keep themselves safe, using anti-bullying/harassment programs such as:*
 - *Program Achieve, by Michael Bernard (2001)*
 - *Bully Off! By Paula Galey (2005)*
 - *Bullying. No Way! (2014) <http://news.bullyingnoway.gov.au/Pages/Resources.aspx>*
 - participate in professional development to enhance their own knowledge and skills so that they can successfully observe and guide students' behaviour.

PARENTS are expected to:

- read and agree to support the school's behaviour code prior to accepting a position for their child at the school
- collaborate with the school to support their child's growth towards self-discipline and to help their child accept responsibility for his/her actions and encourage them to work to repair any hurt they have caused
- set an example in their dealings with staff and other members of the school community and act in accordance with the school's Positive Grievance Resolution Policy should a grievance arise
- avail themselves of opportunities to learn more about bullying and harassment and its effects through forums and parent information sessions run by the school

STUDENTS are expected to:

- behave in a manner that ensures the teaching and learning process is maximised for themselves and others and which brings credit to the school
- accept increasing responsibility for their behaviour
- participate in curriculum opportunities to learn the skills of conflict resolution and decision-making
- participate in the establishment and review of classroom rules

Motivating Positive Change in Bullying & Harassment Behaviours

In the case of students, the success of intervention requires the support and backup of parents working in partnership with the school therefore:

- parents will be informed that their child has been engaging in bullying or harassment and a meeting arranged
- together, school and parents will establish a management plan to raise the child's awareness of why his/her behaviours are inappropriate
- consequences will be imposed
- a set of sanctions will be agreed and actioned if rules about bullying and harassment are broken in the future
- parents may be referred to an outside agency for counselling and support
- the school will inform all those involved in an incident about what actions are being taken
- where appropriate, the teacher and the other children in the class will acknowledge and support the student's positive changes in behaviour

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INTERVENTION - WHERE DO I TURN?

If a member of the school community is being bullied or harassed by a person or group, they should adopt the following procedure:

Make a Personal Resolution

- with as little emotion as possible, tell the person bullying or harassing you that their actions are unwanted, contrary to school policy and / or illegal. The offender is usually aware of the school policy and the reminder may be enough to stop them
- tell a trusted person and seek confidential advice
- if the problem continues, make a formal complaint

Make Formal Complaint

- every complaint will be taken seriously and will be investigated thoroughly
- the complainant may lodge a formal complaint with the class teacher or any other member of staff with whom they feel at ease
- a record will be made of each formal complaint
- the person accused of bullying or harassment will be interviewed. At the interview the offending behaviour will be described and an explanation given of how this behaviour is affecting the other person
- an opportunity will be given for the complainant to express their feelings and be included in the resolution of the issue/s
- an opportunity will be given for the offender to repair the hurt they have occasioned
- an agreement to discontinue this behaviour will be sought
- teacher/s will follow up both the person lodging the complaint and the perpetrator to ascertain adherence to the agreement
- if the bullying/harassment recurs or continues a meeting will be scheduled with the principal and if deemed necessary, an outside mediator will be consulted

Consequences

Consequences may be applied at any stage depending on the severity of the bullying/harassment and the circumstances surrounding it.

If you have been guilty of harassing another individual:

- the victim may ask you to stop
- cease immediately and consider how your present behaviour could be perceived by others
- you may need to consider seeking help.
- if you are a student – consider talking to your parents and /or a trusted teacher
- if you are a staff member, parent or volunteer – consider talking to a trusted colleague or friend or contacting a counsellor through the ACCESS program

The consequence of harassing others may include:

- having counselling with the person involved by the class teacher and / or the Principal
- counselling referral may be recommended

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- having your name and the name/s of the person/s you were bullying or harassing recorded and having your behaviour closely monitored
 - if you are a student - in school or out of school suspension
 - if you are staff member you may face disciplinary action
 - if you are a parent or volunteer your presence in the school may be subject to supervision
 - expulsion

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Appendix A: GUIDELINES FOR MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

If you are being bullied or harassed, you could:

- tell the person/s that you don't like it and that you want them to stop it and leave you alone
- talk it over with friends, parents, teacher - someone you trust who will help you
- report the incident - letting people know how you feel is not 'dobbing'.
- if confronted, stay calm and walk away from the person or area
- look for support from those nearby
- talk about bullying and harassment openly
- make an effort to be with people who don't bully or harass others
- make an effort to avoid high risk places
- stay calm and try not to react as this can make you a more interesting target

If you are being bullied or harassed you have a right to:

- be taken seriously
- be helped to feel safe; this may be assisted by the presence of a support person when discussing the unwanted behaviour
- have your privacy and confidentiality observed
- have the policies and procedures in circumstances of bullying or harassment explained to you
- be kept informed of the investigation's process
- be included in any resolutions arising out of an investigation of the complaint

If you observe bullying or harassment behaviour you should:

- refuse to participate in the behaviour
- support the person being bullied or harassed and encourage them to tell someone
- speak to a teacher on their behalf if necessary
- tell the bully to stop, let them know their actions are unacceptable
- NEVER obey a bully
- **not** support a 'code of silence'
- report the incident

If you have been accused of being a bully or of harassing others you will:

- be informed of the complaint made against you
- have the policies and procedures in circumstances of bullying or harassment explained to you
- be invited to make a response
- be supported and advised by people of your choice
- have your privacy protected and confidentiality observed
- be treated fairly

If you continue to bully or harass others you may:

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- be asked consider ways in which you could repair the hurt you occasioned.
 - be referred to a counsellor
 - have to agree to a behaviour management plan
 - be suspended to asked to leave the school community

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

If you know or suspect your child is being bullied:

- encourage your child to talk it through as far as he or she wants to so you can get the basic facts straight; listen to the child
- keep an open mind, remembering you are only hearing one part of the story
- ask questions gently and involve the child in making decisions about what to do
- contact the school once you have established a clear picture of the situation and how you and your child would prefer to handle it
- discuss with school staff the strategies you and your child have already developed and record ideas and new strategies the school may have for you
- make a follow-up date to review progress.

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Appendix B: TYPES OF BULLYING – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Overt bullying

Overt bullying (sometimes referred to as face-to-face or direct bullying) involves physical actions such as punching or kicking or overt verbal actions such as name-calling and insulting.

Covert bullying

Covert bullying (sometimes referred to as indirect bullying) is a subtle type of non-physical bullying which isn't easily seen by others and is conducted out of sight, and therefore often unacknowledged by teachers. Covert bullying behaviours mostly inflict harm by damaging another's social reputation, peer relationships and self-esteem.

Covert bullying can include repeatedly:

- using hand gestures and weird or threatening looks
- whispering, excluding, turning your back on a person
- blackmailing, spreading rumours, threatening, stealing friends
- breaking secrets, gossiping, criticising clothes and personalities

Cyberbullying can be conducted in many ways, using different media including:

- the sending of abusive texts or emails
- taking and sharing unflattering or private images, including naked or sexual images
- posting unkind messages or inappropriate images on social networking sites
- excluding individuals from online chats or other communication
- assuming the identity of the victim online and representing them in a negative manner or manner that may damage their relationship with others
- repeatedly, and for no strategic reason, attacking players in online gaming

Like other forms of bullying such as verbal abuse, social exclusion and physical aggression, cyberbullying has the potential to result in the target of bullying developing social, psychological and educational issues.

While cyberbullying is similar to real life bullying it also differs in the following ways:

- it can be difficult to escape and invasive—it can occur 24/7 and a person can be targeted while at home
- it can involve harmful material being widely and rapidly disseminated to a large audience, for example, rumours and images can be posted on public forums or sent to many people at once
- it can provide the bully with a sense of relative anonymity and distance from the victim, so there is a lack of immediate feedback or consequences

EXAMPLES of BULLYING and HARASSMENT INCLUDE (but are not limited to)

- physical: hitting, pushing, touching, grabbing, looks, stares, facial expressions, gestures, spitting, taking or damaging property
- verbal or written: spoken or written insults, threats, suggestive comments, name-calling, unfair criticism, spreading rumours
- cyber: using e-mail, voice and text messaging, social networking sites, photographic and video images
- graffiti: using pictures, tags or words

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- social: forming groups to leave out, ignore and disrespect; influencing, encouraging or organising someone else to be involved in any type of bullying or harassment.
- sexual: unwanted sexual advances, other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature; types of bullying and harassment such as that described above that is based on a person's sexuality or sexual orientation; abuse, comments, including name calling that suggests something about a person's sexuality or sexual orientation.

DOCUMENT HISTORY AND VERSION CONTROL TABLE

Based on the Legal Liabilities Guidelines 2011

Version	Date Approved	Approved By	Brief Description
0.01	Oct 2014	Board of Governors	Creation of original document
0.01	Feb 2019	Board of Governors	Review of Policy Ratified

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