

Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy and Appendix

Southern Montessori Education Centre Inc.

Version	Approved By	Date	Maintained By	Next Review
3	Board of Governors	Feb 2025	Management	Feb 2028

Policy Statement

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

The Centre's values underlying this policy are: Care and Compassion, and Connection.

All staff at the Centre will model behaviours that:

- Show respect;
- Value diversity; and
- Promote belonging and wellbeing.

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

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

Expected Outcomes

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

- enhanced student wellbeing and 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

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Definitions (see appendix A 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. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Cyberbullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies, e.g. the internet or mobile devices. Imaged-based bullying is when a person shares or threatens to share an intimate image of a person without their consent. It can be a single incident, repeated or continuous.

Conflicts or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying. In short, bullying is a repeated pattern of harmful verbal, physical or social behaviour which involves the misuse of power.

Harassment

Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender identification; 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 identification; 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

The Centre shares the responsibility for creating a safe and emotionally healthy learning environment characterised by mutually respectful relationships between all members of the community. Therefore, we will develop and review our 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:

- Model and promote positive behaviour. Value diversity, demonstrate respect, and include all students and their families;
- 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 Centre'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;

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- Act quickly, and where possible using low profile techniques, to positively redirect inappropriate student behaviour
- Work with students to assist them in developing skills and strategies to keep themselves safe, using anti-bullying/harassment resources such as:
 - Child Protection Curriculum
 - Life Education SA <https://lifeed.org.au/>
 - Bullying. No Way! (2014) <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>
- Participate when appropriate in professional development to enhance their own knowledge and skills so that they can successfully observe and guide students' behaviour.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Model and promote safe, respectful and inclusive behaviours;
- Help their children to be safe online at home. This includes checking their children's use of technology and social media;
- Make sure their children know how to identify and report bullying (refer to Grievance Policy) and work with the Centre to help their children be safe from bullying;
- Collaborate with the Centre to support their child's growth towards self-discipline and to help their child accept responsibility for their actions and encourage them to work to repair any hurt they have caused;
- Read and agree to support the Centre's behaviour code prior to accepting a position for their child and use the same messages the Centre uses;
- Support their children to attend school while a bullying issue is being worked on; and
- avail themselves of opportunities to learn more about bullying and harassment and its effects through forums and parent information sessions run by the Centre.

Students are expected to:

- Model behaviours that are safe, respectful and inclusive, both face-to-face and online;
- Behave in a manner that ensures the teaching and learning process is maximised for themselves and others and which brings credit to the Centre;
- Accept increasing responsibility for their behaviour;
- Build skills, knowledge and confidence to recognise, respond to and manage bullying;
- Be a part of decision making to improve safety and wellbeing for all;
- Take a stand when bullying is observed. Step in, if it's safe. Seek help from adults;
- Support friends and peers to get help from trusted adults if they experience bullying;
- Support friends to behave in safe, respectful and inclusive ways if their friends engage in bullying;
- Participate in curriculum opportunities to learn the skills of conflict resolution and decision-making and 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 Centre therefore:

- parents will be informed that their child has been engaging in bullying or harassment and a meeting arranged;
- together, teachers 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 Centre 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

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 are being bullied or harassed, you could:

- tell the person/s that you don't like the bullying behaviour, that you want them to stop 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 observe bullying or harassment behaviour you should:

- be a supportive bystander (refer Appendix A – Additional Information)
- 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 a member of the Centre's 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 the Centre's policy and / or illegal. The offender is usually aware of the 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 in line with the Centre's Positive Grievance Resolution Policy
- the complainant may lodge a formal complaint with the class teacher or any other member of staff with whom they feel at ease

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- 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
- If the person being accused is a student at the school, their parent or guardian may be invited to the interview

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

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 accused of being a bully, of harassing or discriminating against 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
- consider seeking help (from a parent, trusted teacher, colleague or speaking with a counsellor from the Employee Assistance Program, Access)
- have your privacy protected and confidentiality observed
- be treated fairly

The consequence of bullying, harassing or discriminating against others may include:

- having counselling with the person involved by the class teacher, school counsellor and / or the Principal
- a counselling referral and intervention may be recommended
- 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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If you continue to bully or harass others, you may:

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

Document History and Version Control Table			
Version	Date Approved	Approved By	Brief Description
1	Oct 2014	Board of Governors	Creation of original document
2	Jan 2019	Board of Governors	Review ratified at Board
3	Feb 2025	Board of Governors	Review ratified at Board

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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 (image-based abuse)
- 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
- 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.

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- 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.

BEING A BYSTANDER:

A bystander is someone who sees or knows about bullying or harassment but doesn’t do anything about it. Bystanders can be either part of the bullying problem or an important part of the solution to stop bullying, harassment or discrimination. The Centre encourages the community to be Supportive Bystanders to aid in the prevention and cessation of bullying, harassment or discrimination.

- Being a **Supportive Bystanders or Defender** means that you actively try to stop the bullying, providing comfort and support to the person being bullied. It may be that you speak out against the bullying behaviour or offer help with getting assistance.
- **Assistant and Reinforcers** provide support or encouragement to the bully by knowing about the bullying behaviour and not doing anything about it.
- **Outsiders** are those people who stay away from the bullying and do not taking sides, this provides the person who is bullying with silent approval.

Assistant, Reinforcers and Outsiders may be considered as colluding with the Bullying behaviour and may be subject to similar consequences as the Bully.

RESOURCES

eSafety Commissioner - <https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-topics>

Bullying No Way - <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>

Kids Helpline - <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/bullying>

ACCESS Employee Assistant Program - <https://accesssa.com.au/contact/>

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