



## THE FRIENDS' SCHOOL

# GUIDELINES ON BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

### **Premise or Rationale**

The Friends' School is strongly committed to providing a safe, supportive environment, which respects the rights of the individual, and acknowledges each person's responsibility to other members of the School community. This is a reflection of our Purpose and Concerns, which states that the School values of 'the need to establish peace and justice'. Harassment and discrimination threatens the safety, peace and justice of our School environment and will not be tolerated.

### **What is Direct Discrimination?**

It is the unfair treatment of someone because of factors such as age, disability, gender, sexuality, race or religion or association with others. An example of direct discrimination may be if an employer advises an employee that they will not be trained to work on new machinery because they are too old to learn new skills.

### **What is Indirect Discrimination?**

It is the use of rules and requirements, which unfairly exclude certain people or groups. An example of indirect discrimination may be an advertisement for a job as a cleaner, which requires an applicant to speak and read English fluently when this is not necessary to perform the job.

### **What is Harassment?**

Harassment is bullying.

It is an act of aggression causing embarrassment, humiliation, intimidation, pain or discomfort to another.

- It can take a number of forms: physical, sexual, verbal, written, gesture, extortion and exclusion.
- It can be planned and organised or it may be spontaneous and/or unintentional.
- individuals or groups may be involved.
- It is unwanted, unwelcome, unsolicited and usually persistent.
- It is an abuse of power.

### **What isn't Harassment?**

Reasonable management actions carried out in a fair and reasonable way is not harassment. For example, harassment is not:

- setting standards and deadlines
- allocating work to a worker
- transferring a worker
- deciding not to select a worker for promotion
- informing a worker about unsatisfactory performance or inappropriate behaviours
- providing constructive feedback



- differences of opinion or personality clashes, provided they don't interfere with work, aren't harassment either.

Harassment is repeated unreasonable behaviour towards an individual or a group of people.

### Some Examples of Harassment

- Any form of **physical intimidation** such as fighting, pushing, shoving, gestures and invasion of personal space;
- **verbal abuse** such as name calling, offensive language, putting people down or belittling their achievements, insults and constant criticism, spreading rumours, making degrading remarks about another's race, gender, religion or characteristics;
- **visual materials** such as offensive notes or e-mail, postings on social media, text message, graffiti or damage to the possessions of others;
- **victimisation of others** by stand over tactics, picking on others, hurtfully excluding others;
- **sexual harassment** is unwelcome requests for sexual favours or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature such as inappropriate physical contact (patting, pinching, touching, fondling etc), personally offensive comments, sexual or smutty jokes, persistent unwelcome social invitations or telephone calls, offensive hand or body gestures, unsolicited letters, gifts etc.
- **psychological bullying/harassment** is when someone deliberately and repeatedly ignores an individual or group of people, and often includes exclusion and undermining.

There are many ways in which someone can be harassed and often these overlap.

### Who May Be Involved?

- students harassing other students / staff / parents / contractors
- staff harassing students / other staff / parents / contractors
- parents harassing students / staff / other parents / contractors
- contractors harassing students / staff / parents / other contractors

### If you are Harassed, you can get Help

- tell the person/s that you don't like it and that you want them to stop it and leave you alone and/or;
- talk it over with friends or colleagues or;
- speak to your supervisor or Deputy Principal or;
- speak to a Head of School or Section or;
- talk to one of the Staff Support Contacts or;
- register a grievance (see Grievance procedures for Staff).

You may decide to follow one of these avenues. It is your choice.



### **What Will Happen if I Tell Someone?**

Someone WILL listen to you, and if you wish, will help you consider the options available to you. The names of the Staff Support Contacts are published in all sections of the School.

### **What are your Rights in Such a Situation?**

Both victims and their alleged harassers have rights that the School is obliged to observe and protect.

#### **Persons Alleging Harassment Have the 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 their privacy and confidentiality observed
- have the policies and procedures in circumstances of harassment explained to them
- be kept informed of the investigation's progress
- be included in any resolutions arising out of an investigation of the complaint

#### **Persons Accused of Harassment Have the Right to:**

- be informed of the complaint made against them;
- have the policies and procedures in circumstances of harassment explained to them;
- make a response;
- be supported and advised by persons of their choice prior to responding and during the course of an investigation;
- have their privacy protected and confidentiality observed;
- be treated fairly and without bias.

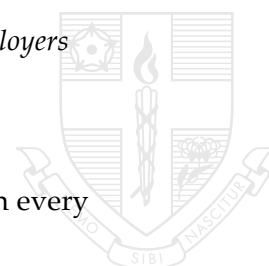
### **Your Responsibilities if you Witness Harassment**

- Refuse to participate in the behaviour.
- Don't support a "code of silence".
- Report the incident.

### **Further Information**

- <http://www.antidiscrimination.tas.gov.au/>
- Workplace Standards Tasmania Publication – *Bullying: A Guide for Employers and Workers*, available on [http://www.wst.tas.gov.au/safety\\_comply/rights/bullying](http://www.wst.tas.gov.au/safety_comply/rights/bullying)

The School supports this guideline by providing training / information session every two years to staff, providing information for new employee, volunteer and



contractor inductions and by providing confidential access to the Employee Assistance Program.

