

Harassment and Bullying Prevention Policy

Sunrise Waldorf School is committed to providing an educational environment that is safe, welcoming, orderly, caring, respectful and affirming for all students. No meaningful learning or personal growth can occur unless all students feel safe, valued and free to express their authentic selves.

For these reasons, we are committed to promoting safe environments, free from fear, harassment and discrimination by engaging in proactive strategies, guidelines and education to ensure that all students are equally welcomed and included in all aspects of education and school life, and treated with respect and dignity. In particular, SWS is committed to the protection of students' physical safety, social connectedness, inclusiveness and protection from all forms of bullying, regardless of their gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Additionally, we are committed to work to educate all members of the school community (including students, staff, parents and guardians) to prevent discrimination, bullying and harassment. We incorporate curriculum that promotes multi-culturalism and respect for the rights of each human as a fundamental aspect of Waldorf education. We also incorporate social health practices that support students, staff, parents and guardians in assuring the safety of all members of the school community.

The purpose of this policy is to define inappropriate behaviours and actions in order to prevent bullying, discrimination and harassment.

For purposes of this policy, bullying is defined as a pattern of unwelcome or aggressive behaviour, often with the goal of making another uncomfortable, scared or hurt. It is most often used as a way of having control or power over another, and it is often based on another's appearance, culture, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity. It is the school's policy that all incidents of bullying are serious and need to be addressed fairly and expediently.

Bullying can take on, but is not limited to, the following forms:

- **Verbal**

- o Persistent taunting or hurtful teasing of others with put-downs and name-calling
- o Mocking or ridiculing another person's ideas, appearance, abilities or work
- o Making offensive or degrading remarks or claims about another's culture, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, abilities, religion or social background
- o Spreading false and malicious rumours or gossip
- o Uttering sexually suggestive or sexually abusive comments
- o Forcing another to do something against their will
- o Making threats, scaring or intimidating others, including behaviours such as extortion of money or possessions
- o Hurtful, offensive and/or threatening gestures, notes and graffiti
- o Intimidating or harassing messages delivered by phone, voicemail, text messaging, chat rooms, instant messaging, e-mail, websites, Facebook, Snapchat, or any other communication tools. (Please be aware that Sunrise Waldorf School discourages the use of social media for all students in order to create and maintain a healthy social and

learning environment for all children—see our Media Guidelines in the Parent Handbook for additional information.)

- **Physical**

- o Any form of physical violence such as hitting, slapping, biting, choking, pinching, pulling, pushing, scratching, tripping, kicking, punching and spitting
- o Unwanted physical contact such as touching
- o Interfering with, taking, or damaging the belongings of others

- **Relational**

- o Ignoring, rejecting, isolating or excluding others
- o Shunning others, which involves both exclusion and rumour spreading
- o Purposefully manipulating and/or ruining relationships

Bullying should be differentiated from conflict in order to appropriately respond to bullying incidents. Some of the actions listed above may not be recognized as bullying when they are committed as random or reactive responses to conflict situations. While the two seem similar, there is actually a distinct difference. Bullying is a persistent pattern of unwelcome or aggressive behaviour that often involves an imbalance of power, and/or the intention to harm or humiliate someone, whereas conflict is generally a disagreement or difference in opinion between peers who typically have equal power in their relationship. When determining whether an action should be considered bullying, the students' age, maturity and special needs, if any, must also be taken into consideration. Responses to inappropriate behaviours related to conflict rather than bullying are covered in the school's Discipline Guidelines.

Sunrise Waldorf School takes bullying and harassment concerns very seriously. We are committed to thoroughly investigating and resolving all cases of bullying in a firm, judicious, and caring manner. All suspected cases of bullying will be looked into by the Head of School in cooperation with the relevant teachers. All inquiries will be conducted in a sensitive and confidential manner in consultation with the appropriate students, parents and staff, and parents will be notified when an investigation is instigated. Ensuring the safety and well-being of our students will be our first priority. Student and parent concerns regarding student safety will be taken very seriously and will be resolved as efficiently and fairly as possible. We will take all reasonable steps to prevent retaliation against a student or other party who has made a complaint of bullying or harassment.

Each member of the school community should share the responsibility of modeling respectful conduct regardless of perceived differences and should refuse to tolerate any form of discrimination. All members of the community shall have the individual and collective responsibility to identify and act upon unacceptable behaviour, including discriminatory attitudes and behaviours, and strive to eliminate systemic inequities or barriers. Any staff member who violates or does not follow this policy may also be subject to remedial or disciplinary action, up to and including termination. We ask all members of the school community to follow the following principles for working together to keep bullying out of our school:

- Refrain from bullying of any kind, for any reason
- Treat others with respect and kindness
- Include instead of exclude or ignore
- Intervene if it's safe, or tell someone who can
- Report inappropriate behaviour to a teacher, who must then report to the Head of School, or report directly to the Head of School

A bullying incident directly involves only a handful of students but there are typically other students who are indirectly involved as bystanders. Children who witness a bullying incident do not play a neutral role. Bystanders may actually encourage and perpetuate the bullying problem, either directly through actively joining in the bullying, or indirectly by not taking a stand against the bully. By failing to stand up to bullies, peer groups play a key role in locking bullies and victims into their respective roles. When bystanders take an active stand, bullying is often stopped. Sunrise Waldorf School encourages students to take a supportive stance when they witness bullying and/or to report immediately to their teacher.

Bullying and harassment behaviours will not be tolerated at school, at a school-related activity, or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school environment. Consequences will depend on the severity and frequency of the incident(s) and may include restorative and/or disciplinary actions.

Note: This policy includes language required by the Ministry of Inspection (Harassment and Bullying Prevention Order (Inspector's Order 1/16, effective 9/7/2016))