tarremah **steiner school**

Anti-Bullying Policy

Overview:

This policy aims to outline a whole school approach to bullying in the school environment, which provides effective and consistent responses and recognises the shared responsibility of us all to deal with it.

Background: At Tarremah 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. We believe effective responses to bullying are a shared responsibility and not an individual predicament.

♦ All teachers are firmly committed to minimizing acts of bullying.

♦ Guidelines are provided for students, teachers and parents on what to do in bullying situations.

♦ Targets of bullying will be supported. Everyone has a right to be free of bullying.

♦ 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 bullying 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 of which they are aware.

Terminology:

Definition of Bullying:

Bullying 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 put-down comments or insults;
- Name-calling;
- Damage to the person's property;
- Deliberate exclusion from activities;
- The setting-up of humiliating experiences.

Bullying behaviour 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.

Bullying 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

What is Not Bullying:

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.

Policy and Procedures:

Level 1- minor incident or first-time occurrence
The teacher is to use one or more of the anti-bullying practices (refer to the following section of this policy) and to inform the class teacher/guardian about the targeted student and the bullying student. The class teacher/guardian will meet with the students and keep informal written records. (Therefore class teachers/ guardians are aware of all incidents of bullying towards students in their class and can follow up on-going incidents reported by different teachers.)

Level 2 - Bullying behaviour continues or more severe incident occurs
Severe incidents require the completion of a Behaviour Report signed by the class teacher/ guardian and the Education Administrator. When two reports for the same behaviour have been issued, meetings are held with the class teacher/guardian, Education Administrator and School Chair and parents informed. Behaviour management or social/emotional support etc. will be discussed. Student may also be directed to attend sessions with the School Chaplain. Written reports will be placed in student's file. Copies made for class teacher/guardian and Education Administrator. Submission of a third behaviour report for the same behaviour requires a meeting with parents.

Level 3 – On-going bullying that is resistant to change
Discuss at Faculty Meeting to establish and further develop behaviour contracts and/or social emotional support etc. Written reports are placed in student's file. Copies made for class teacher/guardian and Education Administrator. Ensure on-going dialogue with parents. Student may also be directed to attend sessions with the School Chaplain.

Level 4 – Severe bullying behaviour that resists School efforts and poses a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing of other students, teachers or the learning environment
The School Chair may suspend or expel a student depending on the severity of the incident and may involve the police. Restorative Practice techniques may be employed in seeking a resolution.

Anti-bullying practices

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 of bullying. The following are not sequential steps but different options depending on severity of the incident.

Staff responding to Bullying (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 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.

<u>Staff responding to bullying (with bullying students)</u>

- If bullying 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/guardian, Education Administrator or School 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

<u>**Teachers:**</u>
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 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 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 issues in education, conduct child studies and support each other through mentoring.

Other avenues for countering bullying-
- 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 behaviour, 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/guardian
- 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 & Secondary)

<u>**Students:**</u>
In the course of their education at Tarremah, all students shall be involved in age-appropriate programmes and activities which include developing an awareness of what bullying behaviour is and the consequences of such behaviour and the development of strategies for dealing with bullying behaviour.

General
Students are involved in programmes 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 Programme
- Class 5 & 6 - Peer Leadership Programme/Camp and Buddy Programme, main lesson stories and activities, Outdoor Education Programme
- Class 7 to 10 - Health for Life Curriculum, Main Lessons (in particular Physiology & Birthing), Outdoor Education programme

Specific
If students observe or are involved in a bullying 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 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/guardian and discuss their concerns
- Encourage and support their child to use the options above
- Tell their own child that bullying behaviour is not acceptable
- Listen carefully to their child and respond calmly and positively.

Policy Title	Anti-Bullying Policy
Policies to be read in accordance with the above Policy:	Behaviour Management Policy Code of Conduct Parent Community Rights and Responsibilities Policy Grievance Policy
Approval Authority	School Executive – Wednesday 31 January 2018
	School Council - 14 November 2017
Review Status	Two years
Information & Contact	School Chair, Education Administrator, Executive