



St Joseph's Catholic School

Queenstown

ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

Rationale

Harassment is any repeated action, which hurts, injures, embarrasses, upsets or threatens someone else and takes away his/her rights. Harassment involves uninvited physical, verbal or psychological behaviour, which makes another person or group feel uncomfortable, intimidated, hurt or anxious.

St Joseph's Catholic School does not accept any form of harassment. It is a serious matter and immediate action will be taken if harassment occurs.

Inspired by our vision statement, our school supports and affirms each person's worth, dignity and vocation. Harassment prevents a person from being in a safe environment, where he/she can feel confidence in himself/herself and in all members of the school community.

Harassment affects everyone, not just the perpetrators and the complainants. Harassment also affects others who may witness violence, intimidation and the distress of the complainant.

Policy Guidelines

- A safe, secure environment will be provided for all members of the school community.
- Every effort will be made to counter the view that harassment is an inevitable part of school life.
- Every effort will be made to ensure a supportive climate prevails, wherein communication is open and honest across the entire community.
- A physical environment, which encourages positive behavioural patterns, will be a priority.

- A preventative approach to harassment, rather than a reactionary or crisis management approach, will be encouraged.
- An agreed set of procedures that treats the complainant, the harasser and the bystanders in a just way will be developed and implemented.
- The school reserves the right, or may be required, to report serious harassment to the appropriate authorities.

Application of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- Students at school, at school-related activities and functions, travelling to and from school and whilst in school uniform.
- Parents and visitors at school-related functions and whilst on the school site.
- All staff in exercising their normal duty of care to students and to colleagues.

Rights of Students at St Joseph's Catholic School

- Every student has the right to feel safe and comfortable at school.
- When a student feels threatened, he/she has the right to express his/her objection to the person who poses the threat and to insist that the person stops the harassment.
- If a person persists, the student has the right to report the matter to a teacher, and to receive an appropriate response, either directly through the teacher or through referral to a person who can respond effectively and appropriately.
- Every student has the right to make a complaint without fear of reprisal in any form. (Refer to St Joseph's Catholic School Grievance Policy and Procedures)
- Every student has the right to receive support from those who witness an incident of harassment, either by the witness' direct intervention or through his/her corroboration of the subsequent complaint.
- All instances of harassment must be reported to the Principal.

Responsibilities of Students at St Joseph's Catholic School

Students have the responsibility to:

- Treat others fairly and equitably.
- Make themselves aware of what harassment is.
- Report and/or support any person whom they believe is experiencing harassment, to the best of their capabilities and limitations.

Rights of Adults at St Joseph's Catholic School

Adults should be able to:

- Feel safe, secure and valued at the school.
- Be able to refer any specific matters to a member of the school community in whom they can trust.
- Be informed of their rights and responsibilities in regard to harassment.
- Have an objective, confidential resolution of any complaint. (See St Joseph's Catholic School Grievance Policy and Procedures)

Responsibilities of Adults at St Joseph's Catholic School

- Comply with the St Joseph's Catholic School Anti-Harassment Policy.
- Actively discourage harassment of any kind in all aspects of school life.
- Offer support to anyone who has been harassed and let the person know where he/she can obtain help.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.

Witnessing Harassment

When students or adults witness incidents, which involve harassment they have a responsibility to intervene to the best of their ability and with regard for their own safety to assist the person being harassed.

Intervention by an adult is to be undertaken with the view to halting the harassment. The adult must ensure the well-being of the person being harassed.

It must be made clear to any students witnessing harassment that, if they feel at all uncomfortable about intervening, they must call a teacher to act on their behalf.

Students and adults who witness incidents of harassment must report them to the Principal.

Response by the School to Harassment

- The school will educate all students about this policy within the curriculum.
- The school will utilise a Peer Support Program and Student Leadership Program to educate students in the effective management of harassment.
- The school will ensure that students are adequately supervised in all contexts to minimise opportunities for harassment to occur.
- The school will provide continuing support to those persons who have experienced any form of harassment.
- The school will ensure that members of staff always act as the best role models for students in their relationships with one another, with students and with parents.
- The school will maintain a register detailing reported incidents of harassment.
- It is important to note that people who harass others do so with varying degrees of intent and malice. It is therefore important to treat each incident of harassment separately and the school's response will be framed accordingly.
- Responses to harassment may include counselling, consequences and attempts to reconcile the parties involved. Where possible, students who harass others will be encouraged to empathise with the persons whom they have harassed. Stern measures will be taken against malicious or repeat offenders.

Some Approaches to Consider

- Report all incidents of harassment. Tell someone: teachers, friends, family or a trusted adult.
- It might be difficult for students to describe incidents of harassment. Encourage students to write down the details of the incident. If possible keep dates, times and persons involved.
- Treat all reported incidents of harassment seriously. There is nothing worse than being ignored.
- Discuss different ways of dealing with conflict in a non-aggressive way.
- Respect the right of every student/adult at St Joseph's Catholic School to feel happy, safe and secure.
- Be open-minded in approaches to resolving problems of harassment.
- Swift and appropriate action is likely to stop the problem from escalating.
- Choose to be part of the solution – not part of the problem. It's all right to tell.

This policy and procedures will be reviewed as part of St Joseph's Catholic School review cycle.

***Implemented 2003
Amended April 2005; revised August 2011***

APPENDICES TO THE ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

APPENDIX 1: FORMS OF HARASSMENT

PHYSICAL HARASSMENT

Fighting, pushing, shoving, negative gestures, invasion of personal space, and threats of a physical nature.

VERBAL HARASSMENT

Name-calling, offensive language, slander, putting people down, targeting people because of their race, sex, religion or ability, malicious rumours, threatening to harm.

VISUAL HARASSMENT

Offensive notes or offensive material, defacing others' possessions, inappropriate use of email, text messages or Internet.

VICTIMISATION

Demanding money, standover tactics, threats, taking or interfering with another person's possessions or property, repeated exclusion, setting up humiliating experiences.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexually orientated jokes, drawing or commenting about someone's body, touching or brushing against someone in a sexual manner, unwanted behaviours of a sexual nature, asking questions about one's private life.

APPENDIX 2: GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

Look for signs of distress in your child. Possible indicators:

- Unwillingness to attend school
- A pattern of headaches or stomach aches
- Equipment that has gone missing
- Request for extra money
- Damaged clothing or bruising
- A decline in school work
- Emotional outbursts/tears
- Inability to rest
- Change in appetite

If you think that your child is being harassed, discuss the situation with your child and inform the Principal or class teacher at your discretion. It is important to maintain the child's confidentiality, if desired.

Keep a written record if the harassment persists: who, what, when, where, why.

Advise your child to speak to a trusted teacher.

Assure your child that there is nothing wrong with him/her.

Do not encourage your child to hit back or to respond verbally.

Parents/guardians may be asked to join in a counselling session to resolve the situation.

Parents/guardians will be assisted by appropriate staff members to devise strategies to help the child, whether complainant or harasser.