



## DIAMOND SCHOOL

# STUDENT BULLYING & HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY

*As Amended September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020*

### **Purpose**

Diamond School (the “School”) is committed to providing a caring, friendly, safe and supportive environment for all students so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere, without feeling in any way intimidated by the behaviour of others. Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated and immediate action will follow any reported incident.

Bullying and harassment of any kind is never acceptable at Diamond, at any school-related activity, or in any other context where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the School environment. All students should feel a sense of collective duty to both prevent bullying and harassment and to respond accordingly if they are aware that bullying or harassment are going on in any of these contexts. Faculty and Staff have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying and harassment.

As a school we take bullying and harassment seriously. Students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying or harassment are reported.

### **Objectives of this Policy**

- All Faculty and Staff, students and parents should understand what bullying and harassment are.
- All Faculty and Staff should know what the School policy is on bullying and harassment, and follow it when bullying or harassment are reported.
- All students and parents should know what the School policy is on bullying and harassment, and what they should do if bullying or harassment arise.

This policy is intended to foster a safe, caring, orderly and inclusive School environment for all students. The School is committed to the protection of all students’ physical safety, social connectedness, inclusiveness and protection from all forms of bullying and harassment, regardless of their gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity. All individuals are to be treated fairly and with respect. All students are expected to act in a manner that brings credit to the School and shows consideration for one’s self, others and the School.

### **Student’s Right to be Free of Bullying and Harassment**

At Diamond School we believe that every student has the right to enjoy the education on offer without having to endure any form of bullying or harassment, including cyberbullying, intimidation, threatening or violent behaviours while at the School, at a School-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the School environment. Bullying and harassment are contrary to the values and ethos of the School and will not be tolerated.

**Bullying and harassment hurts. No-one deserves to be a victim of bullying or harassment. Students who bully need to learn to behave appropriately. All members of the School should take responsibility for supporting this seriously.**

### **What is Bullying and Harassment?**

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both children who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems. To be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include:



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- **An Imbalance of Power:** Children who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose, or otherwise interfering with their social connectedness. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

<b>Emotional</b>	excluding, tormenting
<b>Gender-related</b>	because of or focusing on the issue of sex, sexual orientation or gender identity
<b>Physical</b>	punching, kicking, hitting, pushing or any physical violence
<b>Racist/Cultural</b>	racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
<b>Sexual</b>	unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
<b>Verbal</b>	name-calling, sarcasm, spreading, rumours, teasing
<b>Cyber</b>	unpleasant contact using texting, social networking, e-mail
<b>Disability</b>	physical, emotional, academic, mental
<b>Religious</b>	creed, traditions, clothing etc.
<b>Special Educational Needs</b>	unpleasant reference to any SEN issues

Harassment includes any action or comment which is unwelcome or reasonably ought to have been known to be unwelcome by another and is offensive, hurtful, degrading or humiliating. All forms of harassment including emotional harassment, physical harassment and harassment against a student based on his or her gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any of the other bases described above are unacceptable and will not be tolerated by the School.

Whilst it is difficult to give one precise definition of bullying and harassment, we regard bullying to be any behaviour by an individual or group which is intended to make another student unhappy or miserable and which results in pain or distress being caused to the victim, whether socially, emotionally or physically. Harassment includes any action or comment which is unwelcome or reasonably ought to have been known to be unwelcome by another and is offensive, hurtful, degrading or humiliating. Bullying and harassment may be more than one specific incident or a sequence of more persistent incidents. It is our belief that all students should treat other students with dignity and respect always and that, in their behaviour towards others, they should always consider the effect this behaviour is likely to have.

Bullying and harassment can take many forms. These include the following:

- Verbal name calling, sarcasm, teasing, spreading rumours
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting or any other form of violence
- Emotional: being deliberately unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, threatening or intimidating
- Religious mocking: ridiculing or tormenting someone because of their religious beliefs.
- Sexual: unwanted sexual attention or sexually abusive comments.
- Gender-based, including gender-based bullying or harassment related to gender identity



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- Cultural mocking, humiliating or tormenting a student because of their nationality or background (e.g. their accent, manners or appearance).
- Homophobic: humiliating, ridiculing or tormenting because of their sexual orientation.
- Derogatory use of the word 'gay'.
- Racist: racial taunts, gestures or written comments
- Disability: making comments about obvious disabilities or in time about disabilities that become apparent, e.g. through learning difficulties.
- Cyberbullying as defined below.

### **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is defined as the use of information and communications technology (ICT), particularly email, mobile phones and the internet, to deliberately upset someone else. It can take many forms, including threats, intimidation, harassment or cyberstalking by, for example, repeatedly sending unwanted messages or texts.

Cyberbullying is prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by school if the act or acts in question:

- Create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- Infringe on the rights of the target at school, and or;
- Materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

### **Obligation to Report**

Bullying and harassment of any kind is unacceptable and all Faculty and Staff should seek always to confront bullying or harassing behaviour. If bullying or harassment does occur, all students should be able to report and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Diamond School is a reporting school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying or harassment is occurring, whether at the School, at any school-sponsored activities, or in any other context where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the School environment, or at functions or programs whether on or off school grounds, on school buses or other vehicles owned or used by the school, through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school, is expected to report this to Faculty and Staff.

Parents or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible. Students who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe acts of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviours are taking place should report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying.

Reports may be filed anonymously. However, disciplinary action cannot be taken solely based on an anonymous report. Anonymous reports will be investigated with the same procedure, timeliness and vigour as other reports and disciplinary action can occur based on results of investigation.



### **Why it is important to respond to bullying and harassment**

Bullying and harassment hurt. They can have severe, long-term, consequences for the victim. In extreme cases, they may even lead to suicide. Some types of bullying and harassment may also be classed as criminal behaviour which could result in prosecution. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying or harassment. Students who bully or harass others need to learn different ways of behaving. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. The School has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying and harassment.

Bullying and harassment can lead to psychological harm to the victim and although they may not be a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour that may apply.

### **Bystanders**

The School makes it clear to all students that bystanders have a key responsibility to the School community and to anyone they see being bullied or victimised. They are encouraged not to tolerate such behaviour and to stand up for what they know to be right, for example by telling a member of Faculty and Staff what they have seen or heard.

In cases of cyberbullying, bystanders or 'accessories' to the bullying often have a more active role, e.g. forwarding messages or contributing to chat room discussions. Therefore, even though they may not have started the bullying they are active participants and often make the matter worse.

### **Signs of Bullying/Harassment**

While some students may report bullying or harassment, others may, for a variety of reasons, be unable or unwilling to do so. In all cases, faculty, staff, and parents/guardians should be on the lookout for signs and symptoms of a student being bullied or harassed, which may include a student who:

- Becomes school phobic (unwilling to go to school) or skips school
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or loses confidence
- Becomes unusually aggressive or disruptive
- Changes their usual routine
- Is frightened of travelling to or from school
- Begins to perform poorly in schoolwork
- Has regular illnesses / regularly reports feeling unwell
- Is anxious to obtain money, steals money, or continually 'loses' pocket money
- Has possessions which are damaged or continually 'misplaced' or missing
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Has clothes, books, or possession that get torn or broken often
- Starts to bully or harass others, including siblings
- Attempts or threatens suicide
- Cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares
- Refuses to discuss what is wrong
- Seems afraid of or jumpy when answering a mobile phone or using the internet
- Offers implausible excuses for any of the above.

None of the above signs or symptoms are indicators of bullying or harassment on their own. It is important to investigate the root cause of any of the above signs or symptoms if any occur.



**How to respond to an incident of bullying or harassment:**

1. All disclosures will be treated confidentially. Retaliation against an individual who reports bullying or harassment, or who alleges a breach under this policy in good faith is strictly prohibited by the School, will be treated as severe bullying by the School, and will not be tolerated. The School will take all reasonable steps to prevent any form of retaliation against a student who has made a complaint of a breach of this policy, including appropriate disciplinary action.
2. Where the School becomes aware of a bullying or harassment incident, the School undertakes to respond appropriately. In all cases the aim of the response is to stop the bullying or harassment, to ensure that the instigator understands why his/her behaviour is unacceptable and to aim to prevent any reoccurrence. Whilst the precise response will depend on the specific circumstances, the following general guidelines will apply:
  - (a) All reported instances of bullying or harassment will be taken seriously. In deciding how to proceed in a case, the School will listen carefully to the victim and discuss with him/her the preferred course of action.
  - (b) It is important to stress that it is the perception of the victim and not the perpetrator that matters; perpetrators may pass off their behaviour as a joke, but it is not a joke if the victim does not feel the same.
  - (c) It is recognized that victims are often frightened to report bullying or harassment as they fear that the instigator will retaliate by escalating the nature of the bullying or harassing behaviour. The School recognizes this as typical of bullies and encourages students to be confident that the School will deal sensitively with any reported incident.
3. All incidents will be investigated and serious incidents will be recorded by Faculty and Staff. Where appropriate, parents will be informed and may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the incident.
4. Students who are found to have been bullying or harassing others will be encouraged to confront their behaviour and they will be offered help and guidance as to how to correct their behaviour, taking into consideration the student's age, maturity and any special needs, as may be applicable. The motivation for their behaviour should be considered. If possible, the students will be reconciled.
5. Since some forms of bullying and harassment can also constitute illegal acts, the School may contact, involve, and work with the Police to address bullying and harassment incidents.

Any student who *knowingly* makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action. Faculty/staff will take seriously and investigate all reports of bullying and harassment received.

Where bullying or harassment is persistent, appropriate sanctions will be applied, taking into consideration the student's age, maturity and any special needs, as may be applicable, and may including immediate suspension or expulsion from the School.



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### Guidance for Faculty and Staff

All Faculty and Staff should be prepared to listen to students when they wish to talk about bullying or harassing behaviour. It is crucial that students can trust Faculty and Staff to take their concerns seriously and to treat their concerns sensitively, regarding their right of privacy. All Faculty and Staff should moreover seek to regularly reinforce the School's anti-bullying and anti-harassment ethos.

Where Faculty and Staff observe bullying or harassing behaviour they should in the first instance confront the instigator and reinforce the School's attitude towards bullying and harassment. Faculty and Staff should confront any inappropriate behaviour, including teasing and name calling. Failure to do so may suggest to students that Faculty and Staff are giving their tacit approval to the behaviour.

Prior to notification of any parent or guardian regarding any incident of bullying, harassment or cyberbullying, the school must consider the issue of notification as they would any other educationally-relevant decision, considering the health, well-being, and safety of any students involved in the incident. The Principal or a designated administrator will also be responsible for investigating the allegation in a timely manner and determining appropriate disciplinary action. The Principal or a designated administrator will be doing everything possible, within reason, to resolve the situation.

### Investigations

All incidents or suspected incidents of bullying or harassment must be reported to the Principal right away. The Principal or a designated administrator will direct an investigation into the alleged incident(s) of bullying/harassment. The requirements of such investigation will include:

1. The investigation must be conducted by a neutral person(s) who is **free from bias** and free from the appearance of bias. The investigator must not have a personal stake in the outcome or pre-judge the parties in any way (including the appearance of having done so).
2. The investigation must be **fair and impartial**. This means that all parties will be given the opportunity to provide any relevant information to the investigator(s). In most cases, this will involve an interview with each of the victim and the alleged perpetrator(s), with the purpose of determining the facts of the situation. Any allegations made must be presented to the accused party so that the accused party may have a chance to respond to the allegations.
3. The investigation will be **thorough** so as to uncover all information necessary to make an informed decision as to any action to be taken. The investigator may seek relevant information from third parties or witnesses that are believed to have information that will contribute to the investigation.
4. The investigation should be conducted in a reasonably **timely** fashion and as soon as possible after it is reported or comes to the attention of a staff person. An accused party should be informed in a reasonably timely fashion of the consequences of their actions.
5. The investigation will be **documented** and notes kept of any in-person or phone conversations had in relation to the investigation. Copies of all written communication will be retained.
6. The investigator(s) of the complaint will act in accordance with the school **Privacy** Policies and ensure that discussion of only necessary information is discussed with only those parties who reasonably require it. This will include discussion with such Faculty and Staff who will need to be made aware of incidents to ensure effective monitoring of any ongoing situations.



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7. At the conclusion of the investigation, the investigator(s) will determine any discipline and remediation required. The specific consequences will be reasonable, fair, age appropriate and match the severity of the situation. Disciplinary actions for bullying and harassment may include, but are not limited to: warnings; counselling; loss of opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities, school social events and graduation activities; community service; in-school suspension; at-home suspension; or expulsion.
8. In very severe or extreme instances of alleged bullying/harassment where student safety is at risk, an immediate in-school or at-home suspension for the accused party may be required during the investigation.
9. If necessary, counselling will be provided for the target and/or the student perpetrating the bullying or harassment. If additional counselling is required beyond what the school is able to provide, the school will recommend an appropriate external counselling service. The cost is assumed by the student's family.
10. A party may appeal any disciplinary action to the school Administrative Committee. The Administrative Committee will review the appeal. If the party is still unsatisfied with the decision of the Administrative Committee, they may appeal that decision in writing to the Board of Directors. The decision of the Board of Directors is final and binding on all parties.

### **Preventative Strategies**

Preventing bullying and harassment is central to the School. Students and staff will be given instructions and training on how to prevent bullying and harassment.

A central bullying and harassment prevention strategy is to ensure that all Faculty and Staff act as models of appropriate behaviour at all times. Faculty and Staff should not misuse their positions of power in their dealings with students and with each other, and they should always treat all people, including students and other Faculty and Staff, with kindness and respect.

Everyone ought to be aware that bullying and harassment might take place anywhere but are more likely to occur in poorly supervised areas and during free time. Punctuality for all duties, including supervision, is therefore paramount to prevent instances of bullying/harassment.

The School undertakes to:

- Encourage appropriate behaviour always, ensuring students know what is expected of them
- Provide students with this policy and the Code of Conduct
- Include education intended to prevent bullying and harassment as an integral part of students' educational programs
- Raise awareness of bullying and harassment and regularly remind students of the nature of bullying and harassment and the need to ensure a culture of bullying and harassment prevention pervades all areas of School life, e.g. using assemblies, etc.
- Remind students of the role of bystanders in preventing bullying and harassment and emphasise that bystanders have a responsibility to intervene appropriately when they witness bullying or harassment.



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- Ensure that Faculty and Staff and others who are in positions of responsibility, are aware of the signs and symptoms of bullying and harassment, and of how to respond.
- As appropriate, invest in specialized skills and training to understand the needs of the students, including those with SEN or disabilities, and students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, Two-spirit, queer, or other LGBT2Q+ groups.
- Discuss the idea of 'different but equal' and not, for example, defining a student by their race, religion, disability or sexual orientation.

### Keys to Successfully Addressing Bullying and Harassment

- **Involve parents:** ensure that parents reinforce the School's messages and know that their concerns will be taken seriously.
- **Involve students:** all students must be clear of the School's approach and understand their role in preventing bullying and harassment.
- **Training of Faculty and Staff** to raise their awareness of bullying and harassment so that they may act to reduce the risk of it at times and in places where it is most likely.
- **Regularly evaluate** and update their approach. Consider technological advancements. Carry out student questionnaires.
- **Implement disciplinary sanctions** to ensure that students and parents see that the School takes the issue seriously.
- **Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying and harassment.**
- **Use specific organizations or resources for help with problems.**
- **Provide effective Faculty and Staff training.**
- **Work with the wider community** such as the police or children's services if appropriate.
- **Make it easy for students to report bullying and harassment** so they know they will be listened to and taken seriously, including incidents outside School.
- **Create an inclusive environment** where students and Faculty and Staff can openly discuss bullying and harassment without fear of mockery or retaliation.
- **Celebrate success** to help engender a positive School ethos.