



KATHERINE HIGH SCHOOL

DRAFT

ANTI-HARASSMENT AND ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Rationale

An anti-harassment and anti-bullying policy is regarded by most researchers as the first and most important step in dealing with harassment and bullying.

All staff and students have the right to feel safe and comfortable at school, to travel to and from school feeling safe and to teach and learn in an environment free from harassment. Students and staff have a responsibility to keep the learning environment safe for all and to show respect for others and for property.

Harassment and bullying detract from a safe and effective learning environment and have a detrimental effect on self-esteem. They are therefore forbidden under the terms of the *Katherine High School Student Code of Conduct*.

An anti-harassment and anti-bullying policy is designed to fulfil the school's obligations under the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act*, the *NT Anti-Discrimination Act* and the *Federal Racial Discrimination Act*. It also provides staff, students and parents with procedures to follow when dealing with harassment and bullying.

Assault is not allowed anywhere at school. If this occurs the school advises victims to press charges if they feel the need.

Policy Statement

Katherine High School is committed to the principles of social justice and to zero tolerance of harassment and bullying. This commitment requires the protection of the victims of harassment and bullying and the implementation of strategies to attempt to change and/or modify the behaviour of harassers and bullies.

Harassment is defined as any act or series of actions intended to or reasonably expected to cause harm, embarrassment or offence to another person. It is behaviour that is unwelcome and may be repeated. It may come from an individual or a group and from any member of the school community. Harassment is recognized as taking various forms: sexual harassment; racial, ethnic, cultural and/or religious discrimination; discrimination due to physical and/or intellectual abilities or difference; defamation, libel and/or slander; and electronic harassment.

• Sexual Harassment involves:

- unwelcome touching or brushing against a person
- whistling, gesturing, staring, leering and/or making comments that are sexually explicit and/or offensive
- telling offensive jokes and/or showing sexually explicit and/or offensive reading and/or visual matter
- making comments or asking questions about a person's sexuality
- deliberately excluding a person because of his/her gender or sexual orientation

- repeated requests to go out with someone (especially after prior refusal/s)
 - requests for sexual favours
 - sending obscene letters or making obscene phone calls
 - indecently exposing oneself to another person/s
 - sexually assaulting or raping another person
- **Racial, Ethnic, Cultural and/or Religious Discrimination involves:**
 - making degrading comments or gestures about a person's race, ethnicity, culture, religion and/or background
 - calling a person a name because of his/her race, ethnicity, culture, religion and/or background
 - telling offensive jokes or showing offensive material relating to a person's race, ethnicity, culture, religion and/or background
 - deliberately excluding a person because of his/her race, ethnicity, culture, religion and/or background
- **Harassment because of Physical and/or Intellectual Abilities or Difference involves:**
 - making degrading comments or gestures about a person's physical and/or intellectual abilities
 - calling a person names because of his/her physical and/or intellectual abilities
 - making jokes or showing offensive material relating to a person's physical and/or intellectual abilities
 - deliberately excluding a person because of his/her physical and/or intellectual abilities or difference
- **Defamation, Libel and/or Slander involves:**
 - spreading rumours about a person or a person's family
 - writing unpleasant notes to or about a person
 - writing graffiti about a person or group to which that person belongs
- **Electronic Harassment involves:**
 - using electronic software and technology in such a way that other people are harassed or offended by the information
 - 'flaming', hacking or passing on inappropriate messages regarding people or places
 - removing or changing information belonging to other users
- **Bullying includes:**
 - hiding, damaging, destroying or stealing another person's work or belongings
 - name-calling, using put-downs, teasing and/or pulling faces
 - deliberately excluding a person from a group
 - using abusive and/or threatening language
 - spitting, hitting, pushing, pinching, punching or threatening physical violence
 - any form of deliberate victimization
 - intimidation, extortion and/or forcing another person to act against his/her will
- **Katherine High School staff, students and parents/guardians should be aware that victims of harassment and bullying:**
 - seldom speak openly about their experiences - they drop hints or refer to their distress in an indirect way
 - may raise the subject once and if they get no response, recognition or alleviation of their distress from teachers or parents will not raise the subject again until forced by circumstance to do so

- often feel helplessness and come to expect no support and can see no end to their victimisation
- may lose interest and enthusiasm for school and allow their school performance to deteriorate
- may request that parents drive them to school or collect them even though the school is within walking distance from home
- may have repeated damage to their personal property or report loss of same
- may be ill tempered and be reluctant to explain why
- may exhibit unexplained changes of mood - often before the restart of school at the end of the weekend or at the end of holidays
- may exhibit unexplained cuts or bruises
- may report frequent minor illnesses especially headaches and stomach aches
- may make increased requests for money – and refusal may provoke angry outbursts

Responsibilities of Parties

- **Katherine High School**

Katherine High School will ensure ongoing proactive whole school programs to promote the school's anti-harassment and anti-bullying policy.

Proactive whole school programs will include:

- in-servicing staff, students and parents/guardians of the anti-harassment and anti-bullying policy
- facilitating curricular and extra-curricular activities which highlight the school's cultural, social, racial, ethnic, gender and intellectual diversity
- teaching and using non-violent approaches to solving conflict
- continuing support for special interest groups
- delivering anti-harassment and anti-bullying curriculum units at various year levels
- supporting a "Peer Skills" program for students

- **Appoint a Wellbeing Committee each year.**

The **Wellbeing Committee** will:

- issue an Anti-Harassment leaflet to all students new to the school
- regularly publicise and promote the school's policy amongst students, staff and parents e.g. at assemblies and in newsletter articles
- be a contact point for students and staff who feel they are being harassed
- offer support and advice in a positive and non-threatening atmosphere
- determine what outcome a complainant wants and advise on options available
- maintain confidentiality (except in the case of Mandatory Reporting)
- liaise with the appropriate senior staff member/s on behalf of the complainant
- keep records (without names) for statistical reporting to DET
- NB: It is not the role of the Wellbeing Committee to discipline offenders but to support the victims of harassment.

- **Investigate and deal with all complaints of harassment found to be justified.**

Where any report of harassment and bullying is received by a staff member the relevant Student Coordinator and/or the Assistant Principal Wellbeing will instigate a *Harassment Alert* notice to all relevant staff. The *Harassment Alert* outlines the complaint and requires staff members to closely monitor the reported situation and to advise the Assistant Principal Wellbeing and/or relevant Student Coordinator/s of any issues. If any issues are reported as a result of the *Harassment Alert* the relevant Student Coordinator and/or the

Assistant Principal Wellbeing will discuss those issues with the student and attempt to modify the unacceptable behaviour.

Where a further complaint or teacher's report is received the relevant Student Coordinator and/or the Assistant Principal Wellbeing will investigate within 24 hours where practicable and apply the restorative justice grievance procedures outlined below.

1. Victim and offender are interviewed separately to get both perspectives.
 2. Mediation – where it appears that mediation would be effective.
 3. If an agreement is reached between the two parties (that includes an apology from the harasser and a promise to stop the behaviour) the matter ends. A record of the report and the mediation will be kept by the Student Coordinator.
 4. If the harasser denies the behaviour or repeats it after mediation the Student Coordinator and/or the Assistant Principal will investigate further interviewing witnesses. All proceedings will be documented.
 5. If harassment and bullying is proven a parent interview will be conducted and the harasser will be punished with internal or external suspension. All proceedings will be documented.
 6. If the harassment and bullying is deemed criminal the Assistant Principal will contact the School Based Police Officer (NB: legal action and/or putting the matter before the Anti-Discrimination Commission are available to victims of harassment at any time).
 7. Mischievous complaints will be dealt with by the school as defamation.
- **Protect complainants and/or witnesses from victimization.**
Incidents of victimisation are treated seriously through the discipline procedures of the school and may result in internal or external suspensions.
 - **Support the victim/s of harassment and bullying.**
Support for the victim/s of harassment and bullying will involve protection, reassurance and awareness building in the short term, and empowerment of the individual in the longer term. The school will facilitate counselling for empowerment strategies as requested.
 - **Address the behaviour of the harasser and bully in an effort to eliminate his/her harassment and bullying behaviour.**
Strategies for the harasser/bully may include building awareness, setting boundaries and the application of grievance procedures. Harassment and bullying behaviour may result in internal or external suspensions.
 - **All Teachers will:**
 - implement the school's anti-harassment and anti-bullying policy
 - set the appropriate example for students
 - require that all students refrain from harassing and bullying behaviour at all times
 - deal immediately with any harassment and bullying situation in class or in the playground in order to protect all parties
 - report any complaint from a student that s/he is being harassed and/or bullied
 - monitor closely any *Harassment Alert* situation and report any issues immediately
 - **All Students are required to:**
 - abide by the school's anti-harassment and anti-bullying policy

- practise safe and/or protective behaviours
- inform harassers and bullies that their actions are unwanted (with the support of a friend if needed)
- report any instances of harassment and/or bullying to the Harassment Contact Officer or any other staff member
- **Parents/guardians should:**
 - support your child (one of the most upsetting aspects of harassment and bullying is that the victim is innocent and that there is no obvious reason why they should become the object of harassment and bullying)
 - get as full a picture as you can from your child and make a written record of names, incidents, dates and times where possible
 - contact the school – a member of the **Wellbeing Committee** will listen to your grievance and take action as quickly and expeditiously as possible taking the wishes of you and your child into account
 - provide for some help for your child in developing strategies for dealing with aggressive behaviour in consultation with the school if you are unsure of the services available
 - contact the school to ensure that you are kept informed of all procedures, investigations and counselling of your child

Reported Bullying /Harassment Information and Action Flowchart 2009

