



## **Anti Bullying Policy**

The Armidale Waldorf School does not tolerate any behaviour which can be considered to be of a bullying, harassing, cyber-bullying or violent nature.

All staff at the Armidale Waldorf School are responsible for identifying bullying, violent or harassing behaviours and to report any incidents to the Education Director. Students and their parents are encouraged to report bullying, harassment and violence to the Education Director, so that appropriate support can be provided. Parents and carers will be informed via The Armidale Waldorf School website and parent handbooks about the existing policy.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to employees, students and volunteers on the Armidale Waldorf School site or the same when attending The Armidale Waldorf School related events off site including bus travel.

The teachers and Education Director will inform the Armidale Waldorf School community on methods of resilience, positivity and conflict management, whether within the Armidale Waldorf School curriculum or within general information sessions given to students/staff/parents.

### **Definitions**

#### **Bullying**

A product of social dynamics which can be defined as the repeated negative actions by individuals or groups against a targeted individual or group, which involves an imbalance of power.

Bullying can take different forms – verbal, physical, social, cyber or psychological. Actions can be observable or hidden.

Bullying includes the use of electronic technology in any form, such as misuse of mobile phone messaging or camera facility, or misuse of e-communication systems such as Facebook, Twitter, or inappropriate emails to bully another person, also referred to as cyber bullying. This is not a comprehensive list of examples.

Any behaviour perceived by any student to be threatening, worrying, of concern or unpleasant may be classed as bullying and needs to be addressed.

## **Cyber Bullying**

Cyber bullying is when one student is targeted by another through the use of digital technology, mobile communication devices or through the internet. The aim of this targeting may be harassment, stalking, threats or other forms of harmful behaviour.

Cyber bullying takes many forms and may involve the use of websites, mobile phones, chat rooms, email, SMS and the uploading of pictures or video. It could involve the sending of threatening messages, communicating false pretences, forwarding of other students' private communication, establishment of websites designed to humiliate or the posting of humiliating messages or pictures.

In general the school views cyber bullying in the same way it views other types of bullying and students and parents who are aware of, or have been victims of cyber bullying are encouraged to report the incidents to teachers or class guardians. TAWS's electronic equipment policy forbids the use of phones at school and in school supervised areas. Adherence to this rule helps to limit opportunities for cyber bullying.

## **Harassment**

Negative behaviour intended to annoy or trouble another individual, which may be based on obvious differences such as gender, race, religious or cultural beliefs, physical difference, sexual orientation, ability or disability and socio- economic status. It may be a one off incident between individuals or groups or may continue over time.

## **Violence and Aggression**

Incidents where a person is intimidated, abused, threatened, physically assaulted or where property is deliberately damaged by another person.

It is an extreme use of force often resulting in injury or destruction. Violence does not necessarily involve an imbalance of power.

Situations of violence in different forms require that the parties involved seek resolution to restore a healthy communication process. Refer to restorative justice process (Attachment B) in the *Behaviour Management Policy*.

The Armidale Waldorf School will seek to restore a situation with fairness, by seeking to understand the roles and triggers of each party involved.

Aggressive meaning any of the above definitions of behaviour.

## **Conflict**

A disagreement where the needs of one or both parties are not being met. It does not necessarily involve an abuse of power, even if parties do not have perceived equal power.

Conflict is a disagreement through which the parties involved have a threat or perceived threat to their needs, interests and concerns.

## **Advice for Students and Parents**

Cyber bullying can have traumatic effects on students and it can occur in or out of school time. Students who are targeted in this way often feel powerless and isolated. Listed below are some strategies to help protect students from cyber bullying.

### **Strategies for Students**

- Talk to a parent, friend, teacher or Education Director about the bullying.
- Keep and save as evidence any bullying emails, text messages or images.
- Do not reply to bullying or threatening text messages or emails - do not engage in any communication with the sender(s) as this could make matters worse.
- Do not give out your personal details online - if you are in a chatroom, watch what you say about where you live, the school you go to, your email address etc.
- Remember the tone and meaning of written messages can be misinterpreted.
- Check that your messages are clear and respectful.
- Use blocking software to block messages from certain senders or use mail filters to block emails from specific email addresses.
- Remember that sending/forwarding abusive or threatening messages is inappropriate and could be deemed unlawful under State and/or Federal legislation depending on the circumstances.

### **Strategies for Parents**

There are a number of things you can do to help ensure your child stays safe when using Internet or phone services:

- Talk to your child about bullying and harassment.
- Talk to your child's teacher or the Education Director about your concerns.
- Educate your child about Internet safety and the proper etiquette when using Internet or phone services.
- Keep your eyes out for behavioural changes that may indicate your child is being bullied, harassed, victimized or vilified, as you may be able to intervene.
- Encourage your child to report any incidents of cyberbullying to you.
- Limit computer use for younger children (refer to section on electronic media)
- Stay involved - have the home computer in a public space (not in the child's bedroom) and monitor your child's Internet habits
- Make sure your home computer is protected with security software

## Procedures

1. Parents and Students are to report any incidents of bullying to their Class Teacher or directly to the Education Director.
2. Staff are to report any incidents via an *Incident Report* of bullying that has come via Parents/Students or their own observations directly to the Education Director.

If bullying behaviour is reported, the Education Director will work with students, staff, parents and other individuals involved to offer a safe and restorative response using the following procedures;

1. Preliminary interview(s) will be conducted to ascertain the specific nature of the bullying. These interviews should be with individuals initially (ie students being bullied, students witnessing bullying, student engaging in bullying behaviours, staff etc)
2. The initial interviews should focus on the safety of individuals. This should include:
  - a clear statement on the consequences if the bullying continues or if there are any reprisals as a result of the reporting of the incident.
  - immediate preventative actions that will be implemented to avoid further incidents.
3. The Education Director decides as to the level of severity of the incident and whether the parents of those involved need to be informed.
4. The Education Director will then use the Behaviour Management Procedures and if appropriate the student will be placed on a *Behaviour Contract*. This Plan will specifically identify the inappropriate behaviours, name the replacement behaviours, outline strategies to support the replacement behaviours and reinforcers (both negative and positive) when behaviours occur.
5. A record of the separate interviews will be kept in the *Behaviour Management Folder*. A Behaviour Report will be recorded on school pro and copy of the *Behaviour Contract* will be also filed in the Student's File.
6. Regular monitoring and follow up with the students involved is necessary by the Education Director.
7. Any further recurrence of bullying may result in higher levels of behaviour management as per the *Behaviour Management Procedures* which could include but not limited to suspension and expulsion.
8. The following support services are also available to the school community via the Education Director. The School Liaison Police Officer and Youth Officer is Fiona McCormack and can be contacted on 6771 0699 or [mcco1fio@police.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mcco1fio@police.nsw.gov.au).