

Harassment and Bullying Prevention Policy

PURPOSE

Studio9 is committed to providing a safe, caring and orderly educational environment. The purpose of this policy is to provide for the protection of 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.

This policy applies to all students while they are on school property, at school-related activities and in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the environment of Studio9.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

- Bullying is any type of *repeated* behaviour, intentional or unintentional that causes a person to experience physical hurt or emotional pain.
- Bullying involves the abuse of power in relationships and can involve all forms of harassment, humiliation, domination and intimidation of others. Note that bullying includes both overt and covert behaviours.
- Bullying and various forms of intimidation are unacceptable behaviour and will be taken seriously. All forms of bullying are considered serious as it can damage self-esteem and form a barrier to effective teaching and learning.

Studio9 is committed to ensuring that all staff and students are able to work and learn in a safe environment, free from harassment and bullying. Our aim is to reduce bullying across the school and to ensure recognized procedures and strategies are implemented so that they work towards eliminating bullying, violence and unmanaged anger.

Bullying always involves some or all of the following:

- A desire to hurt
- A hurtful action
- A power imbalance
- Repetition
- An unjust use of power
- A sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim

Without limiting the preceding definitions, bullying may take any of the following forms:

1. Intimidation/Violence: This is any threat, verbal or physical action that frightens another. It includes:
 - a. Physical: hitting, pushing and shoving, hair pulling
 - b. Psychological: Verbal – insults, name calling, teasing, and threatening
 - c. Nonverbal – nasty body language, offensive gestures
 - d. Indirect: rumour-spreading, hurtful gossip, exclusion, social manipulation

2. Racial harassment: This is behaviour of an offensive nature towards another which occurs by reason of the race, colour, ethnic or national origin of the other.

3. Gender harassment: This is behaviour of an offensive nature towards another which occurs by reason of the biological gender or chosen gender affiliation of an individual.

4. Sexual orientation harassment: This is behaviour of an offensive nature towards another which occurs by reason of the sexual orientation of the individual.

5. Sexual harassment or abuse: This behaviour which is construed by the recipient as unwelcome or offensive and is either repeated or of a significant nature:

- a. use of words (either written or spoken) of a sexual nature
- b. physical behaviour of a sexual nature

6. Cyber Bullying: Includes the use of electronic media to slander, defame, spread rumours, tease, provide unwanted attention, harass and cause discomfort. Often there is potential for such electronic communication to be spread widely, and a permanent record of the bullying is likely to exist. Under certain circumstances (such as harassment and making threats) cyber bullying is a criminal activity and is illegal. Studio9 is committed to providing everyone in our school with a working and learning environment free from bullying and harassment. The school will provide an environment where the physical, emotional, and educational health and well-being of students are fostered above all else.

PROCEDURES

Bullying and harassment are not only school disciplinary matters but are illegal under Canadian law. So is victimization/retaliation of those who report bullying.

Bullying and harassment can occur wherever people work or play together. Sometimes people do not realize that their behaviour can be harmful and unfair to others, and is also against the law. In all cases of bullying:

1. Every effort will be made to support students who experience bullying.
2. Every effort will be made to work with the student who is bullying so that the student may learn from the experience and will ensure that the behaviour is not repeated.

The school acknowledges that bullying and harassment can occur and students will be encouraged to report each incident to the school and their parents.

Students alerting adults to acts of bullying will be protected from victimization/retaliation. The school will take all reasonable steps to prevent retaliation by a person against a student who has made a complaint of a breach of this policy. All parties involved in a complaint of bullying will be treated fairly with the complaint resolved as quickly as possible. The parents/guardians of students involved will be contacted and informed of the incident. Monitoring and follow-up will take place to ensure the bullying ceases.

Methods Used in the School to Address Bullying:

1. If bullying is found to have taken place, a teacher/principal will talk with the child/ children involved either separately or as a group. Specific (and sometimes very detailed) questioning about any background or history to the incident may be asked. These include questions about previous incidents or the relationship with the alleged bully and whether any possible provocation or misunderstanding has occurred.
2. The person who claims to have been bullied will be interviewed and may be asked to give an account of the problem orally or in writing. As soon as possible the accused person will be seen and informed of the allegation. The person will provide his or her version of the events. Specifically, he or she will be asked to comment on whether the allegation is true. Other relevant questions may also be asked.
3. If it is clear that bullying or harassment has occurred, the principal will inform the parents and teachers of students involved, informing them of the details of the incident and what the process has been up to that point. This will be saved and filed for future reference, if needed.
4. The students involved will be advised of the findings.
5. The person accused will be taken through the events and the inappropriateness of harassing behaviour will be fully explained. Responses, such as "I was only joking" or "He's too sensitive" and the like will be explained as unacceptable. The expected future behaviour and consequences of failing to follow expected positive behaviour will be outlined.
6. Conflict resolution with both parties and the principal will occur, with students resolving and issues and clear outlines of appropriate interaction will be discussed.
7. Teachers of the student involved in the harassment watch closely to determine whether the bullying behaviour has ceased.
8. If the bullying behaviour does not recur, the matter will end.

REPEAT BEHAVIOUR

Upon a second incident of bullying/harassment committed by a student, parents/ guardians of the student will be requested to attend a meeting with the principal regarding their child's behaviour. At this meeting the parents will be informed that, should this behaviour continue, the potential consequence is suspension from the school and that a third repetition will result the student being asked to leave Studio9

permanently. Incidences of behaviour will be documented and contained in the student's file.