

# Prevention and Management of Harassment and Bullying

## Artemis Place Society

### February 2023

**RATIONALE:** Harassment and bullying have a negative impact on the learning environment and can leave individuals with long-lasting scars. Artemis Place Society takes an intentional position in addressing all forms of harassment, intimidation, and violence. The safety and wellbeing of our students is of paramount consideration. We value and respect each other. This value allows students, staff, and society members to feel safe, to develop a sense of belonging, to forge friendships with peers, and maintain respectful relationships. This sense of community enables learners, counsellors, support staff and teachers to thrive. People deserve to be protected from abuse, neglect, bullying, harm, or threat of harm. Therefore, Artemis Place will ensure students at the school enjoy a safe, caring, and orderly learning environment where each person feels safe, accepted, and respected.

**POLICY:** Artemis Place Society expects all students, staff, and other members of Artemis to be treated with respect and courtesy, in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Artemis will continuously develop strategies to make students feel valued, respected, and connected within our school community. This will include the protection of the students' physical safety, social connectedness, inclusiveness as well as protection from all forms of bullying, regardless of their gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity and expression. Any incident of harassment or bullying that comes to the attention of staff or administration will be actively addressed, with the intent of pursuing healing and justice and a restoration of positive relationships among all members of the school community. Artemis 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.

#### **PROCEDURES:**

**Purpose:** Our policy models a respectful environment that prevents harassment and bullying from occurring and, if it occurs, promotes healing and justice for all parties involved.

**Awareness:** There are many underlying causes of bullying. Harassment and bullying can be blunt or subtle and may continue undetected by anyone other than the victim/target. Myths about harassment and bullying often make it difficult to address the underlying issue. Our staff are leaders who nurture and model a school climate that fosters community, prevents harassment and bullying, and works for forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation should harassment or bullying occur.

- ✚ Each teacher will follow the principles of restorative practice.
- ✚ Staff shall make students aware that they can safely (and confidentially) communicate complaints about harassment and bullying (and any other matter) to any staff member and that they will be protected from retribution.

All people who work and study at Artemis will:

- ✚ be cooperative, courteous, and respectful in dealings with school staff, other students, and school guests.
- ✚ respect the rights of others.

- ✚ demonstrate the highest standards of conduct, personal responsibility, and good judgment when involved in school sponsored events.
- ✚ act as responsible members of the school neighbourhood by being courteous to people in the area and respecting their property.
- ✚ adhere to this Code of Conduct while traveling to and from school and while off the school premises during the lunch hour and at other times during the school day.

Unacceptable Conduct: A student who attends Artemis will not, while at school, at a school-related activity, or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school environment, do any of the following: bully, harass, or intimidate, be racially, ethnically, or sexually prejudiced, engage in cyberbullying, intimidate or threaten, be physically aggressive, engage in violent actions, seek retribution against a person who has reported incidents.

**Intervention:** Staff may exercise their judgment to choose, depending on circumstances, whether to start intervention at Stage 1, or to go directly to Stage 2 or Stage 3 (see below for description of stages).

Stage 1 In this stage, the issue is addressed by the parties and the first staff member that is aware of a problem.

- ✚ Staff shall, where appropriate, encourage and support students to work out issues among themselves with guidance in conflict resolution techniques.
- ✚ Staff may inform parents/caregivers of student(s) involved.
- ✚ Staff shall maintain confidentiality.
- ✚ If the staff's guidance does not resolve the difficulty, the staff shall report the matter to one of the Directors.

Stage 2 In this stage, the issue is addressed with the involvement of one of the Directors.

- ✚ The Director shall investigate *every complaint or staff report* about harassment or bullying. One of the Directors shall interview participants and witnesses, and review evidence, as necessary.
- ✚ The Director shall assess if the harm is harassment, bullying, or child abuse. In the case of child abuse, Director will follow the *Child Abuse Policy – Reporting Child Abuse in British Columbia*.
- ✚ The Director shall consider informing parents/caregivers of student(s) involved; should one of the Directors elect to involve the parents/caregivers, one of the Directors will involve them early in the discussion.
- ✚ The Director shall lead a reconciliation process.
- ✚ The Director shall document these events in summary form, including names, times, and methods of communication, and retain a copy of the summary in administrative files.

Stage 3 In this stage, the issue is addressed with a formal plan and may involve authorities outside the school. One of the Directors shall take the following action:

- ✚ Notify student(s) and parents/caregivers involved and the Board of Directors of Artemis Place Society that action will be taken.
- ✚ Assess the need to refer to the appropriate authorities.
- ✚ Ensure that a formal plan is prepared to address healing for the victim/target and accountability for the harasser/bully. The plan shall include specific accountabilities for monitoring and follow-up.
- ✚ Ensure that all steps in the plan are implemented in a timely manner.

- ✚ Document these events in summary form, including names, times, and methods of communication, and retain a copy of the summary in the administrative files. Process and Timelines To enable timely responses to issues as they arise, the Director may delegate his/her authority under this policy to another teacher or the Board (if no other teacher is available) for periods when one of the Directors is unavailable. Time is of the essence in dealing with harassment/bullying, since the victim/target may continue to be subject to harassment/bullying while the interventions and planning are under way.

Stages 1 and 2: Proceed in a timely manner at the discretion of staff and Directors. Stage 3: Once the Director determines the matter requires a Stage 3 response, a plan shall be completed within 5 working days.

**DEFINITIONS:** The following definitions are intended to enhance understanding of this policy. They are descriptive only and not intended to be used for any legal actions.

**Abuse:** As defined in the Child Protection Policy.

**Bullying:** The most widely accepted definition of bullying comes from the work of leading Norwegian researcher, Dr. Dan Olweus: "Bullying...is a pattern of repeated aggressive behaviour, with negative intent, directed from one child to another where there is a power imbalance." This aggressive behaviour includes physical or verbal behaviour and is an intentional and purposeful act meant to inflict injury or discomfort on the other person. Olweus' definition identifies three critical conditions that distinguish bullying from other forms of aggressive behaviours, including:

- ✚ Power: Children who bully acquire their power through physical size and strength, by status within the peer group, and by recruiting support of the peer group.
- ✚ Frequency: Bullying is not a random act. Rather, bullying is characterized by frequent and repeated attacks. It is this factor that brings about the anticipatory terror in the mind of the child being bullied that can be so detrimental and have the most debilitating long-term effects.
- ✚ Intent to harm: Children who bully generally do so with the intent to harm the other child physically, emotionally, or both. Bullying can start out in seemingly playful ways, consisting of pranks, jokes, and some "roughhousing." The incidents soon become more hurtful, degenerating into name-calling, ridicule, personal attacks, and public embarrassment). Verbal aggression consists of verbal taunts or open and overt behaviour, and takes the form of teasing, criticism, gossiping, spreading malicious rumours. threatening to withdraw friendship, social isolation, or exclusion from the group. See outlines below of various forms bullying can take. Please note that this information is not exhaustive.

When determining whether a specific behaviour is bullying, consider whether it:

- ✚ ● is repeated over time
- ✚ ● is intended to hurt
- ✚ ● involves a power imbalance.

Adapted from the Ministry of Education programs, Focus on Bullying (1998) and Focus on Harassment and Intimidation: Responding to Bullying in Secondary Schools (2001).

**Discrimination** is unequal or unfair treatment based on one or more of the prohibited grounds enumerated in the BC Human Rights Code: race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age of that person. Discrimination includes racial slurs, imitation of accent, put downs about cultural differences, gender harassment, and insults about appearances (e.g., weight, glasses, hair colour).

**Harassment** includes, but is not limited to, such behaviour that has the purpose or effect of offending or demeaning an individual or group of individuals on the basis of race, colour, size, ancestry, place of origin, nationality, religion, family status, physical or mental ability, age, gender, or sexual orientation. A student is bullied and harassed when someone takes an action that he or she knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that student to be humiliated or intimidated. Harassment can be a single incident or a series of incidents. Bullying is usually a series of such incidents. The unwelcome comment or conduct does not have to be directed at a specific person for harassment to occur. Bullying is usually directed at a particular individual. Comments or conduct that tend to ridicule or disparage a group may give rise to an offensive environment and thus to harassment. When it includes an individual who is targeted, then it can be bullying.

**Intimidation** includes, but is not limited to, stealing, extortion, prank, dares (e.g., a public challenge), bribery, threats, locking in a confined space, swarming, stalking, anonymous phone calls, gossip, and breaking confidence. Non-verbal Body Language (inappropriate) Inappropriate non-verbal body language includes, but is not limited to, glaring, snickering, gestures, ignoring (silent treatment), shunning, confining, surrounding, blocking, and unwelcome physical contact such as inappropriate touching or patting.

**Physical Aggression** includes, but is not limited to, spitting, pushing, tripping, hitting, shoving, kicking, hair pulling, hiding personal possessions (e.g., lunch), damaging property, attacking family or friends, coercion, intimidation, threatening with a weapon, defacing property, and stealing.

**Social Isolation and Alienation** includes, but is not limited to, shunning; excluding from a group; public humiliation; undermining; embarrassing gossip; setting up a student to look foolish; spreading rumours; inciting hatred; racist, sexist or homophobic alienation; setting up someone to take the blame; and display of pornographic, racist, or other offensive or derogatory material. Staff Any individual who is employed by the EES, including an independent contractor who has entered into an agreement with the Society.

**Verbal Aggression** includes, but is not limited to, inappropriate teasing; name calling; offensive remarks, inappropriate jokes or innuendo; mocking; sarcasm; putdowns; whistling/catcalls; leaving nasty or threatening notes; threatening or intimidating phone calls; giving dirty looks; racist or sexist taunting; daring another to do something dangerous; verbal threats against property; verbal threats of violence or inflicting bodily harm; coercion; and extortion. Verbal aggression can occur in all forms of communication including, but not limited to, mail, e-mail, text messages, social media platforms, shared documents (e.g., Google Drive files), fax, voice mail, notes, or yearbook journaling.