



A SAFE LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

Trinity Grammar School is committed to providing all members of the Trinity community with a learning and working environment which is safe, supportive and caring and which is free of harassment and discrimination of any kind. Accordingly, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated under any circumstances. The School expects everyone who is part of the School community – boys, parents and staff – to honour the School's commitment in this regard and to work with the School in achieving a safe learning and working environment.

DEFINITIONS

Harassment includes bullying and sexual harassment. It involves physical, verbal or psychological behaviour which makes another person feel embarrassed, offended, upset, devalued, degraded, afraid, frustrated or angry. **Bullying** is a form of harassment which involves **repeated** intimidation, over time, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of people. **Sexual harassment** refers to unwelcome contact or advances of a sexual nature.

Examples of harassment include:

1. hiding, damaging, destroying or stealing work or belongings;
2. name calling, putting a person down, teasing, pulling faces, using abusive language;
3. hitting, pushing, pinching or threatening physically;
4. deliberately excluding a person from the group;
5. insulting, demeaning, humiliating, offensive, vilifying or intimidatory behaviour or behaviour which incites hatred;
6. making comments about a person's sexuality;
7. showing material of a sexual nature;
8. whistling, gesturing or making comments that are sexually explicit and offensive;
9. behaviour which is unwelcome, unreciprocated, uninvited and usually repeated.

Discrimination refers to any behaviour or practice which reflects an assumption of superiority of one group over another and is behaviour which disadvantages people on the basis of their real or perceived membership of a particular group. Examples include doing any of the following on account of a person's gender, religion, intellectual or physical ability, culture, age, race or background:

1. asking discriminatory questions;
2. making offensive comments or gestures, telling offensive jokes or showing offensive material;
3. calling a person names;
4. deliberately excluding a person.

CREATING A SAFE COMMUNITY

The School is committed to implementing strategies which create a safe learning and working environment and reduce, as much as possible, the incidence of harassment and discrimination within the School. Our aim is to create an environment of understanding and co-operation in which, if harassment or discrimination does occur, the victim will feel empowered to seek help and, through collaboration with staff and others, confront the influence of the perpetrator(s). Anti-social behaviour of any kind is unacceptable within the School community.

The School provides proactive measures such as the annual Gatehouse Survey, 'E-Care' email system, Life Skills Programme, presentations and workshops, confidential surveys, active grounds supervision, peer mentoring through the House system, and regular individual interviews with boys by Housemasters, Middle School Housemasters and other Senior Staff. The School aims to ensure that the curriculum and teaching practices are consistent with helping students to develop the ability to challenge anti-social attitudes and behaviours in themselves and others. Students are educated to respect the rights of others to be free from harassment and discrimination.

CYBER SAFETY

Trinity places a high priority on the provision of Internet facilities and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) equipment which will benefit student learning outcomes, and the effective operation of the School. However, the School recognises that the presence in the learning environment of these technologies can also facilitate anti-social, inappropriate, and illegal material and activities. The School by its practices and procedures aims to maximise the benefits of these technologies, while at the same time to minimise and manage the risks. Trinity has in place rigorous and effective school wide cyber safety practices which are directed and guided by the School's Cyber Safety Policy. A copy of this Policy is located on the School's intranet. The various cyber safety practices that the School employs aim to maintain a cyber safe school environment and to address the needs of students to receive education about the safe and responsible use of present and developing information and communication technologies.

The Information and Communication Technology Student Acceptable Use Policy sets out clearly the expectations that the School has for the use of ICT resources by students at School and out of School. Each parent is asked to sign the Information and Communication Technology Student Acceptable Use Policy when their sons are enrolled in the School and the boys are expected to agree to and to sign a copy of this Policy from Year 3. A copy of this Policy is located on the School's intranet.

CYBERBULLYING

Neither the Trinity Grammar School network nor the broader Internet (whether accessed on campus or off campus, either during or after School hours) may be used for the purpose of harassment. All forms of harassment in cyberspace, often called cyberbullying, are unacceptable.

Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening or terrorizing another person by sending or posting inappropriate and hurtful email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or Web site postings (including blogs). Often the author (sender or poster) of the inappropriate material is disguised (logged on) as someone else.

Members of the Trinity Grammar School community who feel that they have been the victims of such misuses of technology should not erase the offending material from the system. They should print a copy of the material and immediately report the incident to the Senior Master, Master of the Middle, Senior, Junior or Preparatory Schools or a School Psychologist. All reports of harassment in cyberspace will be investigated fully. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, the loss of computer privileges, detention, suspension, separation or expulsion from School. Further, it should be noted that, in some cases, forms of cyber bullying are criminal acts and in such cases the School will also refer the matter to the Police or other appropriate authorities.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you feel you are being harassed or discriminated against, there are a number of actions you can take:

1. Tell the person to "stop."
2. Avoiding a confrontation and just walking away can be effective, though ignoring continued incidents gives the impression that harassment and discrimination are accepted within the School. The School's counselling department is available to help boys develop the skills to be assertive in these types of situations.
3. Do not retaliate aggressively, either physically or verbally. Dealing with the situation in a non-hostile manner commonly goes against the response the person was hoping for.
4. Discuss the situation as soon as possible with someone you are comfortable with: parents, teachers, House Tutor, Housemaster, Middle School Housemaster, Chaplain, School Psychologist, School Prefect, Master of the Preparatory School, Master of the Junior School, Master of the Middle School, Master of the Senior School, Second Master, Senior Master or the Head Master so that the problem can be resolved. You can also use the School's 'E-Care' email system, which provides an opportunity to express concerns, and/or report incidents, which you would otherwise be reluctant to discuss in a face-to-face situation. This is an electronic and confidential communication system accessed only by the School's Managing Psychologist. The email address is e-care@trinity.nsw.edu.au

Students who observe any form of harassment or discrimination involving someone in the School community wherever it occurs, are strongly encouraged to report this to a member of staff as soon as possible. Take action – "leave him alone," and offer support to the student. Also encourage the student to report the incident to a member of staff with whom they feel comfortable. Harassment and discrimination can never be seen as being "just a joke" or "just mucking around." There is nothing trivial about being victimised.

Parents who observe a significant change in their son's behaviour should talk to their son and a senior member of staff at the School, as such changes may be symptomatic of harassment or discrimination. These changes may include lack of confidence, withdrawal from social activities, temper flare-ups, forgetfulness, distractibility, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, wanting to change the route to school, and avoidance of specific activities.

INVESTIGATION

The School will investigate all reports of harassment and discrimination in a way which affords procedural fairness to the person who is the subject of the allegation. In all cases, the School will act without bias and ensure claims of harassment and discrimination are addressed without undue delay, providing early and effective provision of pastoral support and disciplinary action. The School will take measures in an attempt to ensure that no-one reporting harassment or discrimination is disadvantaged as a result.

It is important to note that in most cases of harassment or discrimination, the matter is quickly resolved. Depending on the severity of an incident, the School may require from a student an undertaking to attend counselling, write an apology, give a commitment not to offend again, and/or complete a School Detention. In serious cases, or if a student does not respond to these consequences, they may be suspended or expelled from the School. The Head Master is the final avenue of appeal for any decisions made, though if the allegation is in relation to the Head Master, the Chairman of Council is the final avenue of appeal.

WORKING TOGETHER

Parents, students and the School cannot opt out of our joint responsibility in the matter of harassment and discrimination by saying “boys will be boys,” as this can justify aggressive and anti-social behaviour. We need to ensure our boys learn the right way to behave and to empower them to take a strong stand against anti-social behaviour in all of its forms. Each and every member of the School community has the responsibility to contribute to the general welfare of the School. We need to work together – staff, boys and parents – to overcome harassment and discrimination.

