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**Lobethal**  
**LUTHERAN SCHOOL**  
Historically Grounded, Future Minded

## **PARENT/CAREGIVERS INFORMATION ON BULLYING/HARASSMENT**

**HELP MAKE OUR SCHOOL A SAFE AND CARING ENVIRONMENT FOR EVERYONE**

### **WHAT IS BULLYING AND HARASSMENT?**

#### **Bullying**

Bullying is abuse of power, where a person or group uses behaviour to hurt, upset, scare or shame another person.

#### **Harassment**

Harassment is unwanted and unwelcome behaviour that is usually but not always repeated.

Bullying and harassment at school can involve students, teachers, school support staff and parents.

### **BULLYING AND HARASSMENT HAPPENS IN DIFFERENT WAYS:**

**PHYSICAL** – hitting, pushing, touching, rubbing, grabbing, spitting, taking/damaging property and using a weapon

**SEXUAL** – any unwelcome written, verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature

**VERBAL AND WRITTEN** – spoken or written insults, threats, suggestive comments, name-calling, unfair criticism, rumour spreading

**FACE AND BODY SIGNALS** – looks, stares, facial expressions, hand signs

**CYBER** – using emails, voice and text messages, photographic and video images

**GRAFFITI** – using pictures, tags or words

**GROUP** – forming groups to leave out, ignore and disrespect others

**INDIRECT** – influencing or organising someone else to bully or harass

**DISCRIMINATION** – Discrimination in schools is against the law and harms relationships

Bullying and harassment can be about discrimination based on a person's:

- **Sex** – being female or male
- **Gender** – acting masculine or feminine
- **Cultural and spiritual identity/race/ethnicity** – cultural beliefs, religion, language, heritage, clothes, food, skin colour or physical appearance
- **Appearance** – body shape and size, clothes and accessories
- **Disability** – physical, intellectual, medical or psychiatric disability
- **Financial status** – how rich or poor
- **Age** – how old

#### **WE FOLLOW-UP INCIDENTS OF BULLYING BY:**

- Counselling students who have been bullied
- Counselling students who have bullied others
- Communicating with parents or caregivers about the situation
- Putting consequences in place for students who bully others
- Giving negotiated consequences

#### **WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL DO TO REDUCE BULLYING?**

At Lobethal Lutheran School we use a range of preventative intervention and follow-up strategies to best deal with the situation by:

- Using Restorative Procedures to repair harm and strengthen relationships
- Having a specific focus week on harassment/bullying where students are explicitly taught how to handle bullying/harassment and what to do about it
- Teaching students how to be confident and to cooperate and get along with others
- Encouraging students to bounce back and be resilient
- Teaching students about conflict resolution, anger management, problem-solving and assertiveness training
- Promoting student voice with all students at the school
- Identifying "Hot Spots" and "Safe Spots" in the yard via Bullying Audit

- Providing Professional Development for all staff on bullying/harassment and how to deal with it
- Teaching students about honesty, responsibility, respect and empathy

### **HOW CAN I TELL IF MY CHILD IS BEING BULLIED?**

Children who are being bullied at school may not always tell teachers about it. They may be afraid to tell, thinking that it may make the situations worse.

This is why, as a parent or caregiver, you have an important part to play in helping your child and the school deal with bullying.

### **SIGNS THAT A CHILD IS BEING BULLIED MAY INCLUDE:**

- Refusal to go to school and finding excuses not to go (e.g. pretending to be sick)
- Unexplained cuts, bruises or scratches
- Illnesses without any possible cause
- Unexplained change of mood. Tension or emotional distress (crying, acting out, periods of sadness)
- Damaged or missing clothing/possessions

### **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SUSPECT MY CHILD IS BEING BULLIED?**

You may feel anxious or upset if your child tells you that they may have been bullied. However, it is important that you remain calm.

- Listen to your child
- Find out what happened. Who was involved (including bystanders/witnesses) and when and where did the bullying/harassment take place?
- It is important to let your child know that telling you about the bullying/harassment was the right thing to do
- Encourage your child to talk to a staff member
- Parents or caregivers must not approach other students/parents
- Talk to the school staff and let them work through the issue with you and your child

### **INFORMING THE SCHOOL**

#### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

- ❖ We believe that it is important that grievances are kept confidential.
- ❖ Talking with the school about your concern is an important step in solving it.
- ❖ Tell the school staff as soon as possible so we can work together to solve the problem.

Parents and caregivers can address their grievances at the school by:

1. Making an appointment to see the classroom teacher to discuss the concern
2. If you feel as though your concern has not been resolved, make an appointment to see the School Counsellor, Assistant Principal Head of School or Principal

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