

Adopted: 2024-09-23

**Maria Montessori Academy**  
**BULLYING/HARASSMENT POLICY FOR EMPLOYEES**

**POLICY**

It is the policy of Maria Montessori Academy to enforce a zero-tolerance stance toward bullying and harassment, and therefore:

- To promote a respectful and safe working environment; and
- To investigate complaints of bullying or harassment promptly and impartially.

A finding of bullying or harassment will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

It is the duty of employees of Maria Montessori Academy:

- To treat each other with respect; and
- To report all acts of bullying and harassment to the administration.

**Background:**

Bullying and harassment is an issue of high priority for Maria Montessori Academy.

Bullying and harassment is an occupational health and safety issue under the *Workers Compensation Act* that poses a potential risk to the physical and mental health and safety of employees.

Bullying and harassment behaviours may also involve breaches of human rights under the *BC Human Rights Code* – particularly when based on a protected ground (eg, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, age).

**Definition:**

Bullying and harassment means the assertion of power through conduct that is known or that ought to be known to cause humiliation or intimidation. It may occur through physical abuse or the threat of physical abuse, but may also consist of words, gestures, or a pattern of behaviour. Bullying and harassment may therefore include:

- Excluding or isolating someone socially,
- Insulting or putting down a person – verbally or electronically,
- Intimidating a person,
- Intruding on a person's privacy by pestering, spying, or stalking,

- Making offensive jokes – verbally or electronically,
- Physically abusing or threatening abuse,
- Spreading malicious rumors, gossip, or innuendo,
- Stealing credit for work ideas,
- Undermining or impeding someone’s work, and
- Withholding, or not providing information where it is needed by the other person.

Bullying and harassment must not be confused with the reasonable exercise of managerial authority. Examples of reasonable management action may include decisions relating to job duties, workloads, deadlines, transfers, reorganizations, work assignment, work evaluation, performance feedback, and disciplinary actions.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **Employees:**

Any employee who **WITNESSES** bullying or harassment must:

1. Offer support to the person being bullied or harassed and inform them that you witnessed the behaviour.
2. Encourage the person who has been bullied or harassed to come forward and let them know that you will be a witness and will provide a statement in the event of an investigation.
3. Offer to support the person who has been bullied or harassed through any informal process (see below).
4. Where the person who has been bullied or harassed does not make a complaint, inform the administration of the behaviour they witnessed.

Any employee who is **THE VICTIM** of bullying or harassment should, when possible, observe the following **informal process**:

1. Promptly inform the perpetrator their actions are not acceptable,
2. Describe the specific actions that caused you to feel uncomfortable, bullied, or harassed,
3. Keep a record of dates and times you spoke to the perpetrator,
4. Inform the administration, who may then assist by providing support, advice, or mediation.

However, if the bullying or harassment continues, if the above steps are not appropriate, or if the behavior is extreme or dangerous, any employee who is the victim of bullying or harassment employees must initiate the following **formal process**:

1. Immediately report the behaviour to the administration,
2. Write out a statement detailing the incident(s), along with any supporting documentation and the names of any witnesses.

### **Administration:**

1. All complaints must be investigated by the administration or, when more serious, by the Board.
2. All complaints shall be taken seriously and investigated fairly.
3. Where it is determined that the alleged bullying or harassment is criminal in nature, the appropriate authorities will be contacted.
4. Staff members that submit a report or complaint of bullying or harassment shall not be subject to any form of reprisal or retaliation as a result of the complaint.
5. If the findings of the investigation indicate that a violation of the Bullying and Harassment Policy has occurred, immediate and appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, shall be recommended. As well, the administration will monitor the situation between the employees to ensure that the bullying or harassment does not reoccur. Corrective actions shall be proportional to the seriousness or repetitiveness of the offense.

### **Appeal:**

If the complainant or respondent have worked with the process and feel that it has failed at some point, or that the corrective action is not consistent with the incident(s) that led to the original complaint, the complainant may appeal to the Board of Directors in writing. The appeal shall be heard by the Appeal Committee of the Board in a timely fashion.

### **Confidentiality:**

Maria Montessori Academy will attempt to maintain the confidentiality of the complainant and respondent. While it is not always possible to do so when soliciting witness statements, Maria Montessori Academy will endeavor to not release any information to other employees which would jeopardize the confidentiality of the parties involved.