



Anti-Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy

Purpose:	The purpose of this policy is to articulate The Rainforest School's approach to addressing unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying within the School Community. It is also to provide staff at The Rainforest School with direction, guidance and support in creating a learning and working environment where all students, staff and parents/careers are valued and respected.	
Scope:	The policy applies to the School Board and association members, all staff, students, (sub)contractors, volunteers and describes how the school provides service and how it interacts with other members of the public; all aspects of employment, recruitment and selection, conditions and benefits; training and promotion; task allocation; shifts; hours; leave arrangements; workload; equipment and transport. On site, off site or after hours work; work-related functions; conferences – wherever and whenever staff may be as a result of their Rainforest School duties. Staff treatment of other staff, of students and families, and of other members of the public encountered in the course of their Rainforest School duties.	
References:	Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld) Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth) Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth) Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) The Rainforest School Complaints Handling Policy & Procedures The Rainforest School Staff Code of Conduct	
Supersedes:	Version 1 – 30 th May 2019	
Authorised by:	Board Chair	Date of Authorisation: 09/05/2019
Review Date:	Every 2 years	Next Review Date: May 2022
Policy Owner:	Cassowary Coast Community Campus Inc	

1. Statement

The Rainforest School is committed to providing an environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and bullying where staff and students are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect.

The Rainforest School provides procedures by which all staff and students can have a complaint of discrimination, harassment and bullying addressed in a sensitive, fair, timely and confidential manner. By effectively implementing our 'Anti-Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy' we will attract and retain talented staff and create a positive environment for everyone.

Unacceptable workplace conduct

Discrimination, bullying and harassment are unacceptable at The Rainforest School and are unlawful under the following legislation:

- Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (QLD)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)



- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth).

Staff (including Principal, Business Manager and the School Board) found to have engaged in such conduct might be counseled, warned or disciplined. Severe or repeated breaches can lead to formal discipline up to and including dismissal.

Prohibitions

In accordance with relevant law, The Rainforest School will act to prohibit unlawful discrimination towards its students and employees, on the basis of “protected personal characteristics” relevant to the school, whilst students and employees are engaging in their education and work at The Rainforest School. Both direct and indirect unlawful discrimination are prohibited.

In accordance with the relevant law, The Rainforest School prohibits unlawful discrimination against students in all facets of education at The Rainforest School including:

- admission and enrolment applications
- terms of admission and enrolment
- variation of the terms of a student's enrolment
- denial or limitation of benefits normally resulting from enrolment
- exclusion or suspension of students
- assessment and examination
- access to resources and facilities
- treatment of a student in regard to training or instruction

In accordance with the relevant law, The Rainforest School prohibits unlawful discrimination against employees undertaking all categories of work, whether it be full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term, casual, work experience, vocational placement or voluntary, and in every aspect of work, including:

- recruitment
- terms and conditions
- training
- promotion
- termination of employment

All recruitment and job selection decisions at The Rainforest School will be based on merit – the skills and abilities of the candidate as measured against the inherent requirements of the position – regardless of personal characteristics. It is unacceptable and may be against the law to ask job candidates questions, or to in any other way seek information, about their personal characteristics, unless this can be shown to be directly relevant to a genuine requirement of the position.

2. Responsibilities

a) School

The legislation establishes a legal responsibility on employers to provide workplaces free from discrimination. The Rainforest School takes reasonable steps to prevent unlawful discrimination in the school, as follows:

- Develop and implement an anti- discrimination policy to assist in preventing any instances of discrimination.
- Educate and train relevant employees to assist in preventing any instances of discrimination and to appropriately respond to any instances of discrimination.



- Establish appropriate grievance and complaints procedures via its Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure to appropriately respond to any instances of discrimination.
- Remove any discriminatory or offensive materials, rules and practices to assist in preventing any instances of discrimination.
- Encourage employees and students to contribute to a healthy workplace culture to assist in preventing any instances of discrimination.

b) Staff

All staff are entitled to:

- recruitment and selection decisions based on merit and not affected by irrelevant personal characteristics
- work free from discrimination, bullying and harassment
- the right to raise issues or to make an enquiry or complaint in a reasonable and respectful manner without being victimised
- reasonable flexibility in working arrangements, especially where needed to accommodate their family responsibilities, disability, religious beliefs or culture.

All staff must:

- not engage in discriminatory conduct and must uphold the school's policy
- follow the standards of behaviour outlined in this policy and the 'Staff Code of Conduct'
- offer support to people who experience discrimination, bullying or harassment, including providing information about how to make a complaint
- not gossip and respect the confidentiality of complaint resolution procedures, unless in the context of dealing with the claim
- treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect.

If staff believe that this type of behaviour is occurring in the school, they should make a complaint under the school's Complaints Handling Policy.

Gossip

It is unacceptable for staff at The Rainforest School to talk with other staff members, students or families about any complaint of discrimination, harassment or bullying, unless in the context of dealing with the claim.

Breaching the confidentiality of a formal complaint investigation or inappropriately disclosing personal information obtained in a professional role (for example, as a Principal, Manager or Board member) is a serious breach of this policy and may lead to formal discipline.

c) Students

All students at The Rainforest School have a responsibility not to engage in discriminatory conduct and to uphold the school's policy. If students believe that this type of behaviour is occurring in the school, they should make a complaint under the school's Complaints Handling Policy.

d) Additional responsibilities of Principal, Managers and the School Board

Principal, Managers and the School Board must also:

- model appropriate standards of behaviour
- take steps to educate and make staff aware of their obligations under this policy and the law
- intervene quickly and appropriately when they become aware of inappropriate behaviour
- act fairly to resolve issues and enforce workplace behavioural standards
- making sure relevant parties are heard
- help staff resolve complaints informally
- refer formal complaints about breaches of this policy to the appropriate complaint handling officer for investigation



- ensure staff who raise an issue or make a complaint are not victimised
- ensure that recruitment decisions are based on merit and that no discriminatory requests for information are made
- seriously consider requests for flexible work arrangements.

3. Policy Implementation

The Rainforest School takes reasonable steps to prevent discrimination, including the following:

- awareness – regularly raise awareness of discrimination, including by the development and implementation of an anti-discrimination policy, and via the clear support and promotion of the policy by the school board and executive management team.
- training – regularly educate and train employees appropriately on how to prevent and manage discrimination.
- complaints handling – establishment of an appropriate complaints handling policy and procedures.
- record keeping, monitoring, reporting – keep appropriate records, monitor and report on discrimination issues.
- culture – removal of any discriminatory or offensive materials, rules and practices, and encouragement of employees to contribute to a healthy school culture.

Resolving issues at The Rainforest School

The Rainforest School is committed to protecting students and employees from unlawful discrimination and to responding appropriately should such discrimination occur, including possible disciplinary action. The Rainforest School strongly encourages any staff member who believes they have been discriminated against, bullied, harassed or victimised to take appropriate action as per The Rainforest School Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures.

Staff who do not feel safe or confident to take such action may seek assistance from the Principal or Business Manager for advice and support or action on their behalf.

4. Definitions

a) Discrimination

Discrimination is treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic protected by the law, such as sex, age, race or disability.

Discrimination can occur:

Directly, on the basis of an attribute* happens if a person treats, or proposes to treat, a person with an attribute less favourably than another person without the attribute is or would be treated in circumstances that are the same or not materially different.

* see list below for personal characteristics/attributes protected by law

*For example, a worker is harassed and humiliated because of their race OR
A worker is refused promotion because they are 'too old'*

Indirectly, on the basis of an attribute happens if a person imposes, or proposes to impose, a term –

- a) with which a person with an attribute does not or is not able to comply
- b) with which a higher proportion of people without the attribute comply or are able to comply
- c) that is not reasonable.



For example, redundancy is decided based on people who have had a worker's compensation claim rather than on merit.

Protected personal characteristics under Federal discrimination law include:

- a disability, disease or injury, including work-related injury
- parental status or status as a carer, for example, because they are responsible for caring for children or other family members
- race, colour, descent, national origin, or ethnic background
- age, whether young or old, or because of age in general
- sex
- employment activity
- industrial activity, including being a member of an industrial organisation like a trade union or taking part in industrial activity, or deciding not to join a union
- religious beliefs or religious activity
- pregnancy and breastfeeding
- lawful sexual activity, sexual orientation, expunged homosexual conviction intersex status or gender identity, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, queer and heterosexual
- marital status, whether married, divorced, unmarried or in a de facto relationship or same sex relationship
- political belief or activity
- social origin
- medical record
- criminal record
- education
- an association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, one of these characteristics, such as being the parent of a child with a disability.

It is also against the law to treat someone unfavourably because you assume, they have a personal characteristic or may have it at some time in the future.

b) Bullying

If someone is being bullied because of a personal characteristic protected by equal opportunity law, it is a form of discrimination.

Bullying can take many forms, including jokes, teasing, nicknames, emails, pictures, text messages, social isolation or ignoring people, or unfair work practices.

Behaviours that may constitute bullying include:

- sarcasm and other forms of demeaning language
- threats, abuse or shouting
- coercion
- isolation
- inappropriate blaming
- ganging up
- constant unconstructive criticism
- deliberately withholding information or equipment that a person needs to do their job or access their entitlements
- unreasonable refusal of requests for leave, training or other workplace benefits.

Bullying is unacceptable in The Rainforest School and may also be against occupational health and safety law.



c) Harassment

Unlawful harassment is defined under federal and state legislation, as any form of behaviour where a person is made to feel intimidated or humiliated because of a particular characteristic(s) eg, race, sex as specified under anti-discrimination or human rights legislation.

Unlawful harassment can be verbal, written or physical, and has the intent or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work and/or educational environment. Harassment can be a single incident, or repeated behaviour, and can occur even if the behaviour is not intended to offend. Silence does not mean that the behaviour is acceptable to the other person.

Examples of behaviours that may amount to harassment include:

- Asking intrusive questions about someone's personal life;
- Comments that put down or stereotype people;
- Offensive communications including digital communications (e.g Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, e-mails), written, images and telephone;
- Derogatory or demeaning jokes intended to offend on the basis of stereotyped characteristics.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is a specific and serious form of harassment. It is unwelcome sexual behaviour, which could be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be physical, spoken or written. It can include:

- comments about a person's private life or the way they look
- sexually suggestive behaviour, such as leering or staring
- intentionally brushing up against someone, touching, fondling or hugging
- sexually suggestive comments or jokes
- displaying offensive screen savers, photos, calendars or objects
- repeated unwanted requests to go out
- requests for sex
- sexually explicit posts on social networking sites
- insults or taunts of a sexual nature
- intrusive questions or statements about a person's private life
- sending sexually explicit emails or text messages
- inappropriate advances on social networking sites
- accessing sexually explicit internet sites
- behaviour that may also be considered to be an offence under criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications.

Just because someone does not object to inappropriate behaviour in the workplace at the time, it does not mean that they are consenting to the behaviour. Sexual harassment is covered in the workplace when it happens at work, at work-related events, between people sharing the same workplace, or between colleagues outside of work. All staff and volunteers have the same rights and responsibilities in relation to sexual harassment. A single incident is enough to constitute sexual harassment – it doesn't have to be repeated. All incidents of sexual harassment – no matter how large or small or who is involved – require employers and managers to respond quickly and appropriately.

The Rainforest School recognises that comments and behaviour that do not offend one person can offend another. This policy requires all staff and volunteers to respect other people's limits.

d) Victimisation

Victimisation is subjecting or threatening to subject someone to a detriment because they have asserted their rights under equal opportunity law, made a complaint, helped someone else make a



complaint, or refused to do something because it would be discrimination, sexual harassment or victimisation. Victimisation is against the law.

It is also victimisation to threaten someone (such as a witness) who may be involved in investigating an equal opportunity concern or complaint. Victimisation is a very serious breach of this policy and is likely (depending on the severity and circumstances) to result in formal discipline against the perpetrator.

The Rainforest School has a zero-tolerance approach to victimisation.

Version Control

Approval Details

Policy Sponsor	Chairperson
Approval authority	Cassowary Coast Community Campus Inc
Version Number	2
Date for next review	May 2022

Modification History

Version no.	Approval date	Implementation date	Details
2	09/05/2020	11/05/2020	Policy has been revised entirely.