

Sexual Harassment Policy

Purpose:	The purpose of this policy is: (i) to ensure the school community understands the standards of behaviour expected of them and their legal rights and responsibilities in relation to sexual harassment, sex-based harassment, and conduct that creates a hostile workplace environment on the ground of sex and related victimisation; and (ii) to ensure the school community understands what sexual harassment is, how to prevent it, and how to respond in a way that minimises harm and ensures they meet their legal obligations.	
Scope:	The <i>School Community</i> - students and workers including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements, members of the broader school community, including parents/guardians, and visitors.	
Status:	Approved	Supersedes: Nil *New
Authorised by:	Principal	Date of Authorisation: May 2026
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld) • Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) • Guidelines for Complying with the Positive Duty under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) • Information Guide on the Positive Duty under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) • Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth) • Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) • Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld) • Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (Qld) • Goora Gan Steiner School Anti-Discrimination Policy • Goora Gan Steiner School Student Bullying Policy • Goora Gan Steiner School Work Health and Safety Policy • Goora Gan Steiner School Complaints Handling Policy • Goora Gan Steiner School Whistleblowing Policy • Goora Gan Steiner School Child Protection: Reporting Concerns for Harm and Abuse Policy • Goora Gan Steiner School Staff Code of Conduct • Goora Gan Steiner School Risk Management Policy 	
Review Date:	Every 2 years	Next Review Date: May 2028
Policy Owner:	Principal	

POLICY STATEMENT

Goora Gan Steiner School has a positive duty to eliminate as far as possible sexual harassment and related unlawful conduct in the school environment under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth) (SD Act).¹

Goora Gan Steiner School is committed to creating a safe, diverse and inclusive place to work and study and Goora Gan Steiner School does not tolerate sexual harassment, sex-based harassment, or conduct which creates a hostile work environment.

Every member of the school community is responsible for their own conduct and required to take reasonable care that their acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health, safety, and wellbeing of others in the school environment, which includes when working and/or studying from home and at school related events (including school trips/activities and fundraisers). Preventing sexual harassment, sex-based harassment and a hostile environment in the school environment is everyone's responsibility.

This Policy should also be considered in conjunction with Goora Gan Steiner School's *Work Health and Safety Policy*, which applies to the school's duty to manage the risk of psychosocial hazards at work, including sexual harassment or sex-based harassment, under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld) (WHS Act), the *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011* (Qld) (WHS Regulation) and relevant codes of practice.

A note on Terminology

This policy acknowledges the gendered nature of discrimination, harassment and victimisation. When discussing the law, and the conduct covered by the positive duty, this policy uses the term 'sex' rather than 'sex and/or gender' and refers to concepts such as sex discrimination and sex-based harassment. This is because it is the language used in the SD Act.

DEFINITIONS

Conduct that creates a hostile workplace environment on the ground of sex under the SD Act means when a person's behaviour within the workplace creates an environment that is offensive, intimidating or humiliating for another person to work in based on that person's sex, or characteristics that generally relate to that person's sex.²

Relevant unlawful conduct under the SD Act means the conduct covered by the positive duty in the SD Act which requires organisations and businesses to take 'reasonable and proportionate measures' to eliminate, as far as possible:

- discrimination on the ground of sex in a work context.
- sexual harassment in connection with work.
- sex-based harassment in connection with work.
- conduct creating a workplace environment that is hostile on the ground of sex.
- related acts of victimisation.³

¹ *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth), s28M(2)(c)

² *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth), s28M(2)(c)

³ Information Guide on the Positive Duty under *the Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth), AHRC, p5

Senior Leaders are those who hold ultimate responsibility and accountability for the governance and legal compliance of their organisation or business. Senior leaders may be considered ‘officers’ under WHS legislation. That is, a person who makes or participates in making decisions, that affect the whole or a substantial part of the business or undertaking of the State or Commonwealth⁴, public authority⁵ or a corporation⁶. In a school this may include members of the school board and senior leadership employees such as the Principal or Business Manager, Chief Financial Officer and/or Chief Operating Officer.

Sex discrimination is defined under the SD Act as when someone is treated unfairly, or is unreasonably disadvantaged, because of their sex, or a characteristic that is generally associated with people of that sex.⁷

Sexual harassment is defined under the SD Act as any verbal, written, visual or physical behaviour of a sexual nature that is unwelcome and uninvited where the harasser in all the circumstances should have anticipated the possibility that the other person would be offended, humiliated, or intimidated.

Sexual harassment happens if a person:

- Subjects another person to an unsolicited act of physical intimacy; or
- Makes an unwelcome sexual advance or unsolicited demand or request (whether directly or by implication) for sexual favours from the other person; or
- Makes a remark with sexual connotations relating to the other person; or
- Engages in any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, which includes a statement whether orally or in writing, in relation to the other person.

and the person engaging in the above conduct does so:

- With the intention of offending, humiliating, or intimidating the other person; or
- In circumstances where a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances would have anticipated the possibility that the other person would be offended, humiliated, or intimidated by the conduct.⁸

Sex-based harassment under the SD Act is unwelcome conduct of a demeaning nature based on a person’s sex or characteristics that generally relate to a person’s sex (but not necessarily sexual in nature), in circumstances in which a reasonable person would have anticipated that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated, or intimidated.

The circumstances to be taken into account include:

- the sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, marital or relationship;
- status, religious belief, race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, of the person harassed;
- the relationship between the person harassed and the person who made the advance or request or who engaged in the conduct;
- any disability of the person harassed; and
- any other relevant circumstance.

⁴ *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld), s247

⁵ *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld), s252

⁶ *Corporations Act 2001* s9

⁷ *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth), s5

⁸ *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld), s119 and s120; *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth), s28A

It does not matter that the harasser did not intend to offend, humiliate, or intimidate, or know that this was the effect of their behaviour, for this conduct to be against the law.⁹

School Community in the context of this policy, encompasses students; workers including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees; contractors; volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements; and members of the broader school community, including parents/guardians, and visitors.

Victimisation under the SD Act is when a person is treated or threatened to be treated in a detrimental manner because of making or proposing to make a complaint. Victimisation can also occur where a person is treated adversely because they support another person's complaint. The positive duty under the SD Act also covers related acts of victimisation that relate to complaints, proceedings, assertions or allegations about:

- Discrimination on the ground of sex in a work context;
- Sexual harassment in connection with work;
- Sex-based harassment in connection with work;
- Conduct creating a workplace environment that is hostile on the ground of sex.¹⁰

Worker has the same meaning in the SD Act as under WHS law.¹¹ Workers include employees, contractors and subcontractors and their employees, employees of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the school, outworkers, apprentices, trainees, students gaining work experience and volunteers.¹² A person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU), for example a sole trader, can also be a worker if they carry out work in the business.

Workplace has the same meaning in the SD as under WHS law.¹³ Workers is a place where work is carried out for a business or undertaking and includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work. In the context of this policy, the term **school environment** will also be used to refer to the workplace in an educational setting. This includes all areas where school-related duties are performed, such as classrooms, playgrounds, staff rooms, offices, and any other location where workers are present in the course of their work.

⁹ *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth), s28AA

¹⁰ *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth), ss47C(1), 47C(2)(d), 47(4)(c)

¹¹ *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth), s4(1)

¹² *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld), s7

¹³ *Work Health and safety Act 2011* (Qld), s8

PREVENTION

Goora Gan Steiner School acknowledges that it has a **positive duty to take reasonable and proportionate steps to eliminate relevant unlawful conduct** as far as possible.¹⁴

Goora Gan Steiner School understands and acknowledges that senior leaders, workers, and students contribute to the creation of a school culture free of sexual harassment, sex-based harassment, and conduct that creates a hostile workplace environment on the ground of sex and related victimisation.

Goora Gan Steiner School has developed a holistic approach that involves consultation, advances gender equality, acknowledges intersectionality, and is person-centred and trauma informed.

Goora Gan Steiner School will implement measures addressing each of the seven standards outlined in the *Guidelines for Complying with the Positive Duty under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984*:¹⁵

- Leadership
- Culture
- Knowledge
- Risk Management
- Support
- Reporting and Response
- Monitoring, evaluation and transparency

To address the standards, Goora Gan Steiner School allocates the following responsibilities in fulfilling the duty:

Senior Leader Responsibilities

Senior leaders at Goora Gan Steiner School must ensure appropriate measures for preventing and responding to relevant unlawful conduct and will:

- Ensure an understanding of their legal obligations and maintain up-to-date knowledge about relevant unlawful conduct.
- Implement a risk-based approach, recognising that relevant unlawful conduct is an equality risk and a health and safety risk. This includes being responsible for and actively involved in risk management processes for relevant unlawful conduct and actively seeking out and being regularly provided with information about:
 - Risk assessments: identification, analysis and risk evaluation to determine the nature and extent of relevant unlawful conduct in the organisation/business. Refer to Goora Gan Steiner School's Risk Management Policy
 - Controls: any specific measure or action that modifies or regulates the risk of relevant unlawful conduct

¹⁴ *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth), s47C(1)

¹⁵ *Guidelines for Complying with the Positive Duty under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth), Australian Human Rights Commission

- Risk monitoring and review: trends, patterns and lessons learned and adjustments to controls as necessary
- Registering reports and outcomes: the outcomes of reports of relevant unlawful conduct and consequences for people who engage in relevant unlawful conduct must be entered on Goora Gan Steiner School's Complaint Register
- Records: create other written records as required, evidencing the risk management process including implementation and changes to controls
- Industry-relevant WHS guidance, including approved Codes of Practice which set out what is reasonably practicable to manage hazards, such as sexual harassment, under WHS laws.
- Ensure appropriate measures for preventing and responding to relevant unlawful conduct are developed, recorded in writing, communicated to workers, and implemented, including:
 - This policy and other materials regarding respectful behaviour and unlawful conduct.
 - Goora Gan Steiner School Student Bullying Policy.
 - Goora Gan Steiner School Staff Code of Conduct Policy
 - Goora Gan Steiner School Code of Conduct for Parents and Guardians
 - Goora Gan Steiner School Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures
 - Policy is communicated to workers through position descriptions, contracts, induction processes, education and training, emails and codes of conduct.
- Regularly review the appropriate measures (this policy and other materials) and update workers as required.
- Ensure easy access to resources for workers, students, and parents/guardians to improve their knowledge and understanding of relevant unlawful conduct and the consequence for engaging in that conduct, and where to seek support, including:
 - Ensuring this policy and associated resources are publicly accessible on the school website.
- Support workers and students to engage in safe, respectful and inclusive behaviour through education, including:
 - Providing resources, and supporting and training **workers** in the school environment with a specific mandate to address relevant unlawful conduct, including:
 - Expected standards of behaviour, including actions and attitudes that foster equality and respect
 - Identifying behaviours that constitute relevant unlawful conduct, and the consequences of engaging in such conduct
 - Their rights and responsibilities in relation to safe, respectful and inclusive workplaces and working relationships, including their role in preventing and responding to relevant unlawful conduct.

- Providing resources and supporting **students** in the school environment with a specific mandate to address relevant unlawful conduct, including:
- Be visibly committed to and contribute towards a school culture that promotes a safe, respectful and inclusive school community that values diversity and gender equality and empowers workers (including senior leaders) to report relevant unlawful conduct.
 - Senior leaders will express their commitment to eliminating relevant unlawful conduct by:
 - Articulating why gender equality, diversity, inclusion and respectful workplace conduct are important
 - Acknowledging the existence of relevant unlawful conduct and the harm that it causes
 - Role modelling respectful behaviour
 - Setting clear behaviour expectations and holding people to account for their actions.
 - Outline progress made against their commitment and action taken.
 - Senior leaders will contribute to the school culture by:
 - Paying particular attention to gender balance and diversity in recruitment.
 - Attempting to increase the representation and workplace inclusion underrepresented groups.
 - Consulting with workers (and their representatives, where applicable) on workplace issues concerning gender equality, diversity and inclusion. It gives particular attention to the voices and experiences of workers who have lived experience of gender inequality and intersecting inequalities.
 - Openly discuss the role of all people in the workplace for creating a positive workplace culture. This includes in in team meetings and reflected in relevant policy documents.
 - Encouraging workers to call out disrespectful behaviour when they see it.
- Ensure appropriate support is available to workers who experience or witness relevant unlawful conduct, and that workers and students are informed about and can access the support, regardless of whether they make a complaint or not. Support available to the worker or student:
 - May include speaking with a trusted staff member, including a supervisor, teacher or member of the leadership team.
 - Support will be coordinated through the Principal, who is responsible for determining and facilitating appropriate support.
 - Where the concern involves the Principal, support and reporting may be directed to the Board Chair.
 - Support may also include referral to external professional services where appropriate, and access to free community support services, including services for adults and young people, such as a local general practitioner, [1800RESPECT](#), [Lifeline](#) and [Kids Helpline](#).

- Ensure appropriate options for reporting and responding to relevant unlawful conduct are provided and regularly communicated to workers and other impacted people (see below under *Reporting and Responses*).
- Collect and analyse appropriate data to understand the nature and extent of relevant unlawful conduct at the school and actions taken to address it.
- Report on the data in a transparent manner with relevant stakeholders, as required.
- Ensure improvement processes are implemented, where the data indicates improvements in the school culture are required. Processes should include the actions taken to address it. Such as developing further measures for preventing and responding to relevant unlawful conduct.

Students, Workers, and the Broader School Community’s Responsibilities

All students, workers and members of Goora Gan Steiner School’s broader school community contribute to the creation of a school culture free of sexual harassment, sex-based harassment, and conduct that creates a hostile workplace environment on the ground of sex and related victimisation. Students, workers and members of the school community have a responsibility to:

- Understand and comply with this policy
- Attend and engage with training provided by the school (students and workers only)
- Consider the effect of their behaviour on others
- Report any incidents of sexual harassment, sex-based harassment, hostile workplace environment or victimisation experienced or witnessed
- Not sexually harass or victimise another person, engage in sex-based harassment or create a hostile workplace environment on the ground of sex

Reporting & Response

Sexual harassment, sex-based harassment and creating a hostile work environment are unlawful conduct and prohibited under federal, state and territory laws. Individuals who engage in such conduct may be personally liable, and the school may also be held liable for their actions.

Certain forms of sexual harassment, such as sexual assault, rape, and stalking, constitute criminal offences. In some cases, the school may be required to report these matters to the Police.

If this Policy is breached, Goora Gan Steiner School will take appropriate action against the individuals involved, in accordance with Goora Gan Steiner School Complaints Handling Policy.

Goora Gan Steiner School strongly encourages workers who have been sexually harassed or have witnessed sexual harassment to report the behaviour. The school will take all reports of sexual harassment seriously. The response to the report will be guided by the person making the report.

The response to reports will be consistent, timely and minimise harm including avoiding victimisation. Consequences will be consistent and proportionate.

Reporting options for workers include:

Internal

Workers can report unlawful behaviour through Goora Gan Steiner School's Complaints Handling Policy informal or formal complaint processes.

External

A complaint can also be lodged directly with an external agency, including a regulator or the police. A worker who experiences criminal conduct, such as sexual assault, can report this to the police. Contact details for external bodies are set out in **Appendix B** to this policy.

In some cases, a person may be eligible to make a whistleblower disclosure. This avenue also enables a person to raise a concern anonymously. Refer to Goora Gan Steiner School's Whistleblower Policy.

If a specific instance of unlawful conduct is also harm or sexual abuse as defined in Goora Gan Steiner School's Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy, the matter must be dealt with in accordance with that policy.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this policy, or have any feedback about the policy, please contact the Principal on principal@gooragansteiner.qld.edu.au or 07 4974 7734.

Policy Management

The school will regularly review this policy will be reviewed regularly but may also be updated at any time, to remain compliant with relevant legislation. Changes will be communicated to workers, students, and parents.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with all other related school policies.

Appendix A – Leadership Statement

Our Position on sexual harassment

Sexual harassment, in all its forms, is an abuse of power.

It represents behaviours that are beneath the standards we expect from every one of us and across our organisations. It is unethical and against the law. It is inextricably linked to gender inequality.

We understand the psychological, emotional and physical toll it takes, and the detrimental consequences it can have on the careers and personal lives of those affected, as well as their families and those close to them.

We agree that new approaches are required, recognising that this is a human and societal issue.



We will act to prevent it and ensure effective responses for those impacted within, and connected to, our organisations.

We will enable people to recognise sexual harassment in all its forms, and empower them to speak about it, change behaviour if required and respond appropriately in the moment to prevent repetition and escalation.

We will strive for ethical responses over expedient solutions.

We will support respectful transparency so that we can learn from incidents, continuously improve our approach, and improve our accountability to our teachers, students, parents, workers, stakeholders, and the broader community.

We will lead a new conversation and take new actions to ensure that sexual harassment in our school environment is eradicated.

	
Erin Temming	Sharon Groves
Principal	Board Chair

Appendix B – External Complaint Avenues

Anti-discrimination and bullying complaints
<i>Federal</i>
Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) 1300 656 419
Fair Work Commission - for bullying claims including a 'stop bullying order' 1300 799 675 Form F72
<i>Queensland</i>
Queensland Human Rights Commission 1300 130 670 Online Form
Sexual and sex-based harassment complaints
Fair Work Commission Application to deal with a sexual harassment dispute (including seeking a 'stop sexual harassment order') Form F75
WorkSafe Queensland 1300 362 128
Queensland Police (07) 3055 6206 Submit a sexual assault report online – Online Form Complete an Alternative Reporting Option (ARO) sexual assault form – Online Form

Appendix C – Prevention Plan & Psychosocial Risk Assessment Tool

Goora Gan Steiner school will Managing the risk of sexual harassment and sex or gender-based harassment at work by utilising the Work Health and Safety Queensland – [Example Prevention Plan](#) & the [Psychosocial Risk Assessment Tool](#)