



Anti-Discrimination Policy & Procedures

OVERVIEW

Purpose	The purpose of this policy is to outline the School's position and approach to addressing the issue of discrimination.
Custodian	St Stithians Online School Head & Registrar of Valentre Institute
Approval Authority	Rector of St Stithians College
Version History	Version 1, Effective 20 May 2021



1. Preamble

At St Stithians Online School we seek to transform our communal and individual lives in order to heal the hurt and divisions of our past so that we can embrace a future shaped by all.

We aim to provide a safe, secure and supportive environment where:

- individual differences are appreciated, understood, accepted and respected.
- individuals empathise with each other and offer each other support.
- discrimination is reported and the necessary steps are taken to eliminate such behaviour.
- all staff and students are not subject to fear of bullying, harassment or victimisation because of their gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability.

2. Objectives

The objectives of this policy and the procedures detailed herein, are:

- 2.1. To prohibit the different manifestations of unfair discrimination, based on, but not limited to, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, conscience and beliefs.
- 2.2. To prevent and eliminate any conduct of unfair discrimination by any member of the School community against another, which may undermine his or her human dignity. Such conduct of unfair discrimination may include, but is not limited to, bullying and/or harassment.
- 2.3. To clarify the procedure, the responsibilities and the obligations of all to promote equality in the School.
- 2.4. To establish appropriate and accessible interventions for staff and students to address allegations of unfair discrimination.



3. Definitions

- 3.1. **Alternative dispute resolution procedures** refer to procedures for settling disputes by means other than formal processes, which usually includes conciliation, mediation, and arbitration.
- 3.2. **Bullying** is a form of unfair discrimination. In its simpler manifestation, it involves the chronic abuse of an individual staff member or student by another person. This abuse can take the form of insults, interference, intimidation, undermining, withholding resources, social exclusion, harassment, abuse of power or any other behaviour intended to make the victim feel unwelcome. In its more complex manifestations, bullying may include mobbing, which involves more than one perpetrator acting against a member of the school or may be systemic, in which the culture of a school may ignore or minimise bullying or even inadvertently promote it in its structures.
- 3.3. For the purpose of this policy, **unfair discrimination** means “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference, which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, or any other field of public life”.
- 3.4. Unfair discrimination may occur on a number of grounds as defined in Chapter 2, Section 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.
- 3.5. **Direct unfair discrimination** is an overt act of discrimination, which occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person on the basis of any of the grounds listed in Clause 3.2 or any other legally recognised grounds.
- 3.6. **Indirect unfair discrimination** occurs when an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice, which appears neutral on the surface, is imposed in order to exclude person/s upon one or more grounds stipulated in Clause 3.2 or any other legally recognised grounds. Such a distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference unfairly discriminates against individuals or groups of individuals.



- 3.7. **Harassment** refers to derogatory or unwarranted remarks, ridicule, unwanted physical contact, physical assault or demands for undue favours for personal gratification.
- 3.8. **Victimisation** occurs when one person subjects another to detriment (or threatens to do so) because she or he has laid, intends to lay, or has helped someone else to lay, a complaint of unfair discrimination on any of the grounds listed in Clause 3.2, or any other legally recognised grounds, or she or he has refused to perform an act which is in contravention of any policy or legislation, or she or he has provided information about a complaint, i.e. whistle-blowing. It also includes acting to another person's detriment by agreeing to be a witness in cases related to the contravention of policy or legislation.
- 3.9. Vilification occurs when a person incites hatred towards, contempt for, or severe ridicule of a person or group of persons on any of the grounds listed in Clause 3.2 or any other legally recognised grounds.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1. This section of the policy and procedures is predicated on the School community taking collective and individual responsibility to ensure adherence to the principles, procedures and measures set out herein.
- 4.2. All employees are required to attend any race, diversity, transformation and social justice workshops organised by the School during their employment to enhance their understanding of and compliance with this policy.
- 4.3. **Line Managers have the following responsibilities:**
 - 4.3.1. to monitor the working environment to ensure that acceptable standards of conduct are observed at all times; when managers observe a risk of unfair discrimination in the workplace, they should take the necessary steps to ensure that it is appropriately dealt with; failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action being taken against them.



- 4.3.2. to demonstrate and project appropriate behaviour themselves, including ensuring that they do not engage in conduct that may breach the policy and procedures set out herein.
- 4.3.3. to ensure employees, students and other relevant persons understand the policy and procedures set out herein.

4.4. All employees and students of the School have a responsibility to:

- 4.4.1. ensure that they do not engage in any unfair discriminatory behaviour, practices and/or vilification or breach of this policy.
- 4.4.2. treat all members of the school community with respect and kindness, to be polite and well mannered, not to use any offensive language and not to tease, bully or humiliate other members of this community.
- 4.4.3. report any incidences of unfair discrimination.
- 4.4.4. offer support to anyone who is being unfairly discriminated against and direct them to sources of help and advice; and
- 4.4.5. maintain complete confidentiality of information and cooperate during the investigation of a complaint.

5. Application of the policy

This policy and these procedures apply to all staff and students of the School, including:

- A. academic staff; whether they are fixed-term, full-time or part-time;
- B. contractors and visitors while on any of the campuses of the School;
- C. administrative and support staff at all levels; and
- D. Students



6. Procedures

Breach of this policy and the misconducts mentioned in the preamble will initiate a disciplinary process which could include restorative justice, disciplinary action or conflict resolution.

Any complaints involving students may be made to the Campus Manager, Head of School, Teacher or Mentor.

7. Complaints involving visitors and independent contractors

- 7.1. Disputes involving visitors and independent contracts must be submitted to the Campus Manager.
- 7.2. In the event of non-resolution of the dispute, parties may seek recourse to the Human Rights Commission or the Courts.

8. The right to pursue external processes

All members of the School Community have the right to pursue external processes. They are urged to exhaust all available internal mechanisms (pre-mediation, mediation, formal procedure) before resorting to such measures.