



Bullying and Harassment

Policy

Policy review team members:
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This policy was last ratified by
School Council on 2/5/2016

Rationale:

Our school is committed to providing a safe and caring environment including a culture which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff, which encourages self-esteem, cooperation, personal growth and a positive attitude to learning and teaching. A clear policy on bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will inform the community that **bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated.**

Aims:

- To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable.
- Everyone within the school community is alerted to signs and evidence of bullying and has a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to both victim and perpetrator.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times

Implementation:

Bullying is:

- A repeated and unjustifiable behaviour
- Intended to cause fear, distress and/or harm to another
- May be physical, verbal, online or indirect/relational.
- Conducted by a more powerful individual or group
- Against a less powerful individual who is unable to effectively resist.

Harassment is:

- Any unwanted, unwelcome, or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated or offended. Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying. The terms are often used interchangeably.

Types of bullying:

	Direct	Indirect
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hitting, slapping, punching ▪ Kicking ▪ Pushing, strangling ▪ Spitting, biting ▪ Pinching, scratching ▪ Throwing things e.g. stones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Getting another person to harm someone
Non-Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mean and hurtful name-calling ▪ Hurtful teasing ▪ Demanding money or possessions ▪ Forcing another to commit offences such as name calling, harming another person, stealing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spreading nasty rumours ▪ Trying to get other students to not like someone
Non-Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Threatening and/or obscene gestures ▪ Making faces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deliberate exclusion from a group or activity ▪ Removing and hiding and/or damaging others' belongings

Online	<i>Online bullying is always indirect as it is not face-to-face.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Threatening and or/obscene gestures via photographs ▪ Name calling (comments), teasing via social networking sites. E.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, group messaging text messages etc. ▪ Sending photos or videos of others with the intention to embarrass/cause emotional distress. ▪ Spreading rumours about others. ▪ Preventing a person from communicating with others. ▪ Hacking into or stealing passwords.
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- Our school will actively promote a positive and welcoming personal environment for all members of the school community. When people are bullied or harassed some effects might be anger, embarrassment, fear and humiliation, loss of self-confidence and reduced function and potential. Bullying and harassment will be addressed, individual differences will be respected and students and staff will be enabled and supported in their pursuit of learning and teaching.
- A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment in a consistent and systematic way.
- Our school will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving. These strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences.
- Student programs will be organized to raise student awareness about bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion of matters and to aid development of attitudes. Some matters will be dealt with formally in the curriculum and in peer support programs, leadership programs, extra-curricular programs and occasional activities run by outside experts and workers. The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with current DET materials e.g. 'The Bully Stoppers' program.
- Staff programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues. Professional development will be provided for staff relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment and proven strategies to address these issues in classrooms will be shared with all staff.
- The school will provide specialist resources such as books, videos, kits and off site in-service activities to assist staff in responding appropriately to bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment issues.
- The school leadership team and the teachers will work together to ensure the safety of all school members in situations of bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment, by thoroughly investigating all complaints while respecting the need for confidentiality, notifying parents/carers and planning interventions.
- Disciplinary consequences for bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will comply with the school's Student Discipline Policy. The principal or their nominee will provide disciplinary consequences including suspension in accordance with Department of Education and Training (DET) guidelines.

References:

- The school's ICT Acceptable Use Policy (re cyber-bullying)
- Bully Stoppers <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/default.aspx>

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of MEPS three –year review cycle in May 2019

