

# Anti Bullying & Harassment Policy

***Our College is committed to ensuring every student develops the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to positively contribute to the world community as a responsible and caring citizen***

One of Bendigo South East's main goals is to provide an environment where the physical, emotional, moral and educational health and wellbeing of students is fostered.

Bullying and harassment are not only school disciplinary matters but are illegal under Victorian and Commonwealth legislation. Victimisation of those who report bullying is also illegal.

Our student leaders play a key role in modelling a positive caring culture.

Bullying and harassment can occur wherever people work or socialise together. Sometimes people do not realise that their behaviour can be harmful and unfair to others or that it is against the law.

To avoid disputes:

- Use positive language and behaviours to demonstrate respect for self and others
- Do not use inappropriate language and intimidate others
- Treat others as you would like to be treated
- If a conflict or dispute arises, settle peacefully.

## Definitions

**Bullying:** *Ongoing actions of power against an individual that are hurtful or intimidating.*

**Harassment:** *Ongoing behaviour that 'worries and/or provokes' another.*

## Bullying & Harassment Can Be:

**Physical:** Including fighting, pushing, pinching, flicking, pulling hair, shoving, gesturing, standing over or invading someone's personal space, interfering with someone's personal property or making threats to do any of these things.

**Verbal:** Includes name-calling, offensive language, putting people down behind their backs, picking on people because of appearance, disease or disability, making offensive or nuisance phone calls, spreading rumours, making threats.

**Sexual:** Including touching or brushing against another in a sexual manner, sexually oriented jokes, drawings of, or writing about, someone's body, using rude names or commenting about someone's morals, unwanted invitations of a sexual nature, offensive questions about someone's body and/or someone's private life or encouraging or making others do so. Questioning or commenting about someone's sexuality.

**Exclusionary:** Leaving people out of activities on purpose, ignoring someone's presence, not allowing them to join a group.

**Discriminatory:** Includes bullying, harassment or unfair exclusion on grounds of race, nationality, sex/gender, disability, physical appearance, relationships and friendships.

**Visual:** Includes offensive notes, emails, SMS messages, inappropriate use of photographs, graffiti, drawings, posters.

## **People who are bullied and harassed can feel:**

Unhappy, isolated, frightened, unsafe, embarrassed, angry, unfairly treated, confused.

## **People who are bullied and harassed can experience:**

- *Difficulties in concentrating, working and sleeping.*
- *Disrupted relationships with family and friends.*
- *Difficulty with expressing emotions and sharing ideas.*
- *Loss of confidence and self-esteem.*
- *The desire to avoid social contact.*

## **Some Inappropriate reactions:**

### **From the Victim:**

- 'I'll ignore it and it will go away'.*
- 'I don't want to cause trouble'.*
- 'No-one can do anything about it'.*
- 'You shouldn't do it'.*

### **From the Bully:**

- 'I was just mucking around, can't they take a joke?'*
- 'It's just a natural part of growing up'*

## **Sharing the Concern**

Once a person lodges a report alleging bullying or harassment, the following will occur:

The person who claims to have been bullied will be interviewed, and may be asked to give an account of the problem orally or in writing. These may include questions about previous incidents or the relationship with the alleged bully and whether any possible provocation or misunderstanding has occurred.

As soon as possible, the accused person will be seen and informed of the allegation. The person will provide his or her version of the events. Specifically, he or she will be asked to comment on whether the allegation is true. Other relevant questions, as outlined above, may also be asked.

A Leadership Team staff member will then consider the versions of events. Witnesses may be interviewed. It may be appropriate to conduct a mediation meeting between the parties or take other action considered appropriate.

## **If it is clear that harassment has occurred, then further action may include the following:**

The victim and bully will be advised of the findings.

The person accused will be taken through the events and the inappropriateness of the harassing behaviour will be fully explained. Responses, such as “I was only joking” or “he’s too sensitive” and the like will be explained as unacceptable. The guidelines for future behaviour will also be spelt out.

At this point resolution will normally occur, with both parties understanding how they must interact appropriately in future.

The victim of the harassment will be seen regularly over the next few weeks and periodically after this, to determine whether the perpetrator has fulfilled his or her commitments.

## **Disciplinary**

If the bullying behaviour does not recur, the matter will end.

If the unacceptable behaviour does not stop, then contact will be made with parents who may be asked, together with their student/child, to meet with the Learning Team Leader or member of the Principal Team.

At this meeting, a firm commitment to the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy will be demanded of the student. Significant penalties under the College disciplinary practices are likely to be imposed at the discretion of the Principal.

The parents of any victim of such bullying behaviour will be informed of the College’s handling of the matter as deemed necessary.

The perpetrator’s behaviour will be monitored regularly in the following months.

Often both parties may need to take part of the responsibility and both may incur consequences.

## **Role of Students**

If you witness bullying:

- Don’t join in - being part of a group which is bullying someone is being a bully
- Report bullying so that both the person being bullied and the bully can receive help. You are obliged to report bullying and harassment
- Try to influence those who are bullying to stop
- Look out for friends and report your concerns as soon as possible.

## **Role of Staff**

All staff have an important role to play in detecting and reporting incidents of suspected harassment, whether these be inside or outside the classroom. This applies especially to any repeated or chronic behaviour, which may be deemed ‘harassment’.

Any of the following staff members should be notified:

- The relevant Learning Team Mentor
- Learning Team Leader
- Trusted staff member
- Principal Team
- Student Support Centre Staff.

Any staff receiving a notification must report it promptly to a member of the Leadership Team, who must then take action.

## Role of Parents

Do not ignore bullying!

**What to look out for** - Symptoms such as not wishing to go to school, failing to meet deadlines, apparent sadness, uncharacteristic quietness and so on may be indicators of a person being harassed

**What to do** - No matter what year your child is in, if you feel he/she is being harassed please contact a staff member. In many cases your child may not wish you to contact the School in case 'things get worse'.

It is very difficult to deal effectively with bullying if it is not reported. Most bullying takes place away from teacher's eyes, and often outside the school's grounds.

## Advice to Students

- Do not ignore comments or actions that upset you or make you feel uncomfortable
- When another person says or does something which is unfair or bullying, please say one of these two sentences to the person:  
  
'I do not like you saying that to me.'  
Or 'I do not like you doing that to me.'
- Save and show any written evidence (eg. Notes, emails, SMS messages)
- Report in person, by phone (03) 54434522 or email at the earliest opportunity to any other member of staff.  
All reports will be then passed onto a member of the Leadership Team.

***Our College endeavours to provide all students with a safe and orderly learning environment that meets our students' needs.***

**'Strive for Excellence'**