



Bullying and Harassment Policy

Rationale:

Our school is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff and 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.

What are bullying, cyber bullying and harassment?

Bullying is repeated oppression, physical or psychological abuse by an individual or group to deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance.

There are three broad categories of bullying:

- **Direct physical bullying** e.g. repeated hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
- **Direct verbal bullying** e.g. repeated name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
- **Indirect bullying:** this form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:
 - ❖ lying and spreading rumours
 - ❖ playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
 - ❖ mimicking
 - ❖ encouraging others to socially exclude someone
 - ❖ damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
 - ❖ cyber-bullying, which involves the use of electronic means to humiliate and distress

Cyber-bullying consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums such as mobile phones, web logs and websites, online chat rooms, 'MUD' rooms (multi-user domains where individuals take on different characters) and Xangas (on-line personal profiles where some adolescents create lists of people they do not like). It is verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various mediums available.

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

Our school will actively promote a positive and welcoming personal environment for all members of the school community. Bullying and harassment will be addressed, individual differences will be respected and students and staff will be supported in their pursuit of learning and teaching.

Implementation:

- A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment in a consistent and systematic way.
- All new students and staff will be informed of the anti-harassment policy and practices at the commencement of their time at the school.
- All complaints of harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously.
- Our school will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Staff programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues.
- There will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of the Anti-Bullying (including cyber bullying) and Anti-Harassment Policy, guidelines and procedures

PROGRAM Implementation:

- Constructive strategies to deal with harassment will include: education in coping strategies; assertiveness training; problem solving and social skills; counselling and behaviour modification. These strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences. The Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy of the school will be widely promoted to students, staff, parents/carers and the local community.
- 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.
- If a teacher feels a student is at serious and imminent risk from bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment then it is their professional duty to pass on the information to an appropriate person in order to ensure appropriate support for the student. Teachers to document fully their interaction with the student and to verify the actions taken.
- Student programs will be organised 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.
- 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.
- Disciplinary consequences for bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will comply with the school's Student Engagement Policy.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed annually or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstance

Winchelsea

Primary School

