



## BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

### PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS:

Critical to a school's successful functioning is the provision of a safe and respectful environment which engenders a feeling of security for all students. Positive and appropriate social and cyberspace behaviours and attitudes are expected. Bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated. Our school will actively promote a positive and welcoming personal and communal environment for all members of the school community and visitors to the school.

Our school is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment and culture which:

- prevents bullying, cyberbullying and other unacceptable behaviours.
- enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff.
- encourages positive self-esteem, cooperation, personal growth.
- develops a positive attitude to learning and teaching.

### What is bullying and harassment?

**Bullying** is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons.

This table describes the categories of bullying.

Category	Includes, but not limited to
Direct physical bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property</li> </ul>
Direct verbal bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.</li> </ul>
Indirect bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• action designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ lying, spreading rumours and defaming</li> <li>○ playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate</li> <li>○ mimicking</li> <li>○ encouraging others to socially exclude someone</li> <li>○ damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Cyberbullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding or speaking about someone on social networking spaces.</li> </ul>

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management.

**Mutual conflict:** involves an argument or disagreement between people but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

**Social rejection or dislike:** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

**Single-episode acts:** of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours.

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

## GUIDELINES

This policy will be viewed in conjunction with the *Child Safe Policy* as well as policies listed below:

1. A school-wide approach will be taken to minimize incidents and deal with any bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment incidents in a consistent and systematic way.
2. All new staff will be informed of the bullying and harassment policy and practices at the commencement of their time at the school.
3. The school will embed a preventative Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) Framework that promotes self and social awareness and management. A range of initiatives and programs (e.g. Peer Mediation, student leadership, buddies, values education, house system, transition and professional development for staff and parents) will be implemented to promote and ensure that all students are given the opportunity to develop and strengthen their social and emotional wellbeing.
4. Implementation of the school's SEL Program, underpinned by the school values and associated Steps to Learning, along with Acceptable Use (Internet) agreements will provide the basis for a safe, secure, respectful and supportive environment for all students and staff.
5. Any form of bullying behaviour, including cyber bullying and/or harassment will be taken seriously and investigated in confidence and actioned accordingly.
6. Constructive and restorative intervention strategies will include:- counselling; behaviour modification education; problem solving and social skills development; resilience and coping strategies; assertiveness training; restorative meetings.
7. Where disciplinary measures are required, they will be in accordance with the Student Engagement & Wellbeing policy. The principal or nominee will provide disciplinary consequences including suspension, where applicable, in accordance with Department of Education and Training (DET) guidelines.
8. Where a bullying and/or harassment incident has been verified by the school, parents will be informed.
9. Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they have any information regarding alleged bullying (including cyber bullying) or harassment incidents.
10. If a teacher feels a student is at serious risk from bullying (including cyber bullying) and /or harassment then it is their professional duty to pass on the information to an appropriate person in order to ensure support for the student. It is important that teachers document fully their interaction with the student and verify any actions taken.
11. Students, staff and parents all have a responsibility to ensure the safety, security and wellbeing of each member of the school community. This responsibility extends to ensuring the privacy of information relating to school community members.
12. Multimedia technologies have created new domains in which young people learn and interact. Technology such as mobile phones, SMS, in-phone cameras, emails and social media sites can be an effective way to learn and a great way to communicate. As a consequence, cyber

bullying education and privacy requirements regarding the use of these technologies will be taught.

13. Where appropriate, the school will utilise and refer parents and students to outside agencies in an effort to provide further support to both victim and perpetrator.

## **RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES**

*Child Safe Policy*

*Behaviour Management Policy*

*Student Welfare Policy*

*Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy*

*Date Reviewed: April 2018*

*School Council: May 2018*

*Responsibility: Principal and Welfare & Wellbeing Leader*