



# Care to Learn Learn to Care

## Bullying & Anti - 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.
- To provide a fair and supportive work environment free of harassment, that promotes personal and professional respect, and provides physical and emotional safety for all.

### What is bullying, cyber 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.  
(<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/bullying.aspx>)

**Cyber-bullying** consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums such as mobile phones, web-logs and web-sites, on-line 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. 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.

## **GUIDELINES**

The effects of bullying are very individual and the school relies on the vigilance of staff and parents to observe changes in student behaviours and attitudes.

The physical effects may be obvious, but the emotional effects are often difficult for the students to communicate.

A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment in a consistent and systematic way.

- All new families and staff will be informed of the bullying & anti-harassment policy and practices at the commencement of their time at the school.
- All complaints of bullying or harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously.
- Anyone who experiences or witnesses bullying or harassment should report it as soon as possible. When bullying or harassment is reported, it will be investigated quickly and in accordance with school procedures.
- The principal will immediately investigate all complaints of workplace bullying or harassment.
- Staff members who bully or harass others will be subjected to Department of Education disciplinary processes.
- Parents or community members who bully or harass members of our school will be managed in accordance with the law.
- Unresolved school-level issues may be referred by the principal, or the parties involved, to the appropriate authorities.
- All claims of bullying or harassment will be treated confidentially, documented, and promptly and constructively addressed.
- The privacy, rights and sensitivities of all individuals involved will be protected

Our school will organize 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**

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.

A copy of the policy will be included in the Student Enrolment Package and be available on the school website while new staff will receive extensive documentation as part of the school's induction process.

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. It is important that teachers document fully their interaction with the student and to verify the actions taken.

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 DEECD materials e.g. Stop, Walk & Talk, School Wide Positive Behaviour & Better Buddies.

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 Welfare and Discipline Policy. The principal or their nominee will provide disciplinary consequences including suspension in accordance with Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) guidelines.

## References

- DEECD's Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines
- DEECD's Safe Schools are Effective School's
- DEECD's Student Engagement Policy Guidelines
- The school's Internet Use Policy (re cyber-bullying)
- DEECD's Respectful Schools

**Ratified by School Council**

**Date: 16/11/2016**

**Principal: John Barkley**

**School Council President: Stuart Horsburgh**

**Review Date: 16/11/2017**