



BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY

RATIONALE & BACKGROUND

Yarra Hills Secondary College acknowledges that wherever there is a diverse group of people working together there may be bullying/harassment, this can be in the workplace, family or school environment.

As a college Yarra Hills works in partnership with parents, students and staff to build a safe, positive and supportive learning environment promoting academic, emotional and social growth as well as fostering positive self-esteem for all. All members of our College community are valued and have the right to learn and work in a safe and respectful environment that is free from the threat of bullying, harassment and violent behaviour.

Additionally all students and staff are entitled to develop their talents, interests and ambitions without fear of intimidation, harassment or bullying. Therefore bullying, harassment and violence will not be tolerated in any form.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To establish a culture of respect, care and tolerance within the college community
- ✓ To raise awareness of bullying and harassment and the different forms it can take
- ✓ To increase awareness of the impact of positive and negative behaviour on others
- ✓ To provide early intervention to both the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) as incidences occur, in order to minimize the short and long term effects of bullying and harassment
- ✓ To reduce the incidence of bullying and harassment
- ✓ To develop strategies for dealing effectively with the incidence of bullying and harassment
- ✓ To develop students' awareness of their responsibility in using digital technology.
- ✓ To provide a consistent response to incidents of bullying and harassment within the college community.

DEFINITION

- **Bullying** behaviour involves an abuse of power that is hurtful, embarrassing, threatening or frightening.
- **Harassment** is characterized by persistently threatening, intimidating or tormenting behaviour towards a person. Such acts may be physical or psychological and not always obvious. It can be intentional or unintentional and may involve individuals or groups. All forms of bullying, whether physical, verbal, sexual or cyber, are not tolerated at any level.

The following behaviours may constitute bullying:

Physical: Including, but not limited to, fighting, pushing, hitting, bumping, spitting, slapping, shoving, kicking, tripping, stalking, obstructing, practical jokes, stealing, damaging or interfering with personal property, invasion of personal space, gestures or making threatening motions

Verbal: Including, but not limited to, name-calling, put-downs, offensive language, intrusive questions about personal matters, “nuisance” telephone calls, teasing, spreading malicious rumours or gossip, threats of violence, intimidation, mocking, taunting, sexual comments of a demeaning nature, racist or homophobic comments, cultural or religious slurs, ridiculing or swearing at, playing nasty jokes to embarrass or humiliate, encourage others to socially exclude someone

Visual: Including, but not limited to, gestures and body language, graffiti, offensive notes, photos or drawings distributed via emails, SMS, posted on websites, chat rooms or other electronic media.

Psychological: Including, but not limited to, stand-over tactics, extortion and blackmail, damage to others’ possessions, threats, exclusion, “keeping off”, persistent criticism or unreasonable demands.

Cyber: Including, but not limited to, teasing, spreading rumours online, sending unwanted messages, or defamation, creating websites to defame another, damage their social reputation or social acceptance, create a demeaning alias or target individual through any form of digital technology. Further information on our Cyber Bullying Policy (tba)

Sexual: is defined as any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment. It may include physical contact, invasion of personal space, suggestive remarks or sounds, unwanted comments on dress and appearance, jokes of a sexual nature, display of sexually offensive material and unwanted conduct that is related to the sex of a person.

NOTE: Certain distressing behaviours may not be classed as incidents of bullying/harassment even though they are unpleasant and require teacher intervention and management. Please contact the college if you have any concerns in this regard

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.

A single episode of nastiness or physical aggression is not bullying and should not be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours.

GUIDELINES

All members of the school community are expected to be role models in word and action, by acknowledging appropriate positive behaviours in others. It is expected all members of the community will refuse to be involved in any bullying or harassment situations and act appropriately on all bullying and harassment behaviours witnessed (for example: report to teacher/year level coordinator).

Staff are expected to:

- Be attentive and responsive in the supervision of students while on yard duty
- Arrive at class on time and be attentive and responsive to student interactions for the duration of lessons
- Be positive role models by demonstrating respect, care and tolerance at all times
- Respond in accordance with policy procedures to any reports of perceived bullying or harassment in a timely and supportive manner
- Document all incidents of bullying and harassment

Students at Yarra Hills Secondary College are required to:

- Treat other members of the school community with respect, fairness and dignity
- Not participate in any bullying or harassment behaviour. This includes being a bystander.
- Not breach the privacy of students, staff and members of the school community through any form of communication including unauthorised recording or filming or inappropriate use of ICT
- Report incidents of bullying or harassment to an adult such as a member of staff, student counsellor or parent
- Encourage students being bullied or harassed to talk to an adult

Parents are encouraged to:

- Be positive role models by demonstrating respect, care and tolerance at all times
- Take an active interest in their son's or daughter's social life and acquaintances
- Watch for signs of distress eg. unwillingness to attend school, damaged clothes or bruising, changes in behaviour/mood, withdrawn behaviour, increased anxiety or hostility
- Advise their son or daughter to document and report any incidents of bullying or harassment to either the school or the relevant authorities
- Inform the college immediately if bullying or harassment is suspected out of school hours and/or school grounds if this has the potential to affect the student's positive participation within the school environment
- Be positive role models by demonstrating respect, care and tolerance at all times
- Be aware of and be prepared to discuss issues relating to the safe and responsible use of digital technology and social media with their son or daughter
- Make use of the resources provided by the college in relation to bullying and harassment

(Ratified by school council 2013)