



ANTI BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY

WHAT IS BULLYING AND HARASSMENT?

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyber-bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies such as the internet and mobile phones.

Conflicts or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying.

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long term effects on those involved including bystanders.

DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT

Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual of group due to their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; marital, parenting or economic status; age; ability or disability and that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment.

Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour, or it may be a single act.

IT MAY BE HELPFUL TO ALSO KNOW THAT:

Discrimination

- Discrimination occurs when people are treated less favourably than others because of their race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; marital; parenting or economic status age; ability or disability.
- Discrimination is often ongoing and commonly involves exclusion or rejection and may be subject to investigation under the Equal Opportunity Act 1984.

Violence

- Violence is the intentional use of physical force power, threatened or actual, against another person(s) that results in psychological harm, injury or in some cases death.
- Violence may involve provoked or unprovoked acts and can be a single incident, a random act or can occur over time. This may constitute an assault, which is a police matter.

Bullying and Harassment

- May involve hitting, kicking, pinching (physical) name-calling, teasing, threats (verbal); notes, graffiti, text messages, sending filmed or photographed images, comments on social networking sites (visual/written); stand-over tactics, gestures (psychological); rumours, putdowns (social exclusion); physical, verbal or nonverbal sexual conduct (sexual).
- May be done directly (eg. Face to face) or indirectly (eg. via the internet or mobile phones)
- Involves the misuse of power and may be motivated by jealousy, distrust, fear, misunderstanding or lack of knowledge.
- Has an element of threat
- Is often hidden from adults
- Will be sustained if adults or peers do not take action.

NOTE: Under recent amendments to the South Australian Equal Opportunity Act 1984 it is unlawful for a student 16 years of age and over to sexually harass another student or staff member.

- Students and staff should have their complaints addressed through the School Grievance Procedure, but can make a complaint to the Equal Opportunity Commission of South Australia.

HOW CAN I TELL IF MY CHILD IS BEING HARASSED?

Children affected by bullying and harassment may not talk about it with their teachers or school counsellor. They may be afraid that it will only make things worse, or that it is wrong to tell tales or 'dob in' other students.

When people are bullied or harassed they may feel angry, embarrassed, frightened, humiliated or uncomfortable, scared or unsafe. That is why, as parent or caregiver, you have an important part to play in helping the school and your child deal with bullying and harassment.

Some signs a child or young person is being bullied or harassed may be:

- Reduced ability to concentrate and learn
- Refusal to attend school, excuses not to go
- Unexplained cuts, bruises or scratches
- Stolen or damaged possessions / clothing
- Headaches or stomach aches
- Asking for extra pocket money or food
- Acting out, tearfulness, sadness, lack of interest in usual activities
- Unwillingness to discuss or secrecy about their online communication (eg. Mobile phone texts, Facebook comments).

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK MY CHILD IS BEING BULLIED OR HARASSED?

If you think your child is being bullied or harassed you may feel anxious or sad. However it is important that you try to stay calm and take the following steps:

- Listen calmly to your child
- Let your child know that telling you about the bullying or harassment was the right thing to do.
- Find out:
 - * *What happened*
 - * *Who was involved*
 - * *Where it happened*
 - * *If anyone else saw, read or heard about it.*
- Talk with your child about what should be done
- Make a note of what your child tells you to help you when you talk to the school.

NOTE: These steps are also useful if you think that your child:

- Has been involved in bullying or harassment of others
- As a bystander may be affected by bullying or harassment of others
- As a bystander, has information and is concerned about other students being bullied.

TALK TO THE SCHOOL

Your child may not want you to talk about the bullying or harassment, however, it is important you let the school know so the problem can be worked out together:

- Make a time to speak to your child's teacher, Wellbeing Coordinator, Senior Leaders, Deputy Principal or Principal.
- Be as clear as possible about what happened
- Ask the school what else you can do to help your child and the school to stop the bullying or harassment from happening.
- Keep in touch with the school and let the staff know if problems continue
- You may want the school to take action that does not identify your child.

WHAT WILL THE SCHOOL DO?

A range of consequences may be used for students who bully and harass (as detailed in the schools Discipline Policy). This may include exits from class or the yard, suspension and or exclusion from school – even if the behaviour occurred outside of school hours or offsite including cyber-bullying. Police may also need to be contacted if the behaviour is considered illegal (eg sexting).

Staff may also:

- Talk with students involved and help them to solve the problem
- Teach students about dealing with conflict and anger
- Teach students about care and respect for themselves and others

Your child will be supported and in many but not all cases may access school based counselling services. A student support plan can be developed by the school in partnership with you and your child.

FOR MORE DETAILS PLEASE CONTACT

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