

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Policy Statement

Kurnai College seeks and affirms each person's worth, dignity and vocation. Bullying strikes at a basis of these values and prevents individuals reaching for excellence in every dimension of life. Students are entitled to receive their education free from humiliation, oppression, sexual harassment and abuse. Staff members, volunteers and visitors are entitled to work in a supportive environment free from bullying and aggression. Bullying affects everyone; not just the victims and bullies. It also affects others who may witness violence, intimidation and the distress of the victim. It can damage the atmosphere of a class and even the climate of a school.

The College accepts its responsibility under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act of 1984 and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 1995 to ensure that, as far as practicable, no College staff or student, whilst engaged in any College activity, subjects another person to sexual harassment or is subjected to sexual harassment.

Kurnai College is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students, staff, volunteers, and visitors 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.**

Our College will:

- Reinforce within the College community that no form of bullying is acceptable.
- Provide information to everyone within the College community about the signs and evidence of bullying and how to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- Ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to both victim and perpetrator.
- Seek parental and peer-group support and cooperation where practical.
- Monitor through student surveys the perception and/or incidents of bullying at least once a year.
- Seek feedback from volunteers and visitors to ensure their experience in the College is bullying and harassment free.

Definitions:

Bullying is repeated deliberate oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

Types of Bullying - There are three broad categories of bullying:

1. **Direct physical bullying** – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. **Direct verbal bullying** – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic, racist, social or cultural remarks, verbal abuse. **Cyber-bullying**, which involves the use of electronic means to humiliate and distress.
3. **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.
- Mimicking
- Playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate.
- Encouraging others to socially exclude someone.
- Damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance.

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

What Bullying is not:

Many distressing behaviors are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

Mutual Conflict

In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

Social Rejection or Dislike

Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation

Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied.

Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying.

Our College will actively promote a positive and welcoming personal environment for all members of the College learning 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.

Implementation:

Guidelines

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

All new students, staff, volunteers and visitors will be informed of the anti-harassment policy and practices at the commencement of their time at the College. To students this will be pointed out and

explained at the initial enrolment meeting. To new staff, volunteers and visitors through the Staff Handbook and induction process.

All complaints of harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously.

Our College will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.

Staff programs will occur as needed to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues.

There will be consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of the policy – see Student Welfare and Engagement Policy.

Program

Constructive strategies to deal with harassment will include: education in coping strategies; assertiveness training; problem solving and social skills; counselling and behavior modification. These strategies will be employed along-side punitive sanctions and negative consequences, taking into account the readily available precipitating actions.

The Bullying and Harassment Policy of the College will be widely promoted to students, staff, parents/carers and the local community.

A summary of the policy will be included in the Student Enrolment Package while new staff will receive extensive documentation as part of the College's induction process.

The College Leadership Team and the teachers will work together to ensure the safety of all College members in situations of 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 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 organised to raise student awareness about 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 (Team Time, National Day Of Action Against Bullying, Rock And Water, Girls Group). The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with current DET materials e.g. 'The Friendly Schools' and 'No Blame Approach to Bullying' programs.

Professional development for staff relating to bullying and harassment and proven strategies to address these issues in classrooms will be made available.

The College will provide specialist resources such as books, videos, kits and off site in-service activities to assist staff in responding appropriately to bullying and harassment issues.

Disciplinary consequences for bullying and harassment will comply with the Student Welfare and Engagement Policy. The principal or their nominee will provide disciplinary consequences including suspension in accordance with Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DET) guidelines.

Links:

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- DET’s Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines
- DET’s Safe Schools are Effective Schools
- DET’s Student Engagement Policy Guidelines
- The school’s ICT Policy (re cyber-bullying)
- DET’s Respectful Schools

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College’s four year review cycle.

Date Implemented	Week 3 – Term 2 – 2015 – V1
Approval Authority (Signature and date)	 07/05/2019
Dates Reviewed	Week 7 – Term 4- 2014 – V2 Week 3 – Term 2 2015 – V3 Week 3 – Term 2 2019 – V4
Responsible for Review	Student Welfare Committee
Next Review Date	Week 3 – Term 1 - 2023
References	DET

