Warracknabeal Secondary College

ANTI-BULLYING (Including cyber-bullying) & ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

Rationale:

Warracknabeal Secondary College is committed in our duty of care to provide a safe and caring environment to learn, where bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment is not occurring and students feel secure and valued at all times. This enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff, which encompass all five of our school values of Honesty, Excellence, Respect, Perseverance and Resilience.

Warracknabeal Secondary College is committed to child safety (Ministerial Order No. 870) and takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the safety of our students is paramount.

Aims:

- To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying and harassment is acceptable at Warracknabeal Secondary College.
- Everyone within the school community is alerted to signs and evidence of bullying and harassment and has a responsibility to report it to staff/co-ordinator/Principal Class, 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 involve parents/guardians throughout the process of reported bullying and harassment incidences.

What is bullying and harassment?

*Bullying* is repeated oppression, physical and/or psychological behaviour by a person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear. It is important to note that there are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying, these include:

- **mutual conflict** - which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- **single-episode acts** of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying
- **social rejection or dislike** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

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. However, these incidences will be followed up and managed according to our Positive Learning Culture Policy.
Cyber-bullying consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through electronic mediums such as cell-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, uninvited or offensive to a person.

There are some specific types of bullying and harassment behaviour: Verbal or written abuse, violence (including threats of violence), sexual harassment, homophobia and other hostile behaviour towards students relating to gender and sexuality, discrimination including racial discrimination and cyberbullying (online or via messaging devices).

Implementation:

- All students and staff will be informed of the anti-bullying/harassment policy and practices at the commencement of their time at the school.
- Warracknabeal Secondary College will display a declaration in the office foyer of our stance towards zero bullying and harassment.
- Warracknabeal Secondary College will ensure that level assemblies will discuss the topic of bullying and harassment throughout the year.
- Staff will be informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with issues of bullying and harassment as outlined by DET, including restorative practices training.
- Student programs will be organised to raise student awareness about bullying and harassment. Some matters will be dealt with formally in the curriculum, assemblies, leadership programs, extra-curricular programs and occasional activities run by outside experts and workers. These programs will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with current DET materials.
- The Anti-Bullying and Harassment policy will be available on our school’s webpage and promoted to students, staff, parents/guardians and the local community.
- Students/parents/guardians are to report all bullying and harassment incidences to a staff member. This can be done in person, via email, edmodo or over the phone. All complaints of bullying/harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously. All complaints will be passed onto the middle/senior school leading teacher. A box near the Assistant Principal’s office will also be available to identify hot spots for bullying in the school yard and also to report incidences of bullying and harassment. This must include the name of the reporter. Please note this information will remain confidential.
- 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 the middle/senior school leading teacher, 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 via file maker pro pink slips. Level Co-ordinators are to check pink slips on a daily basis.
- Where the situation occurs in out of school hours, the parents/carers and students will be referred to the police.
- A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with all forms of bullying and harassment in a consistent and systematic way. Disciplinary consequences will comply with the school’s Behaviour Management Policy (see Appendix A). This will include:
• The school leadership team and the teachers working together to ensure the safety of all school members in situations of bullying and harassment, by thoroughly investigating all complaints while respecting the need for confidentiality, notifying parents/carers and planning interventions. The Assistant Principal will make referrals to School Support Services or other support services for counselling, where necessary.

• If the incident is found to be in breach of the anti-bullying/harassment policy and is a first time occurrence, restorative questioning will be used, as well as this policy to reinforce that this behaviour is not acceptable at our College.

• If this behaviour continues, those who have breached this policy will be given an assignment to complete educating them on bullying and harassment and upon completion will sign a behaviour contract giving their undertaking that they will change such behaviours. Restorative practices will also form the basis of this discussion.

• If the behaviour continues, an escalation of consequences, including involvement of families, in accordance with Department of Education and Training (DET) guidelines. Outside agencies may be included in the strategies put into place to assist those involved.

Support Services

• Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800
• Lifeline 13 11 14
• Cybersmart Program www.cybersmart.gov.au
• Reach Out www.reachout.com.au
• Bullying, No Way! www.bullyingnoway.gov.au

LINKS AND APPENDICES (including processes related to this policy)

Links which are connected with this policy are:

• DEECĐ’s Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines
• DEECĐ’s Safe Schools are Effective School’s
• The school’s Internet Use Policy (re cyber-bullying)

APPENDICES

• Appendix A - Anti-Bullying (including cyber-bullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures
• Evaluation: This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle or more often if necessary, due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Ratified by School Council  
Date: 17/10/16

Signed:  
Principal:

School Council President:
Appendix A - Anti-Bullying (including cyber-bullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures

What are Bullying, Cyber Bullying and Harassment?

Bullying

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, who have more power at the time, deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

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 or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
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
   - playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
   - mimicking
   - encouraging others to socially exclude someone
   - damaging someone’s social reputation and social acceptance
   - cyber-bullying, which involves the use of electronic means to humiliate and distress

What Bullying is Not

Many distressing behaviours 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.

**Cyber-bullying**

Consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums such as cellphones, 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.

**Why do we have a Policy on these?**

To provide a safe and friendly college environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the *Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act* and the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act*.

**What are the effects of Bullying and Harassment?**

- poor health - anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes, social withdrawal
- reduced career prospects

**Am I bullying or harassing someone?**

If you are not sure about your behaviour you can:

- check it out by asking if it is offensive or inappropriate
- stop it
- apologise
- take it seriously if someone says they are feeling uncomfortable
- talk it over with an adviser or somebody who has an understanding of the issues

**What are some of the feelings victims of bullying or harassment may experience?**

- “*I will ignore it and it will go away.*”

  If anything it will make things worse - you will give the impression that you agree with the situation.

- “*I don’t want to cause trouble.*”

  Most causes of harassment are sorted out quite simply. By speaking up, action can be taken to address the problem.
• “Am I to blame?”

Victims of harassment or bullying sometimes feel that it is their fault. Victims are made to feel guilty by the offender and often blame themselves. It is your right to have a safe environment free from harassment or bullying.

• “Am I imagining things?”

Often our hunches are correct. Rather than put up with nagging doubts, talk to someone about your feelings.

**Bullying or harassment can often make people feel:**

- embarrassed or ashamed
- offended or humiliated
- intimidated or frightened
- uncomfortable
- depressed

**What should you do if you see another person being bullied or harassed?**

Tell the person being bullied that you witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. However, if your friend is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable.

Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully.

**Bullying can involve**

- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving
- publicly excluding a person from your group
- knocking a person’s books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
- teasing a person because of their looks
- verbal abuse

**Cyber-bullying can involve**

- *Flaming* – online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages
- *Harassment* – repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages
- *Denigration* – posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
- *Outing* – sharing someone’s secrets or embarrassing information or images online
- *Exclusion* – intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
- *Cyber-stalking* – repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear

**Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities – it can be subtle or explicit**

*Subtle (the most common) they include:*

- offensive staring and leering
- unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference
- racist or smutty comments or jokes
- questions about another’s sexual activity
- persistent comments about a person’s private life or family
- physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another’s body
- offensive name calling

Explicit (obvious) they include:
- grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving, etc
- unwelcome patting, touching, embracing
- repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal
- offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail
- sexually and/or racially provocative remarks
- displays of sexually graphic material – pornography
- requests for sexual favours
- extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution

What do you do if you are being bullied or harassed?
- tell the person who is bullying you that you don’t like what they are doing and you want them to stop
- discuss the matter with a Coordinator, Assistant Principal, Principal, teacher or Student Wellbeing Worker
- the school will take your concerns seriously - all complaints will be treated confidentially

How will your complaint be dealt with?

Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

School procedures for responding to a student who bullies or harasses others are set out below.

**Level 1**

If the bullying or harassment incident is minor or first time occurrence, teachers may elect to use one or more anti-bullying practices:
- stopping the bullying/re-statement of rules and consequences
- restorative questioning
- think time detention
- private conference
- shared control discussion

The incident must be reported on FileMaker Pro.

**Level 2**

If the bullying or harassment continues or in instances of severe bullying or harassing, a referral should be made to the co-ordinator.

The co-ordinator (or another who has responsibility for student welfare) may:
- meet with the student to develop a behaviour contract
- provide discussion/mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies including structured learning activities
- conduct a restorative conference separately with the perpetrator and “target”
- Involve a member from the Principal class.

**Level 3**

For students whose bullying or harassing and other aggressive behaviour is resistant to change, an Individual Education Plan and/or Behaviour Management plan should be developed by the co-ordinator/Principal Class, in consultation with student, parents/carers and teachers. The victim will be offered counselling through School Support Services and this will also be considered for the perpetrator.

If the behaviour continues, an escalation of consequences, including involvement of families, in accordance with Department of Education and Training (DET) guidelines. This can involve suspension. Outside agencies may be included in the strategies put into place to assist those involved.