

Sacred Heart College



Yarrowonga

Policy Against Bullying and Harassment Version 1.1

Ratified by the College Leadership team	2014
Responsibility for currency	Welfare Officer
Year for next major review	2016
Record of revisions	

Rationale

Bullying and harassment are totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated. At Sacred Heart College we aim to create an environment that is safe and supportive and free from bullying and harassment. Our College encourages and promotes mutual respect, justice, and reconciliation. The Sacred Heart College Policy Against Harassment aims to create an environment of acceptance, tolerance and openness to others and to promote and encourage respect for others and their differences.

Statements of Belief

We believe that all members of the Sacred Heart College community:

- have the right to feel safe and protected
- have the right to differing beliefs, opinions and behaviours provided they do not intrude on the rights of others
- have the right to dignity, respect and freedom from harassment and bullying. This includes comments and harassment based on gender, sexuality, race, marital status, religious beliefs, family background, political beliefs, physical or mental disability or impairment, being a parent or childless
- have a responsibility to ensure their own words and behaviour do not cause someone else to feel embarrassed, frightened, hurt, anxious, or uncomfortable.

We believe that:

- as a Catholic community we must provide positive witness to peace, justice, compassion and reconciliation
- bullying and harassment is wrong
- all bullying and harassment is totally unacceptable
- bullying and harassment is destructive of self esteem and community

Goals and guidelines

Bullying and harassment include verbal, physical or sexual conduct that is unwelcome, uninvited, unreciprocated or offensive. It may be a single incident or repetitive. At Sacred Heart College, no bullying or harassment, verbal or non-verbal is acceptable. When reported, every incident of bullying or harassment no matter how small, will be investigated.

Verbal harassment and bullying may involve:

- 'knocking' or 'putting down' another member of our community
- name calling, spreading rumours,
- negative references to a person's appearance, personality or disability
- threatening remarks or noises and intimidation or consistent yelling or stand-over tactics
- negative comments about a person's private life
- comments which may cause exclusion from groups.

Physical Harassment and bullying may involve:

- threatening behaviour
- unfair exclusion or deliberately preventing another from participating or being involved in an activity
- physical fighting or violence and spitting
- using dangerous weapons, using objects dangerously, throwing objects
- pulling and damaging clothing
- damaging or interfering with others' property
- unwanted touching
- deliberately blocking access to or exit from an area by either a group or individually
- intimidation by deliberately invading the personal space of another.

Sexual Harassment can be divided into three categories.

Subtle sexual harassment is the most common. It may involve:

- offensive jokes, questions, name calling or suggestive comments about a person's private life, mannerisms, sexual morality, sexual preferences or appearance
- unwanted, persistent 'come-ons' or invitations
- unwanted physical contact (such as purposely brushing against another's body)
- ogling, whistling, offensive staring or leering
- belittling comments based on sex-role stereotyping.

Note: Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments or courtesies.

Explicit sexual harassment may involve:

- sexual gestures which cause embarrassment, discomfort, or offence
- verbal, written or illustrative material which causes embarrassment, discomfort, or offence
- deliberate, unwelcome physical contact, such as patting, pinching, fondling, embracing, touching
- demanding or offering sexual favours or rewards
- repeated requests to go out with someone especially after prior refusal.

Serious sexual harassment may involve:

- indecent exposure
- sexual assault, which may range from unwanted touching to attempted or actual rape
- sending obscene communications including letters, emails, text messages or making obscene telephone calls.
- any criminal harassment that could be reported to the police

Racial harassment may involve:

- racist comments or jokes

- negative references to a person's appearance, cultural values, beliefs, language, country of origin.
- racial stereotyping

Emotional harassment and bullying may involve:

- repeated subjection to threats
- repeated subjection to hostility
- repeated subjection to persistent coldness
- repeatedly use of derogatory names
- being humiliated
- being ignored over long periods of time
- personal criticism in a public place
- being repeatedly undervalued or having one's work repeatedly undervalued
- emotional blackmail
- being subjected to false accusations
- withholding deserved affirmation.

Cyber bullying and harassment may involve:

- sending inappropriate, threatening, sexually explicit, offensive or intimidating text messages or emails
- posting inappropriate, threatening, sexually explicit, offensive or intimidating material on any website
- cyber bullying and harassment is illegal and may be reported to the police

Implementation

Strategies to raise awareness

- A copy of the policy against bullying and harassment will be provided for all staff as part of the College induction programme, and to students and their families on enrolment at the College.
- The policy will also be incorporated into the Staff Handbook and student Handbook as well as summarized in the student diary. All new families will receive a copy of the College Policy Against Bullying and Harassment.
- The policy will be discussed with all staff and students at the beginning of each year. Discussions, information and opportunities for learning on bullying and harassment will include the promotion of assertion skills and resilience, in the context of restorative justice.
- Harassment may need to be discussed with staff, students and parents throughout the year, individually, in groups or as a whole group.

- The Principal, Welfare Coordinator, Level Coordinators and Home Group teachers will be responsible for promoting awareness of the policy against bullying and harassment and for encouraging relevant discussions.
- The College will encourage awareness of harassment, supporting staff learning through professional development opportunities.

Other associated documents

Procedures for responding to bullying and harassment

Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Policy

Grievance Resolution Policy

Complaints Handling Procedure