

# ANTI-BULLYING & HARRASSMENT

## POLICY

### **Definition:**

Bullying essentially constitutes an abuse of power and is the repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons. It is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt another and put him/her under stress and is directed against an individual who is not able to defend himself or herself in the actual situation.

Bullying behaviour commonly includes ganging up, hurting others, jostling, pushing, laughing at others' mistakes, picking on smaller children, using stand over tactics, exclusion and ostracism, extortion, telephone and email harassment, taking other people's things, fighting, punching, making fun of people's things, lying about others, hassling people, spying on others, kicking, bribing, spitting, swearing and insulting others, name calling, spoiling games and learning, annoying or pestering, ruining people's things, teasing, throwing things at others and intimidation. Bullying that carried out through an internet service, such as e-mail, chat room, discussion group or instant message or through mobile phone technologies such as short messaging service (SMS), is cyber-bullying.

In many cases of bullying there are elements of harassment and discrimination on the grounds of 'difference'. Harassment behaviours are directed toward someone on the basis of differences such as gender, racial background, religious or cultural beliefs, sexual orientation, ability and disability and socioeconomic status. Harassment behaviour is uninvited, unwelcomed and offensive and makes the person targeted feel humiliated or intimidated.

### **Rationale:**

- Maroondah Secondary College will provide a positive culture where bullying and harassment is not accepted, and in so doing, all will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in the school environment.

### **Aims:**

- To reinforce within the school community what bullying (including cyber-bullying) and harassment is, and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- To provide a safe, secure and supportive environment free from all forms of bullying and harassment, that promotes personal respect, as well as providing physical and emotional safety for all.
- Everyone within the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and harassment and to have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying and harassment are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

### **Implementation:**

- Parents, teachers, students and the community will be aware of the school's position on bullying and harassment.
- The school will adopt a phased approach to bullying and harassment.

**A. Primary Prevention:**

- Encouraging a climate of cooperation and mutual respect through its leadership, teaching practices and modelling of desired behaviours.
- To provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Raising Community awareness and input relating to bullying and harassment, its characteristics and the school's programs and response.
- Ensuring that school organization and management practices are democratic and collaborative
- Ensuring the consistent and fair application of school rules.
- Implementing a comprehensive transition program, which incorporates peer support.
- Professional development for staff and parents relating to bullying and harassment and the strategies that counter-act them.
- School-level protocols for resolving issues or complaints will be developed and well publicised.
- A bullying survey of all students, staff and a sample of parents will be administered annually.

**B. Intervention:**

- Promote students reporting bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- Referrals of bullying and harassment will be followed up conscientiously and in a timely manner.
- The welfare team will provide structures across the school to support the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy.

**C. Further support:**

- The college has adopted the philosophies of Restorative Practice to assist in the reconciliation of all parties involved in bullying or harassment incidents. Staff have received professional development in using Restorative Practice with students.
- Students identified through the Bullying Survey will be counselled.
- Once identified; bully, victim and witnesses spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented.
- Both bully and victim offered counselling and support.
- If bullying is ongoing, parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct.

**Evaluation:**

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

June 2008