

ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

DEFINITIONS

To bully and/or harass is to use intimidating and/or inappropriate behaviour, or to persistently subject a person to unwanted attention.

Examples of bullying may include difficulties between academic, religious and non-teaching staff, between senior staff and other staff, between male and female staff, between staff and students, between male and female students or between staff and parents.

Bullying is repeated intimidation of someone or a group of people whom you mean to hurt, threaten, isolate, exclude or embarrass. It is NEVER fun.

Some examples of bullying include, but not limited to:

- Fighting, pushing, shoving, gestures or invasion of personal space
- Using offensive names, teasing or spreading rumours about others and their families
- Using put-downs, belittling others' abilities and achievements
- Picking on people because of their race, gender, sexual orientation or religion
- Writing offensive notes, e-mail or graffiti about others
- Ridiculing another's appearance
- Hurtfully excluding others from a group
- Using standover tactics or threats to "get" people
- Interfering with another's property by stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying it
- Making sexually suggestive comments, telling sexually oriented jokes, or commenting about someone's morals

The following list of behaviours could be considered intimidating or inappropriate. (This is a guide only and unacceptable behaviour is not limited to the following).

Some examples of harassment include:

Threat to professional status

- Persistent attempts to belittle and undermine work;
- Persistent criticism and lack of respect for judgements, skills or opinions of a person;
- Persistent attempts to humiliate in front of colleagues (put downs and name calling);
- Intimidatory use of discipline or competence procedures (note that this does not preclude supervisors using performance management processes in a legitimate way).

Threat to personal standing

- Undermining personal integrity;
- Destructive innuendo and sarcasm (including rumours and gossip);
- Verbal and non-verbal threats, threat of complaints when people stand up for themselves; use of private information inappropriately;
- Inappropriate or overly forceful language (including jokes, sarcasm, insults and crude language);
- Intimidating behaviour (shouting, invasion of personal space, such as entering someone's office without knocking, physically standing over another person, rifling through personal files and drawers; reading information on someone's desk without permission; blocking someone's exit, banging a desk);
- Physical violence;
- Violence to property.

Isolation

- Withholding necessary information or passive non-cooperation
- Freezing out, ignoring, excluding or cutting off in conversation

OBJECTIVE

BYC encourages staff and students to work together to maintain a safe and supportive environment where all staff, students and visitors can feel safe and free from bullying and harassment. Bullying is not tolerated at BYC and the school has preventative programs in place to educate students.

Students who have experienced bullying in their previous schools are often referred to BYC. Therefore, the school is particularly mindful of the needs of these students to feel safe and supported. All students are encouraged to report any bullying or harassment incidents immediately to any staff member. All staff members have a duty of care to be vigilant in reporting any incidents of a bullying nature to the Campus Co-ordinator or Wellbeing Co-ordinator. Severe incidences should be reported to the Head of School (HOS).

BYC aims to:

1. Provide a safe, secure and supportive environment for all members of the school community by promoting positive peer relations.
2. Provide support for victims of bullying and/or harassment.
3. Ensure bullies understand and accept responsibility for their behaviour.

The school also engages with the School Liaison Police officers. They are invited to deliver presentations to students around the topic of Bullying.

Contact for School Liaison Police officers: **02 9675 0699**

POLICY

To assist staff members, students and parents/carers to maintain an environment that is safe and free from bullying and harassment, BYC provides information and support through various sources to:

- Minimise the risk of harm and ensure students/staff feel secure;
- Support the physical, social, academic, spiritual and emotional development of students;
- Provide student welfare policies and programs that develop a sense of self-worth and foster personal development;
- Provide various courses and presentation of seminars for staff and students;
- Link to other policies;
- Regularly monitor and review of work practices in consultation with staff.

STRATEGIES TO PREVENT STUDENT BULLYING OR HARASSMENT

Staff

- Be role models in word and action;
- Be observant of signs of distress and suspected incidents of bullying or harassment. Discuss your concerns with the student;
- Promote an atmosphere in Pastoral sessions which allows open discussion and invites students to speak candidly about how they are feeling;
- Make efforts to remove occasions for bullying or harassment by active patrolling during supervision duty;
- Be watchful for incidents between lessons;
- Arrive at class on time;
- Be mindful of how students are allocated in group activities and seating plans;
- Listen to a student and be sympathetic to reports of possible bullying or harassment but don't be too quick to presume guilt;
- Report suspected bullying or harassment incidents to the Campus Co-ordinator or Wellbeing Co-ordinator, including details of the parties involved.

Students

- When someone is being bullied or harassed try to take positive action. Watching an incident may look as if you are supporting the bully;
- If someone is being bullied or harassed inform any staff member immediately;
- Make it clear to others that you do not agree with bullying or harassing behaviours.

If you are being bullied or harassed:

- Try to ignore it and not let it show that it upsets you. The bully may stop if he/she doesn't get a response;
- Confront the bully and say that his/her behaviour is unwanted and unjustified;
- Talk it over with others such as friends or parents/carers who may help to work out strategies for dealing with it;
- Tell any trusted staff member.

Parents

- Watch for signs of distress in your child e.g. unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches, missing equipment, requests for extra money, damaged clothing or bruising;
- Take an active interest in your child's social life and acquaintances;
- Advise your child to tell any trusted staff member. If possible, encourage your child to report the problem himself/herself. Much self-respect can be gained by taking the initiative and dealing with the problem without parental involvement;
- Inform any staff member if bullying or harassment is suspected;
- Do not encourage your child to retaliate;
- Communicate with your child that, as a parent, your involvement will be appropriate for the situation;
- Be willing to attend interviews at the college if your child is involved in any bullying or harassment situation.

PROCESS TO BE FOLLOWED IN DEALING WITH BULLYING AND HARASSMENT INCIDENTS INVOLVING STUDENTS

Staff and students have a responsibility to promptly raise suspected incidents of bullying and harassment when it is witnessed or if they become aware of it. The prompt raising of the issue helps to maintain a safe environment.

Allegations of bullying and harassment may result in an investigation being undertaken. Appropriate action will be taken based on the outcome of the investigation. This action may include coaching and/or counselling, an apology, an undertaking that the behaviour will not occur again, training, work adjustments or disciplinary action.

BYC does not tolerate the raising of false or malicious claims of harassment. Such behaviour may result in disciplinary action.

The school reserves the right to assess each situation based on the evidence available and to respond using the most appropriate pathway as outlined below.

First Pathway – Open discussion/“No Blame Approach”

- When an issue of bullying or harassment is first reported at BYC, the parties involved will be interviewed separately and written statements will be obtained and later filed.
- The parties will then be brought together to allow each to communicate their position and to understand the position of the other in the presence of the interviewer.
- The party/parties at fault will apologise and be asked to modify their behaviour without retribution.
- The parents of the parties involved will be notified of the process.

Second Pathway – Formal Interview (punitive response and counselling offer)

A repeat of an issue dealt with via the first pathway will lead to a formal interview comprising the following people:

Students involved (victim and perpetrator);
Parents/carers of both students;
Class Teacher/s;
Wellbeing Co-ordinator;
Campus Co-ordinator;
Head of School.(HOS)

Punitive measures will be implemented as deemed appropriate along with the suggestion that either internal or external counselling be sought by both parties. The process will be documented and issued to all parties involved.

Third Pathway – Suspension

A repeat of an issue dealt with via the second pathway may lead to the guilty party/parties being placed on a behaviour card and/or being suspended from the school. The process for suspension of students from BYC is provided in the Behavioural Management and Support Policy. Parents will be contacted by telephone and asked to come to the School to meet with the Campus Co-ordinator or Wellbeing Co-ordinator and/or HOS. This whole process will be documented.

Fourth Pathway – Withdrawal/Expulsion

A repeat of an issue dealt with via the third pathway will lead to the HOS asking that the guilty party/parties be withdrawn from the school. Failure to withdraw could lead to expulsion from the School by the HOS. The process for expulsion of students is provided in the Behaviour Management and Support Policy. This decision would not be made lightly and would involve the school taking all reasonable steps to assist the family of the effected student pastorally in rebuilding their child’s educational opportunities elsewhere.

Only the HOS may make the decision to expel a BYC student.

If staff or students believe they are being harassed or bullied, they are encouraged to approach the person and tell them that their behaviour is not acceptable and ask him or her to stop immediately.

If staff or students do not feel comfortable with this approach, or if any staff or student feel resolving their concerns informally is not appropriate, they may need to resolve the issue in a more formal manner by using the Grievance/Complaint procedure, the process of which is provided in the Behaviour Management and Support Policy.

If staff or students are being harassed by a visitor or contractor, they should notify the HOS immediately.

RECORD KEEPING

All confidential files relating to bullying and harassment are filed securely by the HOS and/or their authorised delegate as a hard copy. Only the HOS and/or their authorised delegate have access to the secure files.

This document should be read in conjunction with the following:

- **Behaviour Management and Support Policy**
- **Grievance Policy for Students, Parents and Carers**
- **Grievance Policy for Staff Including Contractors**

Policy: **Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy**

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