

## ANTI BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

---

### 1. Rationale

1.1 Bishop DrUITT College is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all members of its community. The college is charged with the responsibility of fostering the physical, emotional, moral and educational health of students and staff within its care.

Bullying and harassment go against the values of Bishop DrUITT College and the things that make our college special – a friendly, family environment; a place of opportunity and positive personal development. Intimidation, violence, bullying or harassment are completely unacceptable in all circumstances.

The college does not tolerate bullying and harassment behaviours of any kind. All members of staff have the responsibility to report conduct that may be bullying and harassment.

#### 1.2 At Bishop DrUITT College all students, parents/carers and staff have the right to:

- Be treated fairly and with respect
- Be able to be themselves
- Feel safe and feel heard
- Feel able to learn
- Have fun and enjoy school
- Be proud of being part of the college community.

#### 1.3 At Bishop DrUITT College all students, parents/carers and staff have the responsibility to:

- Be respectful and considerate to each other
- Accept and respect individual differences
- Act responsibly and sensibly, and respect the opinions of others
- Contribute positively to the learning environment
- Always try their best in work and leisure
- Respect the environment and values of the college.

### 2. Definitions

#### 2.1 Bullying

'Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that cause physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.' (Supportive School Communities Working Group 2015.)

## 2.2 What bullying is not

- **Mutual conflict** which involves a disagreement between equals, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- **A single-episode act** 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.

'These actions can cause great distress. However, they are not examples of bullying unless someone is deliberately and repeatedly doing them.' (Supportive School Communities Working Group 2015.)

## 2.3 There are three critical points in the definition of bullying:

**Power:** people who bully may acquire power through various means: physical size and strength; status within a peer group; and recruitment within the peer group so as to exclude others.

**Frequency:** bullying is not a random act; it is characterised by its repetitive nature. Because it is repetitive, the persons who are bullied not only have to survive the humiliation of the attack itself but live in constant fear of its reoccurrence.

**Intent to harm or cause distress:** bullies usually deny any intent to harm or cause distress to others and may not be fully conscious of the harm they cause. However, causing physical or emotional harm is usually a deliberate act. It puts the person being bullied into the position of being dominated by the person who bullies.

In many cases of bullying there are elements of harassment and discrimination on the grounds of 'difference'. The intention of the bully is irrelevant, the important factor is the harm done to the other person. 'It was only a joke' or 'he/she doesn't mind' are unacceptable excuses.

## 2.4 Harassment

Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their:

- Race, religion or culture
- Appearance or health conditions
- Sexual orientation
- Home and family circumstances
- Learning needs or disabilities
- Gender.



## 2.5 Types of bullying and harassment

**Physical:** intimidation; invasion of space/privacy; fighting; any unwanted physical attention or touch; gesturing that may include body language/facial expressions; going through another person's bag; hiding property; repeated and intentionally damaging another person's belongings; and threatening behaviour.

**Verbal:** repeated or systematic name calling; insults; homophobic or racist remarks; verbal abuse; offensive language; singling people out because of their appearance; and threatening phone calls.

**Sexual:** written or verbal offensive jokes; using rude names or commenting about another person's morals; unwanted invitations of a sexual nature; asking questions about another person's private life or making others do so; touching or brushing against someone in a sexual manner; and obscene gestures.

**Discriminatory:** excluding someone because of their race, gender, disability, physical appearance, religious beliefs, or their relationships and friendships with others.

**Visual:** offensive notes and drawings; inappropriate use of photos; and offensive graffiti and gestures.

**Cyber:** using technology such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms or social networking sites to bully verbally, socially or psychologically.

Types of cyberbullying include:

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

**Emotional:** victimisation; instilling fear; excluding people on purpose; ignoring someone's presence; forcing others to hand over food, money or other possessions; and forcing a student to do another student's work.

**Covert:** lying about someone; spreading rumours; playing a nasty joke that makes the person feel humiliated or powerless; and mimicking.

### **3. Policy Statement - Prevention of and response to bullying and harassment**

#### **3.1 Prevention of bullying**

3.1.1 The college will act to prevent bullying by providing ongoing education to staff, students and parents that raises awareness of all aspects of bullying.

3.1.2 Students, staff and parents will be involved in an ongoing way in the development of policy and strategies to prevent all forms of bullying.

3.1.3 Sessions promoting positive peer interactions will be included in the college's pastoral programs.

3.1.4 Staff will receive ongoing professional development relating to the prevention of bullying.

3.1.5 Students will be consulted regularly to identify and monitor potential types of bullying behaviour that can exist in school and social contexts - including cyberbullying.

#### **3.2 Response to bullying**

3.2.1 All staff have an obligation to be vigilant in regard to incidents that are potentially bullying or harassment and to immediately report suspected cases of bullying or harassment to the relevant year coordinator in secondary, or the Assistant Principal (Head of Primary) in primary.

3.2.2 The college will immediately respond to allegations of bullying and harassment by following the steps outlined in the supporting document [Procedures for preventing and responding to bullying and harassment](#).

3.2.3 Investigations of incidents suspected of being cases of bullying or harassment will be conducted in line with the [Bishop Drutt College statement on procedural fairness](#), and will focus on power, frequency and intent to harm in determining if an incident is bullying or a singular behavioural incident.

3.2.3 All confirmed bullying or harassment incidents will be documented in the school management software system and will be investigated by the year coordinator, the Director of Pastoral Care or the Assistant Principal (Head of Primary or Head of Secondary).

3.2.4 Anyone found to have bullied another person will be subject to consequences that are fair, proportionate and consistent, as outlined in the [Procedures for preventing and responding to bullying and harassment](#).

3.2.5 The college will provide parents and students with information and support when they have experienced a bullying or harassment situation and will provide the contact details for the Police School Liaison Officer and Police Youth Liaison Officer.



3.2.6 Incidents regarding workplace bullying will be dealt with according to the *Bishop DrUITT College grievance policy* and the *Bishop DrUITT College discrimination, harassment and bullying statement for employees, contractors and volunteers*.

#### **4. Implementation**

4.1 Implementation of the college's strategies for the prevention of bullying and harassment and for responding to these incidents will be overseen by the College Leadership Team.

4.2 College strategies will be reviewed annually to ensure that procedures are being followed and that improvements are made where necessary.

#### **Resources**

*Definitions 2015, Safe and Supportive School Communities (SSSC) Working Group,*  
accessed 5 Feb 2016,

<<http://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au/teachers/facts/definition.html>>

*Safe schools hub 2014, Australian Government Department of Education and Training,*  
accessed 5 Feb 2016,

<<http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/resources-and-help/resource-gallery>>

*What is bullying? 2016, National Centre Against Bullying 2016,*  
accessed 5 Feb 2016,

<<http://www.ncab.org.au/parents/whatis/>>.

*What is Bullying? 2014 State Government of Victoria, Bully Stoppers 2014,*  
accessed 5 Feb 2016,

<<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/what.aspx>>

*Working together: A toolkit for effective school based action against bullying 2010,*  
Queensland Schools Alliance Against Violence,  
Accessed 5 Feb 2016,

<<http://behaviour.education.qld.gov.au/bullying-and-violence/schools/Pages/qsaaav.aspx#starterkit>>

#### **Supporting documents**

[Bishop DrUITT College statement on procedural fairness](#)

[Information for parents and students about bullying and harassment](#)

[Procedures for preventing and responding to bullying and harassment.](#)

Alan Ball

**PRINCIPAL**  
March 2016