



Anti-Bullying Policy

Definition:

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, upset or create a risk to another person's health and safety – either psychologically or physically – or their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There are three broad categories of bullying.

- **Direct physical bullying** eg. hitting, tripping and pushing or damaging their property.
- **Direct verbal bullying** eg. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
- **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
 - Unjustified criticism or complaints
 - Cyber bullying, which involves the use of email, text messages, social media or chat rooms to humiliate and distress

WHAT BULLYING IS NOT:

Many distressing behaviours occur at school and in many workplaces but are not examples of bullying. These unpleasant behaviours often require intervention. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

- **Mutual conflict** – there is an argument or disagreement between students or staff members but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are usually upset and 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.
- **A single episode 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.

Even though nastiness and physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying, these events will not be ignored or condoned by the College.

Rationale:

- Wodonga Middle Years College does not tolerate bullying in any form.
- We respect everyone's individual differences.
- A restorative approach is used to manage bullying in the first instance.

- Each member of the College community has the right to be safe at all times while at the College and travelling to and from the College.
- No issue of bullying is too small to investigate and will be dealt with if it occurs.
- All members of the College community are committed to ensuring a safe environment exists at all times.
- Students are empowered to manage bullying issues.

Aims:

- To reinforce within the College community what bullying is, and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- Everyone within the College community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and to have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying 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:

- At the beginning of each Term, students will be reminded of the contents of the Anti-Bullying Policy in A teams
- Staff will have continuing professional development to foster an awareness of bullying and ways of preventing it.
- A survey will be used to determine areas around the College in which students feel unsafe to ensure that these areas are closely supervised. Results are to be discussed with the Team Leaders
- SIMS system is also to be used to maintain records.
- The Restorative approach will be used to deal with any issues of bullying that arise within the school according to DEECD guidelines.
- Staff will be trained in the implementation of Restorative practices.
- When a student has not demonstrated a change in behaviour and continues to harass or bully, further consequences may be implemented.
- Students can approach any member of staff at any time about incidents of bullying. The staff member needs to address the bullying with the student and develop a plan of action to address the issue.
- Parents who become aware of incidents of bullying are requested to report the incident to the A Team Teacher, Team Leader, the Wellbeing Co-ordinator or the Assistant Principal so that immediate action can be taken.
- All staff are requested to be vigilant in noticing, and acting on, instances of bullying. If the unacceptable behaviour has been ongoing a report to the Team Leader, the Wellbeing Co-ordinator or the Assistant Principal for assistance is advisable.
- Students in the company of others engaging in bullying behaviour will be considered to be supporting that behaviour and will be part of the process

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed with whole staff, student, parent and community input as part of the College's three-year review cycle.