

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

POLICY STATEMENT

Hume Valley School is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff and which encourages self-esteem, cooperation, personal growth and a positive attitude to learning and teaching. A clear bullying (including cyberbullying and harassment) prevention policy will inform the community that bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated.

AIMS:

- To provide clear definitions of what is and what is not bullying and harassment
- To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying or harassment is acceptable.
- To provide clear advice on the roles and responsibilities of the whole school community, including students, parents, caregivers and teachers for preventing and responding to bullying behaviour
- To provide clear procedures for everyone to report incidents of bullying to the school
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to any person who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour
- To seek the support and co-operation of the whole-school community at all times.

WHAT ARE BULLYING, CYBERBULLYING AND HARASSMENT?

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear.

Cyber-bullying bullying (as defined above) that occurs either online or via a mobile phone or electronic device. This may include electronic mediums such as mobile phones, web-logs and websites, on-line chat rooms, 'MUD' rooms (multi-user domains where individuals take on different characters) and Xangas (on-line personal profiles where some adolescents create lists of people they do not like). It is verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various mediums available.

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome and which could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation to a person.

Our school will actively promote a positive and welcoming personal environment for all members of the school community. When people are bullied or harassed some effects might be anger, embarrassment, fear and humiliation, loss of self-confidence and reduced function and potential. Bullying and harassment will be addressed, individual differences will be respected and students and staff will be enabled and supported in their pursuit of learning and teaching.

GUIDELINES

A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment in a consistent and systematic way.

All new students and staff will be informed of the anti-harassment policy and practices at the commencement of their time at the school.

All complaints of harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously.

Hume Valley School will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.

Staff programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues.

There will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of the Bullying (including cyberbullying) and Harassment Prevention Policy, guidelines and procedures (see Appendix A).

PROGRAM

1. Constructive strategies to deal with harassment will include: education in coping strategies; assertiveness training; problem solving and social skills; counselling and behaviour modification. These strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences.
2. The Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy of the school will be widely promoted to students, staff, parents/carers and the local community.
3. A summary of the policy will be included in the Student Enrolment Package while new staff will receive extensive documentation as part of OHS.
4. The school leadership team and the teachers will work together to ensure the safety of all school members in situations of bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment, by thoroughly investigating all complaints while respecting the need for confidentiality, notifying parents/carers and planning interventions.
5. If a teacher feels a student is at serious and imminent risk from bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment then it is their professional duty to pass on the information to an appropriate person in order to ensure appropriate support for the student. It is important that teachers document fully their interaction with the student and to verify the actions taken.
6. Student programs will be organised to raise student awareness about bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion of matters and to aid development of attitudes. Some matters will be dealt with formally in the curriculum and in peer support programs, leadership programs, extra-curricular programs and occasional activities run by outside experts and workers. The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with current DET materials e.g. Bully Stoppers: Make a Stand, Lend a Hand and 'No Blame Approach to Bullying' programs.
7. Professional development will be provided for staff relating to behavior support (including bullying and cyberbullying) and harassment using proven strategies to address these issues in classrooms will be shared with all staff.
8. Disciplinary consequences for bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment will comply with the school's Student Engagement Policy. The principal or their nominee will provide disciplinary consequences including suspension in accordance with Department of Education and Training (DET) guidelines.

Related Policies and Links

- Student Acceptable Use Agreement
- Guidelines for reporting Cyber Issues
- Internet Safety Advice for Parents
- Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy and Procedures for Mobile Phone and Electronic Device Usage at School

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- DET's [Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance 2014: Student Engagement Policy](#)
- DET's [Bully Stoppers: Make a Stand, Lend a Hand](#)

EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Ratified By Hume Valley School Council	November 2016
Review Date:	November 2018