

# BULLYING & HARASSMENT

## POLICY & PROCEDURES

### **Rationale:**

Lorne P-12 College is committed to providing a safe and respectful teaching and learning environment where bullying and harassment is not tolerated. Our school believes that all students have the right to learn in a school environment in which they feel safe and secure.

This Bullying and Harassment Policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Engagement and Inclusion Policy and the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Aims:**

- To explain what bullying and harassment are, and the fact that they are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- To ask that everyone in the school community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and 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.

### **Definitions:**

**Bullying** is when a person, or a group of people, repeatedly upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance. Bullying may be direct physical, direct verbal, indirect or cyberbullying. Bullying is not a one-off disagreement between two or more people or a situation of mutual dislike.

Bullying can be:

1. **Direct physical bullying** – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. **Direct verbal bullying** – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. **Indirect bullying** – e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person, damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance, or cyberbullying.

**Cyber-bullying** is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example via a mobile phone, chat rooms, social media. It could involve setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces. It can be verbal or written.

**Harassment** is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome and which is reasonably likely to humiliate, offend, intimidate or distress a person. For example, teasing a student because of their speech impediment.

### **Implementation:**

Lorne P-12 College will not tolerate bullying (including cyberbullying) or harassment.

A school-wide approach is taken to deal with bullying and harassment in a consistent and systematic way, with a focus on student safety and wellbeing.

Disciplinary measures will apply to students in breach of the behaviour expectations established by the school and communicated through this Bullying and Harassment Policy (also refer to our Student Code of Conduct and the Student Inclusion and Engagement Policy).

All complaints of bullying or harassment will be taken seriously and treated sensitively. This policy will be clearly communicated to students, parents and staff on the school's website and through parent information sessions and Year Handbooks.

Our school will continue with preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, tolerance, conflict resolution and problem solving.

Student programs to raise student awareness about bullying and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion 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, classroom discussions and occasional activities run by outside experts. The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with DET materials e.g. Bully Stoppers: Make a Stand, Lend a Hand and 'No Blame Approach to Bullying'.

Staff professional development programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with bullying and/or harassment issues.

An annual confidential bullying survey of the student body will be run and de-identified information will be used at staff and/or parent meetings.

If students believe they are being bullied they may contact their class teacher in the first instance, or a staff member that they would prefer to discuss the matter with.

#### **Student Support:**

If any staff member feels a student is at risk from bullying and harassing behaviours they should discuss their concerns with the class teacher and Wellbeing Team in order to ensure appropriate support for the student. It is important that staff document fully any actions taken in response to student bullying and/or harassment (*see Appendix B*).

Some strategies that might be used by the school to assist the student may include: education in coping strategies; assertiveness training; problem solving, mentoring and social skills; counselling, peer support and behaviour modification.

#### **Links & Appendices:**

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- [Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance](#)
- [DET's Bully Stoppers](#)
- [DET's Vulnerable Students](#)
- The school's ICT Acceptable Use Agreement

Supporting links:

- [The Bully Project Toolkit](#)
- [Human Rights in the Classroom](#)
- [Racism No Way](#)
- [Safe Schools Coalition Victoria](#)

Appendices which are connected to this policy are:

- Appendix 1 – Anti-Bullying (including cyberbullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures
- Appendix 2 – Reporting on Incident of Bullying/Harassment Sample Template
- Appendix 3 – What Parents Can Do

#### **Evaluation:**

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

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

**October 2017**

## **Appendix 1 – Anti-Bullying & Anti-Harassment Procedures**

### **How will a student's bullying complaint be dealt with?**

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and treated sensitively. School procedures for responding to a student who bullies or harasses others are set out below.

If at any time bullying or harassment persists or is sufficiently serious, the principal may contact parents/carers and commence formal disciplinary action in accordance with the School's Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy and the Student Code of Conduct and DET's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance. Cyberbullying and severe bullying may be referred to the Police.

#### ***Level 1***

If the bullying or harassment incident is minor or a first time occurrence, teachers may elect to use one or more of the following:

- Teacher speaks to the students involved and stops the bullying
- Students are reminded of the rules and consequences if bullying continues
- A restorative meeting may be possible between students if the student being bullied is agreeable

If the student does not take control over his/her behaviour, the Student Welfare Coordinator and/or Assistant Principal should be notified.

#### ***Level 2***

Following a second incident of bullying or harassment, teachers may elect to use one or more of the following:

- Inform student of the Bullying policy and what will happen if the bullying or harassment continues
- Inform students that their behaviour is being monitored
- Refer students to the Wellbeing Coordinator for support in changing behaviours (bullying protagonists), and strategies for dealing with bullying behaviour (students being bullied).
- provide discussion/mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies including structured learning activities
- Conduct a restorative conference separately with the perpetrator and "target".

#### ***Level 3***

If the bullying or harassment continues, or in instances of severe bullying or harassment, a referral should be made to the Student Welfare Coordinator who may:

- provide counselling support to the victim
- meet with the perpetrator to develop a Behaviour Support Plan or other type of behaviour modification strategy document and meet with parents of the student to discuss strategies
- provide discussion/mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies including structured learning activities
- parents/guardians are contacted in regards to the student's bullying behaviour
- disciplinary action to be taken in line with the school's Code of Conduct
- where appropriate, conduct a restorative conference separately with the perpetrator and "target".

#### ***Level 4***

Following level 3, and further bullying incidents reported lead straight to a suspension. Students will be required to participate in selected behaviour management programs with school staff or external providers.

The school will support students experiencing ongoing bullying to go to the Police to attain an Intervention Order against those bullying, if necessary.

## Appendix 2 – Bullying / Harassment Reporting Template

Staff member recording incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: / \_\_\_ /

Name of student(s) who appears to have instigated bullying

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Year/Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of target(s)

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Name(s) of witnesses

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Did you observe the incident?

YES

NO

If 'NO' who reported the incident to you? \_\_\_\_\_

Brief description of incident (what was allegedly said or done to the student who appears to have been bullied?)

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What form(s) of bullying took place? Verbal  Physical  Indirect  Cyber

Other  Please detail: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe how you responded (Did you use a school anti-bullying practice?)

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Describe how student responded to your intervention

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**Where / when / time incident took place:**

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

When: before school  recess  lunch  in class  after school

Time: \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ : am/pm

Date incident took place: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**Additional comments:**

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## **Appendix 3 – What Parents Can Do**

### **If your child is a victim of bullying:**

Take the bullying incident seriously and know that your child's school will too.

Stay calm and positive - It can be upsetting when your child is being bullied. Focus on identifying a solution with your child. A confident, positive and resilient appearance can stop bullying from continuing. It might be helpful to draw on your own networks to get support for yourself while you are helping your child.

Talk with the school - You do not need to ask your child's permission to talk to the school. Understandably, children who are being bullied are often fearful and worry that any action will worsen the problem. The solution is to make a parental decision to talk to the school. A consistent and co-operative approach by both the home and school is important. You can always let your child know later what actions you have taken. Let the school take responsibility for helping students who are bullying to change their ways.

Keep your child safe - You should contact the school immediately if your child's safety is at risk.

Talk with your child - Encourage your child to talk about what happened. If they want to try to deal with the bullying themselves, discuss these strategies and set a short period of time to see if they can resolve the situation. Tell your child that reporting the bullying is okay. Assure your child that it is not their fault.

Encourage your child to:

- try to act unimpressed or unaffected
- use other strategies to diffuse the situation (e.g. agreeing in an offhand way with the bullying when they say offensive or negative things - this is known as fogging)
- say 'No!' firmly
- talk to the teacher or another staff member, e.g. school guidance officer
- act confidently even when they don't feel it.

Practise some strategies at home with your child to help them to:

- stand and walk in a way that appears more confident
- give a quick reply to surprise or disarm the other child
- use a routine response (e.g. okay, whatever) that implies that the child is not bothered.

Talk about what we know doesn't work with bullying:

- fighting back
- bullying the bully
- ignoring it
- playing with a different group of friends
- remaining silent about the problem.

Talk to your child about the tips and advice offered on the student section of the Bullystoppers website.

Give them the Kids Helpline telephone number 1800 55 1800 to use if they ask to talk to someone other than the school, or you don't feel able to support them.

Say no to fighting - Do not advise your child to fight with the other child. Fighting (as distinct from defending themselves from a physical attack) with the other child can escalate the situation and your child may be reprimanded for their part in a fight.

Seek help for your child - Seek help for your child to recover from and understand the bullying incidents and give them the chance to improve their social skills. A child who has been bullied can be at greater risk than others of being bullied again (even when the bullying has been dealt with). Knowing how to deal with bullying and difficult people not just at school but throughout life in social situations and at work is a basic life survival skill.

**If your child is using bullying behaviour:**

Stay calm and learn more about your child's behaviour so that any bullying behaviours can be addressed. It can be upsetting to be told that your child has bullied others. Bullying is complex and changing. Children can do the bullying in one situation and be targeted by bullying in another.

Talk with your child - Discuss with your child why they might be behaving this way. Try to understand why they may be behaving in this way. Think about any issues or problems your child might be experiencing.

Explain why bullying is unacceptable - Help them understand what it is like for the person being bullied. Ask them how they would feel if they were being bullied.

Make clear rules and consequences for their behaviour

Acknowledge appropriate behaviour and be consistent when dealing with inappropriate behaviour.

Consider other resources.

Consider enrolling your child in a group program that helps children to manage their behaviour, learn appropriate social skills and relate in more positive ways with other people. This may be provided by the school.

Seek professional help and support if you feel that your child's bullying behaviour is part of a bigger behavioural or health problem.

Consider what's going on at home - Does your child see good examples of how to deal with issues and resolve differences with others at home?

Have any major events taken place recently to upset your child (parents separated, death in the family, significant illness in the family, or siblings bullying your child)?

Increase supervision of your child when they are with other children.

For younger children, show them how to join in with other children in a friendly way:

- first observe a game and the other children
- look for a natural break in the game for joining in
- choose a person with a friendly face and ask them if you can join in
- praise your child when they play cooperatively with others.

Talk with the school - Discuss the behaviours with the school. A consistent and co-operative approach by both the home and school is important.

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

Also <https://www.esmartschools.org.au/Pages/default.aspx>