

Hume Central Secondary College

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

1. PREAMBLE

Hume Central Secondary College students and staff have the right to a safe and caring environment which promotes learning, personal growth and positive self esteem. The College is committed to providing this and each student and member of staff has the responsibility to ensure that this occurs.

All forms of bullying, whether it is physical, verbal, social, and psychological or cyber are not tolerated at any level at Hume Central Secondary College.

All staff and students have the right to a safe environment where they can play, learn and express themselves without fear of victimization. All students have the right to be free from bullying.

Based on National figures, around 1 in 5 students are affected by bullying. Most bullying is hidden, so students find it shameful to admit they have been harassed so they don't tell anyone. Students need to feel comfortable enough to speak out and inform staff, parents and welfare team if they are being bullied.

Hume Secondary College can unite against bullying through;

- Collaboration of staff, students, parents and community
- Use of a variety of anti-bullying processes and strategies
- Implementation of firm and consistent consequences as outlined in the Student Learning and Behaviour Policy.

2. RATIONALE

Bullying and harassment are acts of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another; they can take many forms: physical, verbal, gesture, extortion and exclusion. They are an abuse of power. They can be planned and organized, or can be unintentional.

Bullying and harassment can be by an individual or by a group.

Bullying and harassment can cause long lasting harm to an individual's personal development and wellbeing.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying involves the abuse of power in relationships

Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions

Bullying involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time

Bullying is intentional

Bullying involves all forms of harassment (including sex, race, disability or homosexuality), humiliation, domination, intimidation and victimisation of others.

Bullying Behaviors can be;

- Verbal e.g. name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats
- Physical e.g. hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- Social e.g. ignoring, excluding, ostracizing, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- Psychological e.g. spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding/damaging possessions, malicious sms/email/facebook/messages, sexting, inappropriate use of camera/phones/computers/social media.

Cyber bullying is particularly insidious, powerful and devastating form of bullying. Although cyber bullying generally happens outside of school, it can affect what happens in school, contributing to poor school performance depression and even suicide.

If we are bullied or harassed,

- We may feel frightened, unsafe, embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated
- Our work, sleep and ability to concentrate may suffer
- Our relationships with our family and friends may be affected
- We may feel confused and not know what to do about the problem

Impact of bullying

A single student who bullies can have a wide ranging impact on the students they bully, students who observe bullying, and the overall climate of the school and community.

Students who are bullied – Students deserve to feel safe at school, but when they are bullied they can experience long lasting effects, that can result in;

- Depression
- Low Self Esteem
- Health problems
- Poor grades
- Suicidal thoughts

Students who Bully others – Students that intentionally bully others should be held accountable for their actions. Those who bully their peers are also more likely to;

- Get into frequent fights
- Steal and vandalise property
- Report poor grades
- Perceive a negative climate at school

Observers of bullying (bystanders) – Students who observe bullying may also feel they are in an unsafe environment, but also need to take some responsibility. The effects that can impact on bystanders include being;

- Fearful
- Powerless to act
- Guilty for not acting
- Tempted to participate

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

At Hume Central Secondary College it is the right and responsibility of staff and students to report bullying and harassment.

Staff are required to:

- Be role models in word and action at all times.
- Be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying.
- Make efforts to remove occasions for bullying by active patrolling during yard duty.
- Arrive at class on time and move promptly between lessons.
- Take steps to help victims and remove sources of distress without placing the victim at further risk.
- Act on incidents of bullying and harassment or report suspected incidents to the appropriate staff member, and complete a bullying report form.
- Treat all reports of bullying and harassment seriously.
- Be consistent and assertive in dealing with all forms of bullying.
- Be assertive in reporting incidents of bullying by students against teachers.

Students are required to:

- Refuse to be involved in any bullying situation
- Take some form of preventative action if present when bullying occurs
- Report the incident or suspected incident if present when bullying occurs

This requires the College Leadership to:

- Provide activities, programs and policies which promote a safe school environment and healthy relationships.
- Ensure, on an ongoing basis, that all students, parents and staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities in regard to bullying and harassment.
- Review the effectiveness of the Healthy Relationships Policy on a regular basis.
- Where appropriate, liaise with appropriate other bodies such as the College Council, DEECD and other relevant committees in regard to incidents of bullying and harassment.
- Address issues of bullying and harassment, and in particular racial and sexual harassment, through the curriculum.
- Formulate and implement policies which are inclusive of all students and staff, and which recognize and encourage diversity.
- Induct new staff as a matter of course in the implementation of the Healthy Relationships Policy

The College appreciates parental support of our efforts to promote a safer environment and recommends that parents:

- Watch for signs of distress in their child.
- Take an active interest in their child's social life and acquaintances.
- Advise their child to tell a staff member about a bullying incident.
- Inform the College if they suspect their child is being bullied or is bullying others.
- Keep a written record (who, what, when, where, how, why).
- Do not encourage their child to retaliate.
- Communicate to their child that parental involvement, if necessary, will be appropriate for the situation.
- Be willing to attend interviews at the College if their child is involved in any bullying incident.
- Be willing to inform the College of any cases of suspected bullying even if their own child is not directly affected.
- Be involved in strategies implemented to address bullying and harassment issues.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

Students are required to report a bullying incident to a member of staff they feel comfortable talking to, or directly to the Student Welfare Coordinator, Team Leader, Year Level Co-ordinator or Youth Worker. Staff members should report all bullying incident. When this happens, the report will be treated confidentially.

WHEN A STUDENT HAS HARRASSED OR BULLIED ANOTHER STUDENT

Options will be discussed with the student, but action must be taken to ensure the bullying stops.

The incident should be dealt with as soon as possible after a report has been made.

If a staff member witnesses or is told about a bullying incident they should refer the incident to the Team Leader, Co-ordinator who should;

- **Register incident in Xtreme as a Bullying Incident.**
- Give a verbal warning
- Issue the student with the Student Summary of the Healthy Relationships Policy and go through it with them.
- Have them sign a contract that they will not carry on with the bullying behavior.
- If the incident is serious the parents may be contacted.

The student who has been harassed or bullied should be referred to the Student Welfare Team.

If the Team Leader or Co-ordinator is made aware of another incident involving the same student, they may;

- Issue detention/s
- Issue a suspension
- Remove the student's yard privileges for a period of time
- Have an SSG with parents
- Referral made to Welfare Team
- Inform victim's parents

The student who has been harassed or bullied should be notified of the outcome of any action taken, and encouraged to re-report should the harassment continue.

The student who has been harassed or bullied should be referred to Student Welfare Team.

Further breaches of the Healthy Relationships Policy:

- The consequences for ongoing bullying or harassment are at the discretion of the College.
- Parents will be contacted, and the student who has been harassed or bullied should be referred to Student Welfare Team, and notified of the outcome of any action taken. All incidents of Bullying must be recorded in Xtreme immediately.

- If the reported incidents are deemed to be of a severe nature, including, Physical or sexual harassment involving direct physical contact should be referred directly to the Team Leader and Principal Class.

****In serious cases, teachers are required by law to report instances, or suspected instances, of child abuse to the Department of Human Services and in these cases confidentiality cannot be maintained. Similarly, teachers have a Duty of Care and cannot maintain confidentiality if a student is at serious physical risk.***

5. REVIEW

The policy is to be reviewed annually by a subcommittee lead by the Student Engagement and Wellbeing team and Student Services Team.

6. DATE COUNCIL RATIFICATION

APPENDIX I: POLICY SUMMARY FOR STUDENT USE

HUME CENTRAL SECONDARY COLLEGE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

Every member of Hume Central Secondary College community is responsible for creating a positive and safe learning environment. The College is committed to developing and sustaining a supportive and caring learning environment. The Student Learning Behaviour Policy applies within the College, while travelling to or from school or while engaged in an official school related activity or event.

Hume Central Secondary College recognises that these values underpin the College Student Learning

- All students have the right to learn and the responsibility to allow others to learn
- All students have the right to feel safe and comfortable and the responsibility to allow others to feel comfortable and safe

Every member of the College community is responsible for creating a positive and safe learning environment.

Bullying and harassment are acts of aggression that cause embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another. They can be: physical, verbal, gesture, extortion and exclusion. They can be by an individual or a group, by a **student against a student**. Bullying and harassment can cause long lasting harm to an individual's personal development and well being, and the College is committed to responding to incidents of bullying and harassment and taking action to make sure it stops.

Students are required to:

- *Refuse to be involved in any bullying situation*
- *Take some form of action if present when bullying occurs, such as sticking up for the person being bullied, walking away, or reporting the incident.*

Students can report a bullying incident to a member of staff they feel comfortable talking to, or directly to the Student Welfare Coordinator, Team Leader, Year Level Coordinator or Youth Worker. If the first staff member you tell doesn't respond, you need to tell someone else until you are listened to.

Options will be discussed with you, but action must be taken to ensure the bullying stops.

If you are reported for harassment, and it is a first offence, you can expect:

- a) to be counseled and have it explained to you why your behaviour is not acceptable
- b) To be issued a formal warning, asked to sign a contract, or your parents contacted.

If you are reported for harassment, and it is a second offence or the incident is severe, you can expect:

- a) to be counseled and have it explained to you why your behaviour is unacceptable
- b) to have your parents contacted and to face disciplinary consequences including suspension

You should be aware that if you are involved in a bullying or harassment incident of a **physical or sexual nature**, the police may become involved.

For further information or a full copy of the Healthy Relationships Policy, speak to the Student Welfare Coordinator.

APPENDIX II: STUDENT CONTRACT

BULLYING/HARASSMENT CONTRACT

I understand that this is my final warning to stop the bullying or harassment of another.

I understand what bullying and harassment is, and why it is unacceptable in our college.

I understand that if I am further involved in any bullying or harassment of another person, my parents/guardians will be informed and disciplinary action will be taken which may involve suspension.

I undertake not to be involved in harassment or bullying of any person or persons.

Student name: _____ Student signature: _____

Teacher witness: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX III: IMPLAMENTATION OF POLICY

1. When a student has harassed or bullied another student:

