

HUME CENTRAL SECONDARY COLLEGE BULLYING PREVENTION and ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

At Hume Central Secondary College, we espouse the values of Respect, Commitment and Safety for all. Every member of our community deserves to be treated with respect and dignity, free from bullying and harassment. This policy aims to empower all members of our community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying and harassment and by doing so contribute to the overall health and wellbeing of our members. Bullying, cyberbullying and harassment will not be tolerated by the Hume Central Secondary College school community.

This policy applies to sexual harassment of students by other students. In cases of sexual harassment which involves a staff member as either the offender or the offended, disciplinary procedures will be implemented according to the guidelines provided by DET's 'Sexual Harassment Policy'.

SCOPE

- A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying and harassment in a consistent and systematic way
- This policy will be communicated to all students and staff
- All complaints of bullying and harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously
- The College will organise, develop and deliver preventative curriculum programs to educate members on bullying and harassment and its impacts
- There will be disciplinary consequences, in line with the College Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Inclusion Attendance Policy, for those in breach of the Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy.

Types of Bullying 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. There are three basic categories of harassment - subtle, explicit and criminal. None is acceptable and none is too trivial to warrant complaint. The table below outlines different types of bullying and harassment.

Category	Definition/examples
Direct physical bullying	Hitting, pushing, shoving or intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence.
Direct verbal/written bullying	Name calling, insults, teasing, insulting someone about an attribute, quality, or personal characteristic, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
Indirect bullying	Action designated to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lying and spreading rumours ▪ Playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate ▪ Mimicking ▪ Encouraging others to socially exclude someone ▪ Damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance.
Cyberbullying	Direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies such as via computer or mobile device. Examples include harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal social page and taking unwanted and unapproved photos and sending them onto others, can include threats of violence as well as images, videos and/or audio.
Harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person ▪ Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed, sexuality or abilities ▪ It can be subtle or explicit.
Sexual Harassment	Any unwanted or uninvited sexual behaviour that is offensive, embarrassing, intimidating or humiliating. It includes behaviour that creates an intimidating environment. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unwelcoming touching ▪ Staring or leering ▪ Suggestive comments or jokes ▪ Sexually explicit pictures, posters, screensavers ▪ Intrusive questions about a person's private life or body ▪ Insults, name-calling or taunts based on your sex.
Racist Bullying	Belittling, mocking, intimidating or shaming someone because of their physical appearance, ethnic background, religious or cultural practices and/or the way they dress or talk.
Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying	Bullying on the basis of sexuality or gender expression. It can include physical violence, cyberbullying, name calling, exclusion, 'jokes' and/or sexual harassment.

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management:

Mutual conflict: involves an argument or disagreement between people but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

Social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Single-episode acts: of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression will be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours.

Indicators of Bullying:

Students who are being bullied may show some or all of the following signs:

- Poor health – lost appetite, anxiety, depression
- Lower self-esteem
- Reduced study performance
- Unwillingness to come to school, missed classes, social withdrawal
- Coming home regularly with damaged clothes or possessions
- Mood swings.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL MEMBERS IN RELATION TO BULLYING AND HARASSMENT:

All members of our community (students, teachers and staff, parent/guardians) have a responsibility to each other to ensure we have an environment free from bullying and harassment. As such, members will not bully or harass others and will report bullying or harassment for appropriate follow up.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BULLIED OR HARASSED:

If you feel safe and confident, you can approach the person who is bullying you and tell them that their behaviour is unwanted and not acceptable. This may be hard to do. At the time, you could also ignore them and walk away. It's important not to retaliate with physical or verbal abuse. It is important that you DO report the bullying behaviour. You could:

- Seek help and talk to someone about it that you trust, such as a friend or staff member
- Report it to a teacher, your Team Leader, or a member of the Wellbeing Team
- Talk it over with your parent/guardian.

If you feel that the bullying doesn't stop, take the issue further. See the Assistant Principal if you feel that the things you have done have not improved the situation and they will support you further.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU WITNESS OR BECOME AWARE OF SOMEONE BEING BULLIED OR HARASSED:

We all have a moral responsibility to help create a positive and safe school environment. A bystander is someone who sees or knows about bullying or other forms of violence that is happening to someone else. Bystanders can be either part of the bullying problem or an important part of the solution to stop bullying. We strongly encourage all students to stand up to bullying and not passively ignore it.

We ask bystanders who witness bullying to:

- *Be supportive and take safe action to stop the bully, find help or support the victim.*

We ask bystanders who witness bullying NOT to:

- *Watch or know about the bullying and not do anything*
- *Take the side of the bully by laughing at the victim, encouraging the bully or by passing on text messages or messages on social media sites*
- *Give silent approval or encourage the bully by looking on (including online).*

A supportive bystander will use words and/or actions that can help someone who is being bullied. If bystanders are confident to take safe and effective action to support victims, then there is a greater possibility that bullying can stop and the person who is bullied can recover. People respect those that stand up for others who are bullied but being a supportive bystander can be tough.

To be a supportive bystander we suggest:

- *Make it clear to your friends that you will not be involved in bullying behaviour*
- *Never stand by and watch or encourage bullying behaviour*
- *Do not harass, tease or spread gossip about others, this includes on social networking sites*
- *Never forward on or respond to messages or photos that may be offensive or upsetting*
- *Support the person who is being bullied to ask for help eg. go with them to a Teacher/Team Leader/Year Level Coordinator/Assistant Principal/Campus Principal to get help*
- *Report the bullying behaviour to a Teacher/Team Leader/Year Level Coordinator/Assistant Principal/Campus Principal.*

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF:

All staff have a responsibility to act if they witness bullying behaviour or if a student reports to them a bullying incident.

They will:

- *Listen and provide support to the target of the bullying by acknowledging the nature and seriousness of bullying behaviour*
- *Find out the background and attempt to resolve the incident*
- *Refer the incident to the appropriate Team Leader/Assistant Principal/Campus Principal, if more serious or follow up is required*
- *Model appropriate behaviours at all times*
- *Record details of the allegations on Compass*
- *Implement a curriculum that supports social education and student wellbeing.*

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEAM LEADERS, STUDENT WELLBEING LEADERS, PRINCIPAL CLASS:

- *Provide support to targets of bullying*
- *Provide support for bullies (eg. education)*
- *Ensure the school Anti-bullying and Anti-harassment policy is implemented consistently throughout the College*
- *Implement appropriate consequences to those involved in bullying/harassing behaviour*
- *Make contact with parent/guardian regarding bullying incidents*
- *Keep appropriate records of incidents*
- *Encourage students to continue to report incidents of bullying behaviour/harassment*
- *Disseminate information regarding the school's Anti-bullying and Anti-harassment policy, procedures and curriculum.*

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENT/GUARDIANS:

- *Watch for any signs of distress in your child (see above, Indicators of bullying)*
- *Encourage students to report any incidences of bullying to a staff member*
- *Contact your child's Team Leader/Year Level Coordinator if you are aware that your or any other child is being bullied*
- *Encourage your child to become emotionally resilient*
- *Do not encourage your child to retaliate.*

SCHOOL PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION:

The College will organise, develop and deliver preventative curriculum programs to educate members on bullying and harassment, its impacts and strategies for combatting such behaviour. For students, this will be delivered through the Mentoring program. Preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving will also be delivered.

This Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment policy will be widely promoted to students, staff, parent/guardians and the local community. A summary of the policy will be made available to new students and staff.

INTERVENTION:

- Low level incidents of bullying are dealt with by the Mentor or classroom teacher. Appropriate actions will be taken by that teacher to minimise the behaviour. The teacher will document this on Compass
- Repeated low level inappropriate behaviour is reported to the Team Leader/Year Level Coordinator for follow up ▪ Where the incident is deemed more serious or ongoing, the student(s) involved are interviewed by the Team Leader/Year Level Coordinator who has seen or had the incident reported to them. This is documented on Compass
- The Team Leader/Year Level Coordinator will ascertain if it is necessary to remove or isolate the student exhibiting the bullying behaviour while the issue is investigated
- The Team Leader/Year Level Coordinator will then investigate the incident, interviewing involved parties, including bystanders
- The Team Leader/Year Level Coordinator will discuss appropriate behaviour with the student exhibiting the bullying behaviour (and bystanders if necessary)
- The College will implement consequences to those involved commensurate with the severity of the behaviour and consistent the College's discipline procedures as outlined in the Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Inclusion Attendance Policy
- Where it is deemed appropriate, mediation will occur, facilitated by a member of the Student Management Team. This is to assist in resolving conflict between students and is focused on coming to a shared agreement of the parties
- Team Leader/Year Level Coordinator will follow up with involved parties within an adequate time frame to assess if further action is required
- Counselling and referral will be provided when and where appropriate.

FALSE CLAIM:

If it is found that any student has deliberately falsified an accusation of bullying or harassment against another student, the accusing student will be dealt with as the offending student.

RELATED SCHOOL BASED POLICIES

Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed as required or due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Date Reviewed	To Be Reviewed	Endorsed at College Council
May 2021	2-3 Years	To be endorsed