



# Bullying and Harassment Policy

## Rationale

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Footscray City College believes all members of the school community are entitled to

- Achievement - a positive learning environment
- Respect and understanding
- Responsibility - a safe and secure experience

### Therefore the College aims to ensure that

- equal opportunities are provided for all members of the school community which includes students, parents and staff.
- no individual or group of individuals is discriminated against due to ethnicity, race, religion, gender, socio-economic background or physical, emotional or intellectual differences.
- the College demonstrates a strong commitment to prevent and minimise bullying and harassment
- the school community understands that bullying and harassment is not acceptable
- the school community is aware of how to respond and manage any incidents of bullying and harassment.

## Definitions of Bullying and Harassment

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*There are variations in the definitions applied to bullying and harassment but there are commonly agreed features. Bullying, harassment and aggression as defined here are all unacceptable behaviours at Footscray City College.*

## Guidelines for Students

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*When staff, parents and students work together, we create a more caring, tolerant, healthy and harmonious school environment.*

At first you could try to ignore a one off put down or calmly tell the person to stop that behaviour.

However if you believe you are being bullied you should

- as calmly as possible state that you want them to stop and leave you alone, if you feel confident enough to do this
- discuss the problem with a close friend and/or parents
- discuss with any of the following people class teacher, home group teacher, level co-ordinator, student welfare co-ordinator, assistant principal.

**It is highly recommended that you agree to the teacher, Year Level Co-ordinator, Student Welfare Co-ordinator or Assistant Principal taking action to assist you in resolving this problem.**

### **Guidelines for students to follow if they witness someone being bullied**

*Bystander behaviour is significant in reducing or encouraging incidents of bullying. Therefore you should*

- refuse to be involved in any bullying incidents
  - not stand and watch
  - show that you and your friends disapprove in an assertive not an aggressive manner
  - get assistance from a teacher
  - tell a staff member you trust if you know of serious bullying
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## Guidelines for Parents

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*Parents are often the first to notice that something is upsetting their child. It is important that you discuss any concerns with the school so that the possibility of bullying at school can be investigated.*

- watch for any signs of distress from your child which could be associated with being bullied eg. unwillingness to come to school, missing possessions, torn clothes
- advise and encourage your child to report any incident of bullying to a teacher you trust, Home Group Teacher, Student Program Manager, Level Co-ordinator, Student Welfare Co-ordinator
- if assistance is needed for strategies to deal with a problem discuss your concerns with the Student Welfare Co-ordinator, Level Co-ordinator or Program Manager.
- inform the school if bullying is suspected
- encourage your child to seek assistance and not to retaliate.

### Stage of parent involvement

*It is important for parents, staff and students to work closely together whenever it is believed that bullying behaviours exist*

- parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns with staff as soon as they become aware of them
- parents will be informed about any significant incident involving bullying and harassment which has been reported to the school
- parents will be invited to participate in discussions with Level Co-ordinators, Student Program Managers, Student Welfare Coordinator and/or Student Support Services Officers.

## Guidelines for Teachers

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- be aware of signs of distress which could indicate if a student is being bullied
- arrive at class and yard duty punctually
- be particularly vigilant in areas where bullying may be more likely to occur eg. Crowded areas or areas where teacher presence may be lower
- listen to student's concerns
- intervene in any incident which appears to be bullying, harassment or put downs of any kind – clearly and calmly state that this behaviour is not acceptable and will not be tolerated
- discuss any concerns about suspected bullying with the Level Co-ordinator or Student Welfare Co-ordinator
- write an incident report about any observed incident or complaint of bullying made to you
- listen to parent concerns and discuss them with the level co-ordinator
- model assertive rather than aggressive, reactive responses to interpersonal interactions
- encourage socially acceptable behaviours
- be aware of and use problem solving and inclusive behavioural management and teaching strategies eg. Restorative Justice, Bystander Training, Friendly schools Friendly families approaches.

### Management of an incident of bullying – school processes

*The College acknowledges that problem solving and non-punitive approaches are considered effective strategies for supporting students involved in episodes of bullying however there are instances when it will be considered appropriate to impose a direct consequence for particular behaviours.*

### Process of investigation of an incident

- students should be listened to
- strategies should be provided to assist students in dealing with unwanted behaviours
- talk to all students involved – discuss ways of solving the problem or perceived problem
- mediation involving students concerned – this could be facilitated by the Home Group Teacher, Level Co-ordinator or Student Welfare Co-ordinator
- any incident should be referred to the Level Co-ordinator for investigation

### If the bullying persists or involves major abusive behaviours

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- consequences will be implemented according to the Student Engagement Policy
- students involved should be referred to the Student Welfare Co-ordinator for individual counselling, or assessment for other referral
- Student Support Services staff should be involved to assist in solving the problems
- further mediation will occur facilitated by the Student Welfare Co-ordinator, Program Manager, Year Level Co-ordinator or Assistant Principal.
- a written incident report should be made about any incident of bullying and harassment
- the report should be kept in the Year Level Co-ordinators file for each student involved

## School Prevention Strategies

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### School's prevention strategies

*The College recognises that prevention and early intervention approaches can do much to create an atmosphere of safety and acceptance of all students.*

- extracts from The Bullying and Harassment policy will be in the school diary and spoken about at school assemblies
- relevant articles will be included in school newsletters
- activities which promote harmonious and friendly relationships between students will be offered across the curriculum
- a referral and support process exists to assist students at risk of being involved in incidents of bullying and harassment
- appropriate training for staff in the use of problem solving and inclusive practices in teaching and dealing with student behaviour management
- suitable programs about promoting a positive and safe school environment will be available for students
- specific programs relating to school safety and bullying and harassment to be approved at Student Management meetings
- specific guidelines will be provided to all students in relation to cyberbullying and the possible school response to any inappropriate incidents involving the use of the internet and mobile phones.

## Policy Evaluation Process

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- the policy will be reviewed every three years and ratified by School Council
  - the Welfare Committee will be responsible for conducting evaluation
  - evaluation will involve analysis of appropriate data.
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