



Bullying and Harassment Policy

Rationale

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

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.

Harassment

- is unwanted and one-sided words or actions towards another that demean, annoy, alarm or abuse
- may involve a single incident or an ongoing pattern of behaviour
- may be deliberate or unintentional.

Bullying is

- a specific form of harassment which is repeated and deliberate
- a specific form of aggression which is repeated, deliberate and causes distress for the recipient
- directed towards a specific person or group
- a repeated pattern of attacks.
- when there is an imbalance of power between those bullying and the recipient
- when the behaviour is unreasonable and unjustifiable
- when the recipient finds it difficult to leave or avoid the bullying situation.

Bullying behaviours

Bullying behaviours include verbal, physical, social and psychological behaviours. Specific examples include

- hitting, tripping, pushing, throwing things towards others
- name calling, mocking, setting up, belittling and insulting someone
- making insulting racist, or sexual comments or comments about (perceived) sexual orientation
- spreading rumours, exposing private information, telling lies etc, to try to damage someone's reputation amongst other students

- using verbal or non-verbal put downs in a public context such as a discussion or meeting
- playing nasty practical jokes on others
- damaging or hiding other people's personal property
- covert forms of physical intimidation such as blocking the way and making the other person walk around them or bumping them and claiming it was an accident
- encouraging others to socially exclude the recipient
- using email, social networking sites, eg. Facebook, text messages, mobile phone videos and cameras to make malicious comments or play nasty jokes
- accusing someone of things they haven't done
- unwanted touching by others.

Guidelines for Students

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, Year Level Coordinator, Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Head of Sub-school or Assistant Principal.

It is highly recommended that you agree to the teacher, Year Level Coordinator, Student Wellbeing Coordinator 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

Guidelines for Parents

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 they trust, Home Group Teacher, Year Level Coordinator, Head of Sub-school or Student Wellbeing Coordinator
- if assistance is needed for strategies to deal with a problem discuss your concerns with the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Year Level Coordinator or Head of Sub-school.
- 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 Year Level Coordinators, Heads of Sub-School, Student Wellbeing Coordinator and/or Student Support Services Officers.

Guidelines for Teachers

- 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 Wellbeing 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 Year 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

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, Year Level Co-ordinator or Student Wellbeing Coordinator
- any incident should be referred to the Level Coordinator for investigation
- a written incident report should be made about any incident of bullying and harassment
- the report should be kept in the Year Level Coordinators file for each student involved

If the bullying persists or involves major abusive behaviours

- consequences will be implemented according to the Student Engagement Policy
- students involved should be referred to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator 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 Wellbeing Coordinator, Program Manager, Year Level Coordinator or Assistant Principal.

School Prevention Strategies

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
- 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

Policy Evaluation Process

- the policy will be reviewed every three years and ratified by School Council
- the Welfare Committee will be responsible for conducting the evaluation
- This policy was ratified on: November 2015 and to be reviewed in 2018