

Woodmans Hill Bullying and Harassment Policy

RATIONALE:

To ensure Woodmans Hill is an inclusive environment and bullying and harassment are not tolerated. We aim to provide our students, staff and community members with a safe environment where everyone is respected and treated fairly and equally.

PURPOSE:

- To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable.
- To ensure that everyone within the school community is alerted to signs and evidence of bullying.
- To ensure there is clarity of what classifies as bullying behaviour.
- To ensure that all community members understand their responsibility to report any form of bullying or harassment to staff.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to both victim and perpetrator.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and cooperation at all times.

POLICY STATEMENT:

- A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment in a consistent and systematic way.
- All Woodmans Hill students and staff will be informed of this policy and the Anti-Bullying (including cyber bullying) and Anti-Harassment procedures at the commencement of their time at the school.
- All complaints of harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously.
- Woodmans Hill will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- There will be disciplinary consequences for those in breach of the Anti-Bullying (including cyber bullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures.

DEFINITIONS:

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.

What is bullying?

There are some specific types of bullying behaviour:

- verbal or written abuse - such as targeted name-calling or jokes, or displaying offensive posters
- violence - including threats of violence
- sexual harassment - unwelcome or unreciprocated conduct of a sexual nature, which could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation

- homophobia and other hostile behaviour towards students relating to gender and sexuality
- discrimination including racial discrimination - treating people differently because of their identity
- cyberbullying - either online or via mobile phone.

What is not bullying?

There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying:

- mutual conflict - which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying
- social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Harassment

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 or abilities. It can be subtle or explicit.

Subtle (the most common) they include:

- offensive staring and leering
- unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference
- racist or smutty comments or jokes
- questions about another's sexual activity
- persistent comments about a person's private life or family
- physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body
- offensive name calling

Explicit (obvious) they include:

- grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving, etc
- unwelcome patting, touching, embracing
- repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal
- offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail
- sexually and/or racially provocative remarks
- displays of sexually graphic material – pornography
- requests for sexual favours

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Responsibilities of the Principal

- To ensure the expectations of staff, students and parents/guardians are clear.
- To monitor the implementation of school rules and values.
- To develop and maintain strong parent and community links.
- To effectively communicate and promote the school's behaviour management guidelines and procedures.

- To ensure that all members of the school community are aware of and have access to the anti-bullying school policy and procedures.
- To respond to each incident of bullying in accordance with the procedures detailed in this document.

Responsibilities of Staff

- To model, educate and discuss appropriate behaviours.
- To watch for indicators of possible bullying.
- To ensure adequate supervision of children at all times.
- To respond to all reported and observed incidents of bullying, as detailed in this policy.

Responsibilities of Students

- To have an understanding of bullying and bullying behaviours.
- To appropriately report incidents of bullying (occurring either to themselves or another student).
- To help someone who is being bullied.
- To not bully others.

Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

- To support the School's Student Anti-Bullying Guidelines and Procedures.
- To model, educate and discuss appropriate behaviours.
- To watch for indicators of possible bullying (including unwillingness to attend school or talk about school and activities, changes in personality, disturbed sleep, a pattern of headaches and stomach aches, loss of personal property).
- To encourage and support your child to inform you or a staff member if they are being bullied or witness bullying.
- To act appropriately if your child is found to be the bully.
- To speak to your child's Year Level Coordinator FIRST if you suspect or know that your child is experiencing bullying behaviour.
- Under no circumstance should parents/guardians contact other parents/guardians or children regarding an issue of bullying.
- All matters should be referred to your child's Year Level Coordinator who will then respond according to this document.

RESPONDING TO BULLYING:

Woodmans Hill has a 3-phase approach to addressing bullying in our school community.

1. **PREVENTION:** Our students are provided with education about bullying. We utilise our staff, external providers and our Youth Counsellors and School Nurse to educate our students. We explicitly teach:
 - a. Resilience
 - b. Social intelligence
 - c. Respectful relationships
 - d. Anti-bullying and bullying prevention strategies
 - e. Effects of bullying
 - f. Empathy
 - g. Emotional intelligence

2. **RESPONSE:** Our staff respond to all incidents of bullying according to our conduct and behaviour agreed procedures.
- a. We ensure the appropriate consequences are put in place for bullying. (It is important to understand that often the appropriate consequence is NOT a punitive consequence e.g. detention, suspension)
 - b. There is a range of strategies to respond to bullying that we utilise at Woodmans Hill. Their use is determined by the nature of each case of bullying. (eg the severity of the offence; whether committed by a group or a single individual; the remorsefulness of the offender; the training and skills of the practitioner and the age of the child.)
 - c. Some strategies used include:
 - i. Serious talks
 - ii. The use of direct sanctions
 - iii. Bully Prevention in the Positive Behaviour Support (SWPB)
 - iv. Strengthening the Victim
 - v. Mediation
 - vi. Restorative Approaches – e.g. restorative chat, restorative conference
 - vii. The Method of Shared Concern
3. **COMMUNICATION:**
- a. We endeavour to work WITH families to prevent and respond to bullying.
 - b. Communication is a critical element of this and communication with parents will be made, as soon as practicable.

REFERENCES:

<p>Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines</p>	<p>https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/segpolicy</p>
<p>Bullying</p>	<p>http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/what.aspx (Bullying definitions)</p> <p>http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/roles.aspx (Bullying Roles)</p> <p>http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/impact.aspx (Impact of Bullying)</p>
<p>Cyberbullying</p>	<p>http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/cyberbullying.as</p>