



## Policy Statement

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Our school is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff and which encourages self-esteem, cooperation, personal growth and a positive attitude to learning and teaching

Lyndhurst Secondary College champions Child Safety and recognises the need to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and staff. A clear policy on bullying and harassment will inform the school community that **bullying and harassment in any form will not be tolerated.**

### Aims:

- To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable.
- Everyone within the school community is alerted to signs and evidence of bullying and has a responsibility to report it whether as observer or victim.
- 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 co-operation at all times.

## What are bullying, cyber bullying and harassment?

### *Definition of Bullying*

**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.

### *Types of Bullying*

- **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.

### *Definition of Cyberbullying*

**Cyberbullying** occurs when the internet, email or phones are used to deliberately and repeatedly engage in hostile behavior to harm someone.

### *Types of cyberbullying*

- *Flaming* – online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages
- *Harassment* – repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages
- *Denigration* – posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
- *Outing* – sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online
- *Exclusion* – intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
- *Cyber-stalking* – repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear

### *Definition of harassment*

**Harassment** is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person. Harassment is illegal and criminal prosecution can occur. Lyndhurst Secondary College will respond to harassment in accordance with the Child Safe Guidelines (refer to the LSC Child Safe Policy for further information). Harassment can be subtle or explicit.

Subtle forms 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) forms 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 or transmission of sexually graphic material or pornography
- requests for sexual favours

### *What Bullying is Not:*

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

- *Mutual Conflict* – In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for ‘retaliation’ in a one-sided way.
- *Social Rejection or Dislike* – Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.
- *Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation* – Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, they are not being bullied. Similarly, nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying. These behaviours are, however, subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in the College Behaviour Management Policy.

## **Why do we have a Policy on bullying and harassment?**

To provide a safe and friendly college environment for students and staff, we adhere to the following legislation and guidelines:

- Victorian Equal Opportunity Act (2010)
- Child, Youth and Families Act (2005)
- Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act (1984)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act (2004)
- Child Safe Standards (2016)

## **What are the effects of bullying and harassment?**

- poor health - anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes, social withdrawal
- reduced career prospects

Bullying or harassment can often make people feel:

- embarrassed or ashamed
- offended or humiliated
- intimidated or frightened
- uncomfortable

## **Am I bullying or harassing someone?**

If you are not sure about your behaviour you can:

- check it out by asking if it is offensive or inappropriate
- stop it
- apologise
- take it seriously if someone says they are feeling uncomfortable
- talk it over with an adviser or somebody who has an understanding of the issues

## School Strategies

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Our College actively promotes a positive and welcoming personal environment for all members of the school community.

Lyndhurst Secondary College has a responsibility to support all students and staff involved in an incident. Bullying and harassment will be addressed, individual differences will be respected and students and staff will be enabled and supported in their pursuit of learning and teaching.

A college-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying and harassment in a consistent and systematic way. The anti-bullying and harassment procedures of the College will be widely promoted to students, staff, parents/carers and the local community.

All students and staff will be informed of the anti-bullying procedures and practices at the commencement of their time at the College. A summary of the procedures will be included in the Student Enrolment Package and new staff will receive documentation as part of the College's induction.

The College Leadership Team and the staff will work together to ensure the safety of all members of the College community in situations of bullying and harassment. All complaints will be heard in confidence and taken seriously. These will then be thoroughly investigated while respecting the need for confidentiality. Parents/carers may be notified and interventions planned to support the students involved.

If a staff member feels a student is at serious and imminent risk from bullying and harassment, then it is their professional duty to pass on the information to an appropriate person in order to ensure appropriate support for the student. It is important that staff fully document their interactions with the student to verify the actions taken.

Constructive strategies to deal with bullying may include (but are not limited to): education in coping strategies, resilience building programs, problem solving and social skills, counselling and behaviour modification. These strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences, where appropriate.

There will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of anti-bullying procedures. The College may choose, if bullying or harassment persists or the initial incident is of such magnitude, that parents/carers will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the College's Behaviour Management Policy. The Principal may commence formal disciplinary action in line with '**Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines**' (DET) at any stage in the process depending on contextual information relating to the severity of the bullying and harassment. The Principal or their nominee will provide disciplinary consequences, which may include suspension (or expulsion) in accordance with Department of Education and Training (DET) guidelines.

Preventative student programs will be organised that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving. Programs will be implemented to raise student awareness about bullying and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion of matters and to aid development of attitudes. Some matters will be dealt with formally in the curriculum and through peer support programs, leadership programs, extra-curricular programs and occasional activities run by outside experts and workers. The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with current DET materials e.g. 'Bully Stoppers,' 'Respectful Relationships' and other relevant programs.

Professional development will be provided for staff relating to bullying and harassment and proven strategies to address these issues in classrooms will be shared with all staff.

Lyndhurst Secondary College is a registered e-Smart school and we adhere to the conditions of this registration. As such, we support students regarding staying safe online and educate them about cyberbullying. We also offer an opportunity for all school community members to report concerns about bullying anonymously through the confidential online form available on the College website.

## **School Procedures**

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### **What to do if you are being bullied or harassed – for students**

- If you feel comfortable to do so, tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop
- Discuss the matter with Sub School or Wellbeing staff, or a teacher that you feel comfortable with. You could also approach a Peer Support Leader for support in speaking with an adult mentioned above.
- You can report bullying anonymously through the online form on the College website.

### **What to do if you are being bullied or harassed – for staff**

- If you feel comfortable to do so, tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop
- Raise your concerns with a member of the principal team who will follow the Workplace Health and Safety guidelines
- You can report bullying anonymously through the online form on the College website.
- If you're not satisfied with the outcome of your discussions, contact the Department of Education (see the Raising Complaints Policy) or your union
- Staff can also seek free, confidential support from the Employee Assistance Program. Principal class permission is not required to access this service.

### **What should you do if you see another person being bullied or harassed?**

- Tell the person that you witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. If your friend is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- We encourage bystanders to enlist support if you see bullying occur and to report it to an appropriate person.

### **How will your complaint be dealt with – for students?**

Your concerns will be taken seriously. As the first priority, you will be afforded access to support as appropriate.

All complaints will be treated confidentially. School procedures for responding to a complaint against a student of bullying or harassment are set out below.

### Minor/First time occurrence

Teachers may elect to use one or more anti-bullying practices:

- stopping the bullying/re-statement of rules and consequences
- restorative questioning
- think time detention
- private conference
- shared control discussion

If the student does not take control over his/her behaviour, this will be recorded on Compass and the relevant Sub School team will be informed to address the behaviour.

### Severe/Ongoing occurrences

Teachers will ensure that separation occurs where required and will record the incident on Compass, alongside informing the relevant Sub School team.

The relevant Sub School staff may:

- liaise with the Wellbeing team as appropriate
- meet with the student to develop an individual management plan, in consultation with the student, parents/carers and teachers
- provide discussion/mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies including structured learning activities designed to develop the student's inner social and emotional strengths
- conduct a restorative conference separately with the perpetrator and "target"
- refer to outside agencies for evaluation and support, in consultation with the Wellbeing team

All details of the complaint and any processes followed will be documented and kept on file.

## **How will your complaint be dealt with – for staff?**

Your concerns will be taken seriously. As the first priority, you will be afforded access to support via the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) as appropriate.

All complaints will be treated confidentially. Complaints against students will be dealt with in accordance with the steps outlined above. School procedures for responding to a complaint against a staff of bullying or harassment are set out below.

The Principal may:

- contact the Employee Conduct Branch
- meet with the staff members involved to facilitate mediation etc as deemed appropriate
- initiate disciplinary procedures if considered necessary

All details of the complaint and any processes followed will be documented and kept on file.

## **Related Policies and Procedures**

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- DET Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance
- Student Engagement Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Child Safe Policy

## **Evaluation Process**

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Last reviewed:            September 2017

Next review:             September 2019