

# Bullying and Harassment Policy

## Purpose

Carrum Downs Secondary College is committed to the safety of all children and young people.

## Policy

Harassment in any form, including physical, verbal or cyber bullying, is unacceptable. As educators, we have a responsibility to provide teaching and learning environments that are free from harassment, and that encourage students to develop attitudes and skills that discourage, challenge and report harassment in all forms.

## Aim

- To provide a fair and supportive environment free from all forms of harassment, that supports the College values by promoting personal respect and providing physical and emotional safety for all.

## Definition

Harassment is the exertion of power over another person – often presenting as bullying behaviour, which violates an individual's rights, making them feel embarrassed, offended, upset, devalued, degraded, afraid, frustrated or angry. It is unwelcome, unreciprocated, uninvited and usually repeated. It is behaviour that breaches proper and professional conduct.

**Harassment** is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

**Bullying** is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

**Cyberbullying** is a form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, online social networking apps, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS. It may involve text or images (photos, drawings).

Examples of cyberbullying behaviour are:

- teasing and being made fun of
- spreading of rumours online
- sending unwanted messages
- defamation

Cyberbullying can happen to anyone and the bully can act anonymously. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collective members of an online community.

It is important for the school to provide a safe and friendly environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.

The effects of harassment or bullying include:

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

If a student sees another person being harassed or bullied they should tell the person that they witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. If a student witnesses harassment they should let that person know that their behaviour is unacceptable.

Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for

the bully, which could potentially lead to consequences.

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

Extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution.

**Bullying can involve such things as:**

- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving
- publicly excluding a person from your group
- taking or breaking a person's property
- knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
- teasing a person because of their looks

Being involved in online spaces – either at home or at school - requires students to behave responsibly.

This includes:

- the language you use and the things you say
- how you treat others
- respecting people's property (e.g. copyright)
- visiting appropriate places.

**Behaving safely online means:**

- protecting your own privacy and personal information (we used to call it 'stranger danger')
- selecting appropriate spaces to work and contribute
- protecting the privacy of others (this can be sharing personal information or images)
- being proactive in letting someone know if there is something is 'not quite right'. At home this would be a parent or carer, at school a teacher.

**If you are being harassed or bullied you should:**

- Tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop.
- Discuss the matter with a student leader or a teacher/coordinator that you feel comfortable with.

Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

**Implementation**

- Staff, students and members of the College community will be familiar with the school's Pro Social Model to harassment and will be provided with information relating to their rights and responsibilities.

- School level protocols based on the principles of Restorative Practices, for conflict resolution will be developed, publicised and implemented.
- Harassment by students will attract consequences consistent with the Student Management Model or Anti-Social Model.
- Professional development relating to harassment will be provided for all staff who in turn will model and practice the appropriate behaviour.
- The College will operate as an inclusive school and will acknowledge students who consistently display exemplary behaviour.
- All claims of harassment will be treated confidentially, documented and promptly and constructively addressed.
- The rights and sensitivities of all individuals will be protected.
- Curriculum will analyse the effects of harassment and assist students to understand harassment in its many forms, develop attitudes and skills that discourage, challenge, counter act and report harassing practices.
- All staff will complete the DEECD online modules Addressing Workplace Bullying & Sexual Harassment training.
- Staff members will not allow themselves or their colleagues to be subjected to harassment by any member of the College community – all such issues must be immediately reported to the principal.
- Unresolved school-level issues may be referred by the principal, or the parties involved, to the appropriate authorities.

**Evaluation:** This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's review cycle

**Related policies:** School Policy Advisory Guide – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>

*This policy was endorsed by the College Council in June, 2016*