

INTRODUCTION

All staff members of Bairnsdale Secondary College are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children. Our College values of 'respect for self' and 'respect for others' provide a strong foundation for this policy.

All members of our College community, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, appearance, religious, social or racial background are entitled to a safe, secure and caring work and learning environment.

AIM

Bairnsdale Secondary College provides students with a safe learning environment where the risk of harm is minimised and they feel physically and emotionally secure.

This policy supports the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, which outlines the basic human rights of all Victorians, including the right to recognition and equality, freedom from discrimination, cultural rights and right to protection of families and children.

Principals and teachers are held to a high standard of care in relation to students. The duty of care requires principals and teachers to take all reasonable steps to reduce risk, including implementation of strategies to prevent bullying.

Bullying and harassment are not acceptable in our College community. The purpose of this document is to provide all members of our community with clear policy, procedures and guidelines to follow in identifying and responding to incidents of bullying and harassment.

POLICY

As a College community we should understand the definition and impacts of bullying and harassment, know how to recognise incidents and share a consistent and considered approach to deal with bullying. This policy provides advice on the roles and responsibilities of students, parents / carers and teachers for preventing and responding to bullying behaviour.

This policy is freely available for all members of the College community via our website.

Definition of bullying

Bullying can be defined as repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour by a person or group, which is intended to cause harm, distress or fear.

It is often the exploitation of a power imbalance (including social influence). Types of bullying behaviour may include:

- Verbal or written abuse
- Physical violence - including threats of violence
- Sexual harassment
- Homophobia or other hostile behaviour towards students relating to gender and sexuality
- Discrimination including racial discrimination
- Cyberbullying – either online, via mobile phone or another electronic device.

Some behaviour, although unpleasant or distressing, are not described as bullying, such as:

- Mutual conflict - which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power - however, unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying
- Single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression toward one or many different people
- Social rejection or dislike, unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Bullying can be verbal, visual, written or physical. It can take place in many forms, including:

- Exclusion
- Extortion
- Derogatory comments
- Unwanted sexual attention
- Discrimination
- Intimidation
- Mockery
- Anonymous, particularly cyber bullying.

Effects of bullying

The effects of bullying and harassment can have long term consequences and may continue to do so into adult life. The effects can involve the victim as well as bystanders and the bully. Effects of bullying and harassment for the victim can include:

- Feeling frightened, unsafe, isolated, and / or embarrassed
- Lowered self-esteem / confidence and withdrawn behaviour
- Sleep disturbances
- Reduced concentration and / or drop in work standards
- Negative impact on relationships with friends and family
- Physical complaints including headaches and nausea
- Unwillingness to attend school and / or reduced attendance
- Increased chance of mental health issues depression, anxiety or self-harm.

A student who is involved in bullying or harassment as the perpetrator can also experience:

- Lowered self esteem
- Negative attention seeking
- Disrespectful attitude to authority figures
- Poor relationship with peers
- Declined work standards
- Increased likelihood of antisocial behaviours which can continue into adulthood.

IMPLEMENTATION

We recognise that a calm and consistent response when dealing with bullying issues is the most effective. The College recognises that there are different ways to respond to an incident, which depend on a range of factors.

All reported cases of bullying or harassment will be investigated by appropriate agencies within the school. The response may be managed by any one or team of the following: classroom teacher, Hub Leader, Coordinator, Key Teacher, Student Wellbeing Team member, Assistant Principal or Principal.

College staff members who identify an incidence of bullying should contact the relevant Hub Leader or Coordinator. If a resolution cannot be obtained or the behaviour continues the College may implement the following consequences:

- Direct instruction
- Mediation
- Suspension
- Counselling
- Detention
- Restriction to designated area
- Parent contact / meeting
- Individual social & Behaviour Plans.

At any time counselling is available to any party involved in bullying or harassment. Counselling is confidential, offered through our College Wellbeing Team and can occur after self-referral or staff or parent referral. Students may also be provided with information from online resources such as Kids Helpline, Bully Stoppers, Bullying No Way and Youth Beyond Blue.

The College *Duty of Care Policy and Procedure* and *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* may also be considered when managing incidents of bullying and harassment. For a detailed outline of practical ways for students, teachers and parents to deal with bullying and harassment please refer to Appendix 1.

Bullying incidents amongst staff

Incidents of bullying and harassment between staff members will be investigated by a member of the Principal Team. In such cases the College's *OH&S Policy* and *DET Human Resources Complaints Policy* will be referred to.

RELATED DOCUMENTS / KEY REFERENCES

Bairnsdale Secondary College:

- Student Management Policy
- Child Safe Policy
- Mandatory Reporting Policy

Websites:

- bullyingnoway.gov.au/
- www.kidshelp.com.au/
- www.cybersmart.gov.au/
- www.youthbeyondblue.com/

Other Resources:

- Bully Stoppers
- Bullying No Way
- Bully Stoppers Step by Step Guide: Online Incidents of Inappropriate Behaviour Affecting Students
- Youth Beyond Blue
- Whole School Approach to Student Management: Bill Rogers

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: WHAT YOU CAN DO WHEN BULLYING OCCURS

WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO

Bairnsdale Secondary College Document Name: Bullying Prevention Policy Reviewer: Assistant Principal	Review Schedule: every 2 years Date of last review: 12/12/18	Page 3 of 8
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------	-------------

Being bullied can feel awful. There are some important things you should do if you are being bullied.

Talk to someone

You are not on your own. There is always someone who can help. Bullying will probably keep happening unless you tell someone about it.

- Tell a school staff member, mum / dad / carer, one of your family, a grandparent, friend or someone else who you know will listen to you. Ask them to help you work out what to do.

If things do not get better after you have told someone, tell them again or tell a different person.

Try to be positive about yourself

It might take a while for new things to start working so do not give up if things do not get better right away. There are some important things you should do if you are being bullied:

- stay positive and be confident
- think about positive things like:
 - *what you like doing at school and away from school*
 - *what you are good at*
 - *the people who like you and care about you*
 - *friends away from school (e.g. sport or drama).*

Try some things yourself

- Tell the other person "I do not like that and you need to stop."
- Use a strong and confident voice. Even if you do not feel strong and confident, fake it!
- Talk with the person who is bullying you (if you think it is a safe thing to do). Ask them if there is a problem that you might be able to sort out together. If you feel too scared to do it alone, ask a friend to come with you.
- If possible, ignore the 'person' who is bullying you. When a person is ignored they often lose interest in continuing the bullying. If that does not work, tell someone and ask for their help.
- Do not try to get back at the person who bullies you. This usually does not work and sometimes makes things even worse. You can end up in trouble too.
- Hang around people who help you feel good about yourself. Friends do not bully you. They care about you and are fun to be around. You might also make new friends by caring about others.

If bullying happens on the phone or internet

- Do not respond to the message.
- Keep messages and posts that hurt you or write down what happened and show an adult.
- Tell your mum or dad, one of your family, a grandparent, school staff member, friend or someone else who can help you work out what to do.
- Ask for help to put a block on your mobile device or social networking page so you do not get the bullying posts or texts.
- Report the abuse to the social media site administration.

WHAT BYSTANDERS CAN DO

If you see someone being bullied they need your help. Others respect you if you stand up for someone who is being bullied.

How are they feeling?

Bairnsdale Secondary College Document Name: Bullying Prevention Policy Reviewer: Assistant Principal	Review Schedule: every 2 years Date of last review: 12/12/18	Page 4 of 8
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------	-------------

If a person is being bullied, they are probably feeling some or all of these:

- Sad
- Frightened and lonely
- Like running away
- Not wanting to go to school.

How can you help?

Sometimes people do not say or do anything because they are afraid they will be bullied as well. But if you do not do anything the bullying will probably continue. Do not stand by and let bullying happen at your school! Talk to school staff members about doing something about the bullying. You may not be able to stop the bullying yourself but you can help.

What should I do?

As long as you feel safe when you see the bullying happening, you could:

- walk away and tell a school staff member right away
- tell the person who is bullying that you will get a school staff member if they do not stop
- encourage your friends to walk away or tell the person to stop
- help the person who is being bullied to get away and go somewhere safe.

If you do not think it is safe for you to confront the bullying there are other things you can do. You can help a friend or classmate who is being bullied by:

- telling them that bullying is not okay and they did not do anything wrong
- asking them if they want help to get it stopped
- telling a school staff member about it, or another adult if it is out of school
- trying to make sure your friend is not alone when they might get bullied
- asking the person who is being bullied to join your group or game
- walking away because people who bully like others to watch
- telling the person bullying you do not think what they do is cool or funny.

What should not you *not* do?

You should try not to inflame any situations. Do not insult or provoke the bully, or try to get back at the bully physically.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

Talk to your school

If you are concerned your child is being bullied, harassed or physically hurt, talk to your school. You should also talk to the school if you believe that your child is bullying someone else.

Bullying outside the school

If bullying happens online or via text messages outside school report it to the school, especially if other children from the school are involved or it is making your child uncomfortable at school. We are aware of the potential harmful effects of bullying, including cyberbullying, on young people and take reports of bullying seriously. Do not respond online and encourage your child to 'block' the bully. Save any messages and contact the police or other agencies if you think it is necessary.

Bullying on the way to or from school is also unacceptable. Talk to the school if this is happening.

Talk to your school immediately

The sooner the College receives information about a bullying issue the quicker they can respond. College staff members understand that it can be distressing to report that your child is being bullied. They will try to support you and your child as much as possible and include you in discussions about strategies that could be used.

What should you do?

- Contact the school and make an appointment to discuss the issue. Do not directly approach any other student or their family.
- Ask us for a copy of our policies and any handouts on bullying.
- Work with the College to solve the problem by establishing a plan for dealing with the current situation and future bullying incidents.

Schools must follow privacy laws and may not be able to tell you everything that has taken place, especially about any other children involved. These laws also keep you and your child's information private too.

WHAT TEACHERS WILL DO

To prevent bullying

Teachers will develop and maintain a culture of respect and responsibility in their classroom by:

- providing students with clear expectations
- consistently reinforcing rules and applying appropriate consequences as per Bill Rogers 'Whole School Approach to Student Management'
- showing students respect as well as providing opportunities for, and encouraging success
- being a positive role model in following school rules
- affirming positive behaviour

The College teaches students about values, self-esteem, safety, conflict resolution, relationships and bullying in a range of programs including:

- Work with Key Teachers in Year 7, & 8
- Specifically targeted Pastoral Care classes in Year 7, 8, 9 & 10
- Senior School classes such as VCAL Personal Development, VCE Health & Human Development and VCE English
- Guest presenters
- Information posted around the College

College staff model positive relationships and interactions in the school and in the wider community.

The College collects data about:

- student connectedness and satisfaction with school
- students' perceptions of their safety (e.g.) frequency of bullying, cyberbullying, and cyber harassment incidents) and the effectiveness of the school's responses
- parents' and carers' perceptions of student safety and wellbeing
- teachers' perceptions and observations of student safety and wellbeing

The College addresses issues raised through the collection of data e.g. identifying "hot spots" in the school where bullying occurs and developing strategies to respond effectively such as increasing supervision or changing the physical environment.

The College monitors student safety across the entire school. Safe places are identified for students so that they can reduce the risk of being bullied.

The College promotes the Bullying Prevention Policy amongst staff, students and parents / carers.

Responding to bullying

Every time an incident of bullying is *witnessed* by a staff member they will:

- intervene and take appropriate action as required to defuse the situation quickly
- listen to the student's story
- ask the student appropriate questions to determine what happened, who witnessed, what their response was, how they felt, how they feel now
- provide this information to the appropriate Hub Leader. They should also inform them of what action has been taken so far and whether they recommend any future actions
- check with the Hub Leader to ensure they received the report and that it has been acted upon
- reflect on the incident and review their classroom practices if appropriate eg. may need to change seating plan for the next lesson

Every time an incident of bullying is *reported* to a staff member they will:

- listen to the student's story
- ask appropriate questions to confirm date, time, place, what happened, who witnesses, what their response was, how they felt, how they feel now

- establish whether bullying has occurred and if so, provide this information to the appropriate Hub Leader. They should also inform them of what action has been taken so far and whether they recommend any future actions
- if it is not a bullying incident, it will be dealt with in alignment with our College values
- Check with the Hub Leader / Coordinator to ensure they received the report and that it has been acted upon
- Reflect on the incident and review their classroom practices if appropriate eg. may need to change seating plan for next lesson

Every time a Hub Leader receives information about a bullying incident they will:

- file the report if it has been indicated that no further action is required.
- if further action is required they will speak to the student who was bullied and the student who was bullying to determine need for further action. The Hub Leader takes notes and keeps records of conversations and the report. They consider the appropriate outcomes and communicate this to the relevant people.
- Ensure all students involved (including witnesses) know that resources are available to help including College Wellbeing Team and other resources such as:
 - Websites:
 - bullyingnoway.gov.au/
 - www.cybersmart.gov.au/
 - www.kidshelp.com.au/
 - www.youthbeyondblue.com/
 - Other Resources
 - Bully Stoppers
 - Bullying No Way
 - Youth Beyond Blue
- Consider outcomes which can include:
 - contacting the parents of the student who bullied
 - contacting the parents of the student who was bullied
 - Discussions with peers and bystanders to reinforce their roles in promoting a 'bully free' school.
 - *Restorative questioning* - used on the spot or during a conference.
 - *Expectation discussions* – used when the student is asked about the school values and expectations regarding bullying. Students are also asked to reflect upon their behaviour and how it has affected others.
 - Lunch time detentions – rubbish pick up cleaning duty.
 - Suspension
 - Formal Referrals – can be made to counsellors and outside agencies to offer more intensive services to the students for ongoing support.
- Update parents and carers of all relevant stages of managing any bullying incidents.

Resources

- Bully Stoppers
- Bullying No Way
- Youth Beyond Blue
- College Wellbeing Team
- Building Respectful and Safe Schools
- Bairnsdale Secondary College Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Effective Schools are Engaging Schools