

Murtoa College

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY



Rationale:

All members of the school community have the right to work in a safe and supportive environment free from all forms of harassment and bullying. Our school is committed to ensuring a caring learning environment which promotes personal growth and positive self-esteem for all.

Bullying and harassment of individuals & groups of students is inappropriate and will not be accepted. Schools and communities need to be proactive in eliminating such practices.

Research has illustrated that the effects of bullying can be both long & short term on children. These consequences include:

- Loss of self-esteem & confidence.
- Depression.
- Poor academic performances, and in extreme cases,
- Suicide.

Research has also shown that 1 in 4 children is affected by bullying – either as a victim or as a bully. At Murtoa College we accept that bullying or harassment occurs in all Primary & Secondary Schools. We also acknowledge that schools can make a difference by implementing programs to prevent bullying by improving social skills, interpersonal relationships and self-esteem.

- Bullying or Harassment will not be tolerated at this school.

What is bullying or harassment?

Bullying is an abuse of power. It is an act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another. It is usually, but not necessarily a series of events or incidents.

Types of bullying/harassment:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Sexual
- Exclusion
- Interference
- Written
- Urging or encouraging others to behave in any of the above ways
- Through the use of mobile phones, emails, websites, chat rooms and other communications technology

Aims:

- To ensure that people feel safe
- To encourage the development of a school ethos which discourages bullying behaviour through the support of students, parents and staff
- To deal with all incidents of bullying or harassment promptly and confidentially
- To communicate and consistently reinforce clear standards of behaviour
- To monitor the playground closely (document incidents)
- To record incidents to compare and contrast annual data (computer)
- To provide opportunities for children to discuss bullying
- To provide support, counselling & protection for victims

- To ensure teachers attend appropriate professional development activities to increase their knowledge & skills to deal with prevention, intervention & post-vention of bullying or harassment

Implementation:

The student welfare co-ordinator is responsible for overseeing and co-ordinating the operation of this policy together with the year level co-ordinators and Assistant Principal, however ALL staff are responsible for the implementation of the policy.

This policy supports and complements the Student Engagement policy. The student welfare co-ordinator will ensure that all members of the College community are made aware of the policy.

Students need to be encouraged to speak up about bullying. A climate of 'Standing up for oneself' needs to be promoted.

The College appreciates parents making contact with the school if they have a concern about bullying and encourages parents to talk to their students about this issue.

Staff and students should be aware of the need to conduct themselves in such a manner as to present a positive role model to the school community at all times.

Procedures

All staff should be prepared to deal with incidents of bullying – whether it be in their class or on yard duty. It is important in the development of the school ethos that all staff members have a role in the prevention of bullying.

Step 1 – Student can report incident to the classroom teacher or any trusted teacher (the student may feel more comfortable if a friend can speak to the teacher as well)

Step 2 – Teacher should record the incident and investigate the complaint

Step 3 – Teacher should meet with bully and discuss their behaviour with them. This should take place privately, with time for discussion. Teachers should counsel the offending student with the aim of assisting them to recognise their behaviour is a form of bullying or harassment with hurtful consequences. Appropriate disciplinary consequences should be implemented if appropriate. Sometimes it helps in conciliation if both parties can meet together with the assistance of a teacher.

Step 4 – Discuss with the victim how the incident was dealt with, and emphasise the need to immediately report any reprisals should they occur. Ongoing support may need to be provided.

Further incidents of bullying by a student will result in increased consequences, but may also lead to counselling or referral.

Staff and Parents

Any staff member or parent who feels they have been bullied should contact the Assistant Principal or Principal.

Evaluation:

Successful implementation of this policy will be evident from:

- Student Satisfaction Survey results.
- Analysis of Incidents Register entries.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

June 2017