

HEATHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

# ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

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Department for Education and  
Child Development



# ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

At Heathfield High School we recognise that bullying exists in the world of adolescents and therefore all schools need to create an atmosphere of openness and reporting. We also recognise the role of parents and the community in influencing how we deal with bullying in the community.

Bullying can have far-reaching effects on adolescents' personal and social development as well as a considerable impact on their educational achievements.

Total elimination of bullying will be a difficult, if not impossible, task. It is, however, the duty of all staff, students and parents to pursue this ideal with determination and vigour. Students and staff are entitled to be safe in the educational setting without fear of harassment or bullying.

The aim of our policy is to empower the whole school community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying and harassment and to contribute to the general health and well-being of all students.

## Anti-Bullying code

Bullying interferes with learning and will not be tolerated at Heathfield High School. It is not an acceptable part of life.

The Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) recognises bullying as an inappropriate behaviour, which can be dealt with according to the school's Responsible Behaviour Policy and DECD's Suspension/Exclusion/Expulsion (SEE) procedures.

Every student has the right to participate in school life free from intimidation.

Students are expected to support each other by reporting all instances of bullying. Bullying is too important to ignore.

All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and appropriate action will be taken.

Each member of the Heathfield High School community shares the collective responsibility to ensure every member feels safe, supported and valued at all times.

## Policy aims

- To provide a safe, secure learning environment for all
- To create a supportive environment and encourage open communication
- To raise awareness of the issues involved with bullying and provide information to students, staff and parents
- To ensure that the needs of all parties are addressed
- To implement procedures to address bullying behaviour and develop mutual respect
- To impart information, skills and strategies to students, staff and parents

## How do students know about the school's Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy?

ACE group sessions, Brainstorm Productions workshops, explained in detail during ACE in week 1 term 1, regularly revisited in Middle and Senior Years' curriculum, pamphlets/posters around school, school website, SAPOL visits (e.g. Cyber-safety sessions), Moodle (Induction section)

## Definition of bullying and harassment

Bullying is not the same as a disagreement between two people.

Bullying is the misuse of power, position or privilege by an individual or group towards one or more persons. It is done to intimidate, coerce, create fear, control, embarrass, exclude, or cause pain or discomfort.



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Bullying is:

- Deliberate and ongoing
- Any form of behaviour that is not welcome and not asked for
- Distressing and hurtful to the target
- Always one way rather than an exchange

Bullying can be recognisable or hidden. Bullying is about power. A person or a group engages in bullying behaviours towards another person to establish or maintain a position of power over them.

Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; marital, parenting or economic status; age; and/or ability or disability, and that offends, humiliates or creates a hostile environment. Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour, or it may be a single act between two people or groups.

Bullying and/or harassment may be:

- Verbal - name calling, personal comments, racial abuse, gossip, making unwelcome comments, e.g. put-downs, threats, teasing, spreading rumours
- Social - being deliberately/maliciously left out or not being spoken to by an individual or group
- Property - when possessions are stolen or damaged or extortion takes place e.g. hiding, throwing, stealing, dumping or intentionally damaging someone's property; forcing others to do things, such as hand over lunches, money
- Mental - when pressure to conform is applied, intimidation (verbal e.g. threats) or nonverbal (e.g. glaring or laughing at others)
- Physical - physical assault. Throwing objects at others, pushing, shoving, fighting, pinching or any other unwelcome physical contact used intentionally to intimidate or hurt someone
- Written – graffiti (pictures, tags or words), text messages, web sites, or other misuses of technology, writing comments or notes intended to embarrass or upset someone
- Sexual – unwelcome sexual conduct which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated e.g. inappropriate touching or brushing up against someone; verbal or written sexual remarks; commenting on someone's body in a sexual way; pestering someone to go out with them or asking someone for sex when the person has said no; showing or sending pictures or texts/emails of a sexual nature, inappropriate comments about or questioning of someone's sexual identity/preferences
- Racist - any of the above types of bullying directed towards people on the basis of their racial/cultural group
- Cyber - using e-technology as a means of victimising others; using an internet service or mobile technologies - such as social networking sites (e.g. Facebook), email, chat room discussion groups, instant messaging, webpage, photographic and video images; in-boxing, clicking 'Like' button to someone's comments or SMS (text messaging) with the intention of harming another person
- Indirect – influencing, encouraging or organising someone else to be involved in any type of bullying or harassment
- Covert – when there are no witnesses or in ways which are not noticed by others
- Peer pressure plays a pivotal role in bullying and this may occur when a young person is perceived to be weak or different. Bullies don't want to be disliked and may exhibit bullying behaviour out of their own sense of self-loathing. The bully usually picks an easy target and someone that other people are unlikely to defend. The pressure to be liked combined with the pressure to reject the person who appears different leads to bullies targeting students who may already be struggling with their own social issues
- Some people find it difficult to distinguish bullying from teasing or joking. Often, a bully can dish out criticism and personal attacks, but can't take it. Teasing and joking occurs among equals and is equally given and accepted; a bully, since he or she is trying to exert control, will usually not be able to take the same level of treatment in return

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EXPECT TO BE **CHALLENGED**  
EXPECT TO BE **ENCOURAGED**  
EXPECT TO BE **THE BEST YOU CAN BE**



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## Strategies for dealing with bullying

In order to stop bullying, a target must first make his feelings known. For many, children and adults, this is a difficult task. Telling a bully that his or her actions are hurtful and not fun may be difficult, but it is a good way to determine a real bully from a joker who takes things too far. Someone who is not a bully will likely apologize and stop his or her behavior when confronted with an honest, straight-forward complaint. If, on the other hand, a person responds to the complaint with jeers, insults, or increased bullying, a target can rest assured that s/he is dealing with a bully and can feel more comfortable seeking assistance.

## What can I do if bullying is occurring?

- Ignore it
- Walk away
- Deflect with humour
- Show it doesn't upset you.
- Stay close to friends – avoid being isolated
- Tell the bully to stop
- Tell yourself you are not to blame; you don't deserve to be bullied

For all of the above, stand up for yourself and act confidently, hold your head up, look the other person in the eye, stand straight with shoulders back, stand your ground when you are talking- react calmly not aggressively.

If you witness or know/hear of someone being bullied, support them. Bullies feed off the power they have over a target. By not intervening when you witness bullying or harassment, you are supporting the behaviour, giving the bully an even stronger sense of power, which may lead to an increase in bullying.

You can stop bullies in their tracks by:

- Refusing to participate, even passively, in bullying behaviour
- Not laughing or accepting comments that make fun of or hurt others
- Telling the bully on the spot that the behaviour is wrong.
- Standing up for the person being targeted

If the bullying continues

- Seek help from someone you trust (parents/caregivers/teacher/counsellor/sports coach/student leader/BBS)
- Do not put up with behaviour that makes you feel embarrassed, uncomfortable, afraid or upset.

Silence and secrecy nurture bullying.

## Reporting or Dobbing?

Reporting bullying is about acting responsibly by trying to prevent further harm. Dobbing is deliberately trying to set someone up, to get them into trouble.

Dobbing	Reporting
No one is being hurt	You or someone else is being hurt by the bully's behaviour
No one is afraid	You or someone else is afraid



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Gets someone into trouble	Gets someone out of trouble
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## Student reporting of bullying

Students can report bullying to any member of staff or to a student leader (who will then refer the matter to a teacher or counsellor).

Students seeing others being bullied are encouraged to report it. Reports can be made anonymously.

It is important to give as much information as possible:

- Who did the bullying?
- What happened?
- When did the bullying start and how long has it been happening?
- Where did it take place?
- Were there any witnesses?

When bullying is reported, the staff member will deal with it immediately. Further appropriate action and follow up will then take place as soon as practicable (see role of staff).

- Meeting(s) to discuss the situation will be arranged with the people involved.
- All reports of bullying are acted upon; however, the consequences for students who bully may not be disclosed or observable to others
- Reoccurrences of bullying are likely to result in more serious consequences, e.g. suspension/possible exclusion.
- A report to the police will be made in the case of suspected criminal behaviour. (e.g. verbal/physical/sexual assault, serious property damage, sexting, theft, e-crimes/cyber-safety issues)

## Role of staff

All staff members are aware of the indications of potential bullying and will act in response. All staff must ensure that harassment/bullying or threatening behaviour is not tolerated in school.

All staff must respond to bullying:

- Listen.
- Reassure.
- Continue to offer help, advice and support to those involved.
- Document the incident and give to the appropriate Year Level Assistant Principal

Parents will be informed of actions taken in bullying incidents by the Assistant Principals

\* Note: Situations involving violence or sexual harassment/interference must be reported immediately to the Year Level Assistant Principal

## Duty of Care

To respond to incidents of harassment, bullying or threatening behaviour, all staff must:

- Take action as quickly as possible such as moving the bully or target, detentions, parent contact
- Make it clear to the bully that such behaviour is not acceptable
- Report the incident to the Year Level Assistant Principal in writing



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Every incident of bullying is unique. Bullying varies in its severity and consequent impact on those involved. Staff should follow the existing Responsible Behaviours Policy procedures.

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All incidents of bullying need to be documented and given to the relevant Assistant Principal to ensure that:

- Within the school, it is made clear that bullying will not be tolerated
- Sanctions used take into account the severity and frequency of the bullying
- Bullying behaviour is confronted clearly and pursued beyond the mere application of sanctions
- Students who persist in bullying, despite counselling and support, may be suspended and ultimately excluded from school

## Role of parents

If you believe your child is involved in bullying, either as a target or as an aggressor, it is appropriate to communicate this information to the school by contacting an *ACE group teacher* or *Year Level Assistant Principal* as soon as possible.

Advice for parents:

- If you suspect that your child is involved in bullying at school, either as a target or as an aggressor, encourage them to talk to you about it
- Never dismiss the matter by saying it is the child's responsibility to deal with it, either by standing up to the bully or ignoring it
- Don't be too over-protective either. Encourage your child to come to school after the school is made aware of the situation
- Listen carefully with empathy. Try to get the relevant facts without interrogation
- Encourage your child to tell someone at school about it
- Describe accurately what has been happening to your child to your contact at the school. (ACE teacher, Assistant Principal, school counsellor)
- Be prepared to work with the school to resolve the issue/s
- Understand that bullying that occurs out of school hours is often out of the school's jurisdiction

## Support through the curriculum

Heathfield High School works actively through subject-specific curriculum and the Wellbeing Program to raise awareness concerning the issues related to bullying, and to reduce the frequency and severity of bullying incidents within the school community.

Subject Specific Curriculum:

Responsible Living curriculum includes dealing with bullying and conflict resolution

All Learning Areas identify specific opportunities to reinforce conflict resolution and anti-bullying.

## Wellbeing Program

As part of their scheduled ACE group activities the students are led through a series of workshops that focus on what bullying is, the effects of bullying, the reasons people bully, the resources available in the school, and the responsibilities of all school community members. The students participate in groups structured specifically to build group awareness and associated skills.

- Implemented in Term 1 of Year 8 & 9 and followed up throughout the year in all year levels' ACE activities during Term 3
- A bullying survey will be used in Term 2 and 4 with each year level to record incidents of bullying and to monitor any such incidents/behaviour.

## Big Brother/ Big Sister Program

Year 11 and 12 student leaders undergo training before Term 1 commences for the incoming Year 8 students. The Year 8 students are encouraged, through group work and orientation activities, to develop close relationships with the Year 11/12 students. The aim is for Year 8s to use the older students as a support network and point of reference in the school for information/assistance.



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## Evaluation

An anti-bullying policy alone will not stop bullying. Bullying is an aspect of life that can only be reduced through raising awareness and appropriately empowering all members of the school community.

This policy will be reviewed regularly. The review will be conducted by representatives from Heathfield High School's Wellbeing team, in collaboration with the Students for Students (S4S), the Parents and Governing Council.

## The following websites have useful information and tips

- National Centre Against Bullying - <http://www.ncab.org.au/>
- Bullying. No Way! - <http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/>
- Office of the Children's e-Safety Commissioner - <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>
- Beyondblue - <http://www.beyondblue.org.au/index.aspx?>
- Headspace - <http://www.headspace.org.au/>
- Kids Helpline - <http://www.kidshelp.com.au/>
- Reach Out - <http://au.reachout.com/>