



Policy Number:	COL 16
Policy Name:	Bullying & Harassment Policy
Contact Officer:	Deputy Principal – Community
Date Approved by Executive:	07 December 2016
Date of Next Review:	December 2019
Related Policies:	

1. PURPOSE

1.1 As a Catholic College, with Jesus Christ as our role model, bullying and harassment is a violation of our core values of justice, hospitality and community. If the members of our Catholic College community are to be true witnesses, committed to and reflective of the Gospel values, then bullying and harassment of any kind is not to be condoned and is to be actively discouraged.

1.2 Students, staff, family members and visitors have the right to feel safe and valued, and to be treated with dignity and respect. As such, all members of our College community are expected to develop a high standard of courtesy and care for one other.

1.3 As a Child Safe School, St Joseph's College is committed to ensuring that all students, especially indigenous children from multi-cultural backgrounds and children with learning or social disabilities are respected and treated with respect.

1.4 Staff members of the St Joseph's College are entitled to a safe workplace, where they are free from sexual harassment and other forms of bullying or harassment.

2. DEFINITION

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

2.2 Bullying is a repetitive attack on someone which causes distress (e.g. embarrassment, discomfort, hurt/pain), not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks. Bullying behaviours are about an imbalance of power, where there is a deliberate intent to cause harm or distress by more powerful individuals or groups against those who are seen as less powerful.

2.3 The nature of bullying behaviour and harassment can be characterised by the following acts:

Verbal: Put downs, name calling, teasing and gossiping, comments of a sexual nature.

Physical: Actual contact (hitting, tripping, pushing, holding, spitting, inappropriate touching or persistent and unwanted eye contact).

Social: Exclusion (isolating, hiding, ignoring).

Psychological: Interference with property of others (hiding, damaging, stealing), extortion (demanding favours or money), threats or intimidation.

Written: Writing about someone, graffiti or sending notes that are derogatory, sexually offensive (including the misuse of e-mail, chatrooms, etc.).

Cyberbullying: Online Harassment: Repeatedly sending offensive messages and/or the posting of nasty, hurtful or sexual comments using electronic means. Online harassment can include repeated threats of harm/intimidation or continual inappropriate comments, pretending to be someone else on a site and/or posting material that makes another person look as if they are participating in cyberbullying. It may also include sending or posting material that is sensitive or embarrassing including forwarding private messages or images, deliberately excluding another from an online group, mailing list or text/chat/MSN type conversation. Inappropriate use of sexual images or material is not acceptable.

2.4 Cyberbullying may occur using the following applications: Email, personal websites, chatrooms, social networking sites such as Snapchat, Facebook, and other such sites; video uploading sites such as YouTube; blogs, wikis, SMS, MSN, forums, webcams and phones.

3. INDICATIONS OF BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

3.1 A student or staff member who is being bullied or harassed at St Joseph's College may display some of the following signs and symptoms:

Emotional

- Changes in personality
- Mood swings (e.g. angry outbursts, unexplained crying)
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Signs of depression and a lower self-esteem
- Psychosomatic complaints (e.g. headaches and stomach aches)

Physical

- Nervous tics and cowed body language
- Changes in eating habits
- Self-harming
- Signs of bruising, cuts, scratches and torn clothing

Social

- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Reluctant to participate in social activities
- Refusal to work or play with certain class members
- Refusal to work or socialise with certain individuals or groups

Behavioural

- Reluctant to attend the College
- Changes in College and or home routines (e.g. deliberately arriving late to school or hanging around after school)
- Truancy
- Unusual misbehaviour in class
- More easily or noticeably distracted in class or in the workplace

Home

- Bullying own family members
- Withdrawn or aggressive behaviours towards family members or friends
- Requesting extra money and 'losing' personal and valuable items

Academic

- Decrease in output of class/home work
- Decline in academic grades/marks for students; decline in professional behaviours for staff

4. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FEEL THAT I'M BEING BULLIED / CYBER-BULLIED OR HARASSED?

4.1 What should I do if I feel that I'm being bullied/cyber bullied or harassed?

- a) Take clear and assertive action in the first instance;
- b) Tell the person that their behaviour offends you. They may not realise this;
- c) Tell the person to stop;
- d) Tell an adult or person in a responsible position whom you trust.

4.2 If the bullying persists:

- Tell or contact your Homeroom Teacher/House Leader or ask a trusted person to do so. The House Leader/senior staff will investigate the matter. The College Counsellor will also be informed.
- Staff: Tell or contact a senior staff member or ask a trusted person to do so.

4.3 The investigation may involve:

- a) Interviews;
- b) Notification of parents /guardians;
- c) Counselling;
- d) Notification to Police or advice to inform Police or other relevant agencies;
- e) The initiation of restorative processes to enable an opportunity for the affected relationship to be restored;
- f) Appropriate action taken in relation to the person performing the acts of bullying and harassment that may include suspension and parent involvement in interviews and action plans resulting from the bullying behaviours.
- g) Staff members are subject to VIT regulations and the College will pursue matters according to legal and professional standards.

4.4 St Joseph's College undertakes to:

- Treat complaints seriously;
- Treat complaints promptly and confidentially;
- Investigate complaints impartially.

4.5 Harassment and bullying are defined by what occurs in the eyes of the recipient:

- Check with the person being bullied to see if the action was unwelcome;
- Support the person being bullied and encourage them to do something about it;
- Speak to a member of staff/parent/counsellor about it;
- Be aware that not talking about bullying/harassment often allows it to continue.

5. NOTE FROM THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT CHILDREN'S E-SAFETY COMMISSIONER:

(Refer to Page 4)



The Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner - resolving complaints with schools

What information we will give you?

When we notify a complaint to a school principal, we may provide information about:

- a) the name of the student who is the target of the cyberbullying
- b) a summary of the cyberbullying material
- c) suggested options to help resolve the complaint in accordance with your school policies
- d) action taken by us to date with respect to the complaint.

We will also advise you of any conditions that apply to the use of the information supplied by us (see below).

What actions should schools take?

If we notify you about a cyberbullying complaint concerning students in your school, you can help resolve the complaint by undertaking to do the following (to the extent you are capable of doing so):

- a) acknowledge receipt of the notification within 24 hours to an email address provided by us
- b) inform us of the types of actions the school proposes to take and the time period for that action to be taken by email within 5 working days of the notification
- c) meet any conditions placed on information that has been disclosed
- d) inform us of the outcomes of the action you have taken within 3 weeks from receipt of the notification
- e) talk to us if you feel that you are unable to resolve the complaint and/or that you have a serious concern that the bullying will continue so we can discuss any further assistance we may be able to provide.

Disclosure of information - conditions

When we disclose information to you, amongst other things we may ask you to:

1. Only discuss the information with the students involved and—with the students' consent—their parents or guardians.
2. Only disclose the information to third parties with the consent of the affected students or as required by law.
3. Comply with applicable privacy laws and policies in relation to the personal information disclosed.