

**BULLYING  
PREVENTION  
POLICY  
2020 - 2023**

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## RATIONALE

This policy articulates relevant information and processes relating to bullying and harassment prevention across the college community as mandated by the Department of Education and Training Victoria, as well as in consideration of Brighton Secondary College’s commitment to Student Engagement and Wellbeing.

## **BULLYING PREVENTION/ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY - 2017-2020**

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **BULLYING AND HARASSMENT IS COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE AT BRIGHTON SECONDARY COLLEGE.**

As part of the Department of Education and Training Student Engagement Policy schools are required to:

- create and maintain environments that are safe and supportive
- value diversity and promotes pro-social behaviour

### **AIM**

The purpose of this policy is to create a safe and respectful school environment and prevent bullying, cyberbullying and other unacceptable behaviours.

### **POLICY DETAIL**

Schools must include a statement about bullying and cyberbullying behaviours in the Rights and Responsibilities section of their Student Engagement Policy.

**Note:** A Student Engagement Policy should include a positive statement about the school's values and philosophy, and the related programs and strategies being implemented by the school to promote student engagement, high attendance and positive behaviours. See - [Department Resources](#). See also - Whole-School Engagement Statement.

### **DEFINITION**

#### **BULLYING**

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons.

*Bullying includes but is not restricted to:*

- Direct physical bullying - hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property.
- Direct verbal bullying - name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.
- Indirect bullying - action designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:
  - lying and spreading rumours

- playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- mimicking
- encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance

#### **COVERT BULLYING**

Covert bullying can be very difficult for someone outside of the interaction to identify. It can include hand gestures and threatening looks, whispering, excluding or turning your back on a person, restricting where a person can sit and who they can talk with. Social bullying (spreading rumours, manipulation of relationships, excluding, isolating) is often covert bullying.

#### **CYBERBULLYING**

Cyberbullying includes any form of bullying behaviour that occurs online or via a mobile device. It can be verbal or written, and can include threats of violence as well as images, videos and/or audio.

Cyberbullying is bullying using digital technologies including mobile phones, email and social media tools.

Cyberbullying includes:

##### *Pranking*

- Repeated hang ups, anonymous, mocking or threatening phone calls.
- Image sharing
- Forwarding, sharing or creation of unflattering or private images without permission.
- Sexually explicit images
- People of any age, who forward or share images of a sexual nature of a person under 18 need to be aware that this is a criminal offence (child pornography) that may result in prosecution.

##### *Text and email*

- Sending insulting or threatening text messages or emails.

##### *Personal online information*

- Publishing online someone's private, personal or embarrassing information without permission, or spreading rumours online.

##### *Identity theft*

- Assuming someone's identity online and negatively representing them in a way that damages their reputation or relationships.

##### *Hate sites*

- Creating hate sites or implementing social exclusion campaigns on social networking sites.
- Other types of cyberbullying

It is also cyberbullying when a student, or students, uses technology to run a multi-step campaign to bully another student. For example, setting another student up to be assaulted, video-recording their humiliation, posting the video-recording online and then sending the website address to others.

#### **Cyberbullying vs Bullying**

While cyberbullying is similar to bullying in some ways, there are also differences.

##### *Differences:*

Cyberbullying is invasive. Cyberbullying can be difficult to escape and is incredibly invasive. It is more likely to occur outside of school, including while at home, and can happen at any time.

Cyberbullying can involve a large audience. Cyberbullying can involve harmful material being widely and rapidly shared to a large audience, for example, rumours and images can be posted on public forums or

sent to many people at once. This material can also continue to be available and harmful long after the cyberbullying has ceased.

Cyberbullies have a sense of anonymity. Cyberbullying can provide the bully with a sense of relative anonymity and distance from the target, so there is a lack of immediate feedback or consequences.

*Similarities:*

Power imbalance - The power imbalance between the 'bully' and 'target', the repetitive nature of the bullying behaviour and the intent to harm, humiliate, embarrass, ostracise, or isolate can occur in bullying and cyberbullying.

Types of behaviour - Types of behaviour including spreading rumours and making threats or insults, can occur in bullying and cyberbullying.

Reasons for behaving in a bullying way - People often engage in cyberbullying for the same reasons they engage in bullying.

Cyberbullying includes direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This pertains to harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces.

*Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require staff intervention and management.*

- Mutual conflict - involves an argument or disagreement between people but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- Social rejection or dislike - is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.
- *Some* single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours. If any member of the school community feel that a particular situation they experienced was a case of bullying without historic pretence, each case will be considered in its own right and determined whether or not it was an instance of bullying through mediation of parties involved.

**PHYSICAL BULLYING**

Physical bullying includes hitting, pushing, shoving or intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence.

**SOCIAL BULLYING**

This is sometimes called relational or emotional bullying, and includes deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, sharing information that will have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.

**VERBAL AND WRITTEN BULLYING**

Verbal and written bullying includes name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic.

**PREVENTION OF BULLYING AND HARASSMENT**

**Brighton Secondary College undertakes to:**

- ensure that each staff member receives a copy of all related policies; create awareness of the nature of bullying and harassment; provide supporting professional development on a regular basis (including the induction of new staff members), identify risk factors, control the risk and encourage reporting of any incident.
- sustain a supportive learning environment and work culture to encourage constructive relationships between students, staff and parents. Such relationships are built through behaviours such as cooperation, consideration, and open and honest forms of communication.
- provide learning experiences to develop appropriate social skills, considerate relationships and resilience. These learning experiences will be expressed in the College curriculum and co-curricular programs at all year levels.
- provide counselling to both the victim and the perpetrator of bullying and harassment. Counselling will deal with issues of conflict resolution, and offer acceptable strategies to resolve conflicts of interest, opinion and expectation.

**The College requires students to:**

- allow other students to learn and teachers/staff to teach and work in an environment free from disruption, discrimination and harassment.
- accept responsibility for their behaviour and actions.
- be cooperative and treat all members of the College community with respect and courtesy at all times.
- promote a supportive and caring environment for all.
- refuse to be involved in any bullying situation.
- take preventative action and report actions of bullies.
- help break the code of silence which often surrounds bullying by speaking out about incidents of bullying they experience or observe.

**The College requires staff to:**

- foster inclusive community values in classes, and in all areas and activities of the College.
- discourage behaviours that exclude individuals from any aspect of school life.
- allow others to work in an environment free from disruption, discrimination and harassment.
- be a role model to students through the use of appropriate language and behaviour.
- focus on the behaviour, not the person, when dealing with issues of conflict.
- be sensitive to signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying.
- encourage victims to speak out, take steps to help victims, and remove those who are responsible for distress, in order to reduce the risk to the victim.
- implement the recommended procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying (see attached procedures).

**The College asks parents to:**

- foster inclusive community values.
- be a role model to children through the use of appropriate language and behaviour.
- watch for signs of distress in your child.
- encourage their children to discuss any incidents of bullying with them, and reinforce the need to speak out and not keep the bullying a secret.

- discuss issues and strategies with your child to develop relationship skills and understanding.
- inform the school if bullying is suspected.
- discourage their children from retaliating to incidents of bullying.
- be willing to actively participate in school interviews if their children are involved in a bullying incident.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Any incidents of reported bullying or cyberbullying or harassment will be handled/dealt with as follows:

- victim(s) and written perpetrator statement(s) will be taken by the student manager.
- victim(s) and perpetrator(s) will be interviewed separately
- parent(s) or carer(s) will be contacted
- well-being team will be involved to provide counselling, support and further education if necessary
- depending on the nature or severity of the incident (or repetitive) appropriate consequences will apply which may include:
  - temporary removal from the classroom or placement in a senior class
  - completion of a special task
  - detention (before or after school or during recess or lunchbreaks)
  - Conduct card
  - written behavioural or work agreements
  - attendance on student free days
  - being sent home from excursions, camps, other activities at parents' expense
  - involvement of the Police
  - suspension – either Internal or External
  - assisted transfer (in line with DET guidelines)

For further information, see:

- **Student Engagement Policy**
- **Student Wellbeing Policy**
- **Detention Policy**
- **Suspension Policy**

## RACIAL HARASSMENT

Racism and racial harassment are unlawful and unacceptable at Brighton Secondary College. We believe that it is the responsibility of all members of the school community to practice non-racist behaviour and to challenge racist remarks of behaviour of others.

Racism is the ill-treatment and/or harassment of another person or group because of their ethnic background or skin colour.

For the staff member, the judgement of what constitutes racist behaviour may be subjective since it is to some extent determined by the context in which the behaviour occurs and the reaction of the audience to the situation.

The following examples may be seen as incidents of racism:

- name-calling;
- comments that unfairly label or stereotype characteristics of a particular ethnic group;
- comments that relate to things such as appearance, food, abilities, work habits, religion, clothing;
- refusal to work with a particular person because of his/her background;
- refusal to listen to/impatience with the oral contribution of anyone less confident with the English language;
- imitating the accent or pronunciation of another person;
- jokes, sarcasm, and/or a condescending manner;
- verbal abuse/derogatory language;
- wearing of clothing which is “offensive” including inappropriate cultural appropriation;
- physical violence;
- graffiti that denigrates an individual or an ethnic group;
- deliberate and/or ongoing alienation, eg. making of rules that exclude a particular group on the grounds of their ethnicity or colour.

## GUIDELINES

- All staff need to question/challenge students regarding potentially racist incidents rather than ignoring them.
- Since it is vital that we are all seen to be challenging racism, incidents must be dealt with immediately by the teacher/member of staff, even if a referral is to be made.
- All staff need to promote non-racist attitudes and model non-racist behaviours in their own interactions with all members of the school community.
- All staff should attempt to include multicultural perspectives in curriculum material in order to dispel ignorance and promote understanding and celebration of difference.
- All staff need to implement inclusive strategies which are sensitive to the needs of students based on their ethnicity.

## STRATEGIES

Address the incident yourself:

- Even if words are used in a good natured way, acknowledge the level of usage but explain that such language is often used in a derogatory way which may be offensive to some people.
- Question the reason for the remark.
- Assess the situation, and if the behaviour is inappropriate, immediately pass a comment of disapproval. Remind the students of the School's Code of Conduct and how it applies to racism.

## REFERRAL

Serious and/or recurring cases of racism should be reported to the Year Level Manager and/or the Sub-School Assistant Principal. Both should be involved in dealing with such incidents. The procedure to be followed in dealing with cases of racism should be the same as that for dealing with sexual harassment.

### REPORTS/COMPLAINTS MADE BY STUDENTS:

These will be treated seriously and investigated. The procedure to be followed should be the same as for that for sexual harassment cases.

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

#### SEXUAL HARASSMENT (AS DEFINED BELOW) IS UNLAWFUL AND TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE AT BRIGHTON SECONDARY COLLEGE.

Sexual harassment is any behaviour of a sexual nature which is uninvited, unwelcome, unsolicited, not reciprocated offensive, and/or frightening, whether the action was intended or unintended. Males, females, students or staff may be perpetrators or victims of sexual harassment. Brighton Secondary College recognises that everyone has the legal right to protection from sexual harassment.

This policy aims to provide an enjoyable and harmonious learning/working environment that actively discourages sexual harassment and ensures that proper standards of conduct are maintained by all members of the community at all times.

Sexual harassment may be physical, verbal or written. It can include words, images, sounds, gestures or statements which are transmitted by telephone, fax or computer email.

Examples, which may be dealt with at a school level, include:

- offensive gestures;
- offensive staring or leering;
- suggestive comments about a person's physical appearance or sexual preference;
- offensive comments or jokes;
- questions or comments about another's sexual morality;
- uninvited physical contact, eg. purposefully brushing up against another's body;
- offensive name-calling;
- pinching, patting, touching, embracing;
- repeated requests to go out with someone, especially after prior refusal;
- sexually provocative remarks;
- displays or sexually graphic material;
- requests for sexual favours, especially as condition/payment for other "favours";
- such conduct/behaviour that creates an intimidating, hostile, and/or offensive work/class environment for any member of the school community;
- seeking to define a person in terms of their gender or sexual preference, and ignoring and/or denigrating their individual worth as a result;
- conduct of a sexual nature that either implicitly or explicitly manipulates or leverages terms or conditions of an individual's employment, including but not limited to conditions for decisions that may affect promotion, salary or job conditions, for an individual's personal benefit or as a way to coerce consent.

*Sexual harassment does not refer to statements of which the intention was to compliment or common courtesies. Any miscommunication or disagreement as to a statement's intention will be considered on a case-by-case basis through mediation with involved parties.*

Other sexual harassment offences are much more serious and may be regarded as criminal. They are to be reported to the police.

They include:

- attempted or actual rape;
- indecent exposure;
- sexual assault;
- sending obscene letters or making obscene phone calls;

### POLICY DETAIL

#### Staff Sexual Harassment of a Student

The grievance procedures for this category of harassment are covered by overriding DET directives entitled "[Procedures For Handling Complaints Against Persons Employed Under The Teaching Service Act](#)" and "[Sexual Harassment Policy and Guidelines](#)". In these circumstances, parents should be informed and the complaint ultimately directed to the Principal or Assistant Principals.

#### Staff Sexual Harassment of Another Staff Member

The grievance procedures for this category of harassment are covered in the overriding DET directives entitled "[Procedures For Handling Complaints Against Persons Employed Under The Teaching Service Act](#)" and "[Sexual Harassment Policy and Guidelines](#)". An extract from the second document follows (Point 7 - Avenues for Advice and Complaint): "The choice of the contact depends entirely upon the preference of the complainant. Advice may be sought from and/or complaints lodged with any of the following:

- nominated contact person at the workplace;
- union representative at the workplace;
- Principal/Assistant Principal;
- the relevant Union;
- the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity."

#### Student Sexual Harassment of Another Student or Student Harassment of a Staff Member

- Complainants should report possible cases to a confidante. This may be one of the Year Level Manager, the Sub-School Assistant Principal or any staff member whom the individual feels he/she can trust.
- The confidants should document any possible case on an Incident Form from Sub-Schools and relay this for the to the Sub-School Assistant Principal. Any witnesses of a sexual harassment incident should also report it to the Sub-School Assistant Principal.
- The Sub-School Assistant Principal will keep Reports of all incidents in a file which will be confidential
- If further action is indicated, this information will be related to the appropriate Sub-School Assistant Principal who will convene a meeting between the complainant student, his/herself and the Sub-School Assistant Principal to investigate the complaint.
- Possible strategies of dealing with the complaint will be discussed. The complainant's wishes regarding any action will be considered.

### REPORTING OF INCIDENTS

If a decision is made to follow through with investigation, a meeting will be convened with the offending student(s).

After investigation, if it is found that a single incident of sexual harassment has occurred, the following procedures or sanctions may be implemented:

- The offending student(s) will be removed from class at an appropriate time and counselled by the relevant Year Level Manager and the Sub-School Assistant Principal.

- During their time out of class, the student must prepare a contract giving an assurance that this behaviour will not occur again.
- Copies of the incident report and of the student's contract(s) are to be kept in the student's file(s) by the Year Level Manager.
- Parent notification.

### REPEATED AND SERIOUS OFFENCES

After investigation, if it is established that repeated or serious sexual harassment has occurred, the following procedures or sanctions may be implemented:

- Any student found to have exhibited repeated sexual harassment is committing an offence against the law.
- Any student found have exhibited repeated sexual harassment will be suspended immediately, and the parents/guardians of the student will be notified in order to begin a consultation process. Police will be notified. As each situation is unique, in addition to the steps stipulated above, other steps may be taken depending on the individual circumstances of the incident.
- At the discretion of the Principal, the students may be encouraged and assisted to find an alternative educational setting.

### IMPLEMENTATION

DET and College Councils are responsible for providing a work environment free from sexual harassment. This responsibility will be discharged through the school Principal.

All staff and students have a responsibility to ensure their behaviour does not constitute or foster sexual harassment.

A workplace contact person, the Manager Human Resources, will be the nominated initial point of contact for complaints.

It is not the role of the workplace contact person to investigate, substantiate or resolve complaints, but to be responsible for providing confidential support to a complainant. The Principal is responsible for contacting the Complaints and Investigations Unit regarding any complaint that has been made, and to inform the complainant of their rights and options.

All staff members are refer to the DET [School Policy and Advisory Guide](#) for detailed information relating to sexual harassment, avenues for lodging complaints and grievance procedures.

Staff are always encouraged to refer to current departmental policies which can be references at EduGate.

### SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

All complaints of sexual harassment will be investigated as valid complaints.

Individuals who have complained of sexual harassment will be protected from "victimisation". If victimisation does occur, the offending individual(s) will be dealt with as outlined in the "Repeated and Serious Offences" section above.

### FALSE REPORTING:

If it is found that any student has deliberately or falsely accused another student member of sexual harassment, the accusing student will be dealt with as the offending student.

### EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

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LAST UPDATED: 24/11/2020

LAST RATIFIED BY COLLEGE  
COUNCIL:

NEXT REVIEW DATE: NOVEMBER  
2023



**BRIGHTON**  
SECONDARY COLLEGE