



HARASSMENT AND ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

RATIONALE Every student enrolled at Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College has the right to experience a learning environment free from intimidation and humiliation and feel safe whilst at school. The care of students should take place within a safe environment to prevent any form of harassment or bullying. Through this positive learning environment, students grow into young adults, confident in themselves and capable of acting towards others with honesty and integrity. The College is committed to the involvement of all staff in the care of students. All students participate in formal and integrated Pastoral programs and documentation which include reference to Bullying Prevention and consequences. The College works towards achieving conflict resolution through conflict management strategies. The College is committed to the principles of acknowledging God's presence in the world and, therefore, demonstrating respect for others, personal responsibility and integrity.

PURPOSE To identify bullying behaviours;
To communicate the student grievance procedure to all members of the College community;
To enable staff to respond to any incident of bullying and to process student grievances.

RELATED POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Student Responsibility Policy
- Discipline Guidelines and Procedures

PRINCIPLES

1. Identifying what constitutes bullying behaviours

Bullying is a pattern of repetitive oppressive behaviours by an individual or group. It is the willful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone and, as such, is contrary to the Christian and Mercy Values of the College. The National Safe Schools Framework defines bullying for all Australian school: *"Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm."* Bullying is different from ordinary teasing. What makes it different is that the incidents are repeated and there is usually an imbalance in size, strength and power between the people involved.

Bullying behaviours take many forms, all of which will cause distress. Some examples of bullying include but are not limited to:

- Physical: hitting, pushing, or otherwise touching another student with the desire to intimidate, tripping, kicking, spitting on others, surrounding a student by others so that the individual feels threatened or unsafe.
- Verbal: teasing, using offensive language or name calling, negative personal comments (especially those made regarding appearance), ridiculing, spreading rumours.
- Non-verbal: writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, rude gestures.

- Cyber: bullying behaviours carried out through online services such as email, chatrooms, discussion boards, online social networking, and web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS, voice recording and/or video, webcam and still photography.
- Exclusion: deliberate social isolation of one student by another, refusing to sit next to someone, saving seats for friends in classrooms.
- Extortion: threatening to take someone's possessions, food or money.
- Property: willfully hiding the possessions of another student, stealing, damaging or destroying property of another.
- Sexual: touching or brushing up against someone, making suggestive comments, commenting on the size or shape of someone's body, spreading rumours of a sexual nature, calling the person rude names.

2. Students are aware of anti-bullying strategies

- 2.1 Students receive significant and compassionate Pastoral Care underpinned by our Mercy Values. Through the Pastoral Care program and tutor group interaction the College strives to create an environment of inclusion, developing compassion and empathy for other students in the College community.
- 2.2 Students are made aware of this policy as part of their Pastoral Care program and extracts can be found in the College Planner.
- 2.3 Provision of activities across the curriculum which develop a culture of caring for one another and acknowledging the worth and contribution of others.
- 2.4 Monitoring of student activity on the internal/external web, email and College portal through the College filtering system.
- 2.5 Students who are found to have used digital technologies to bully or harass another student at any time (including holidays, weekends and after school) must accept that they may face any or all of the consequences outlined in this Policy at the discretion of the Principal. (Refer to the College *iLearn* Student Access and Usage Guidelines in the College Planner for strategies on safe technology usage.)
- 2.6 Students are encouraged to keep a record of the offending material from the internet and provide this to the trusted staff member to whom the incident is reported.
- 2.7 Staff make clear statements about the nature and unacceptability of bullying.
- 2.8 Students as role models display positive behaviours, particularly those in leadership roles such as the Student Representative Council, Senior Leaders, House and Vice Captains, and Cocurricular Captains.
- 2.9 Students are provided with strategies through counselling and other supportive services.
- 2.10 The College provides support for parents/carers through the College's Pastoral Care structure, information seminars, support networks.

3. Staff are aware of anti-bullying strategies

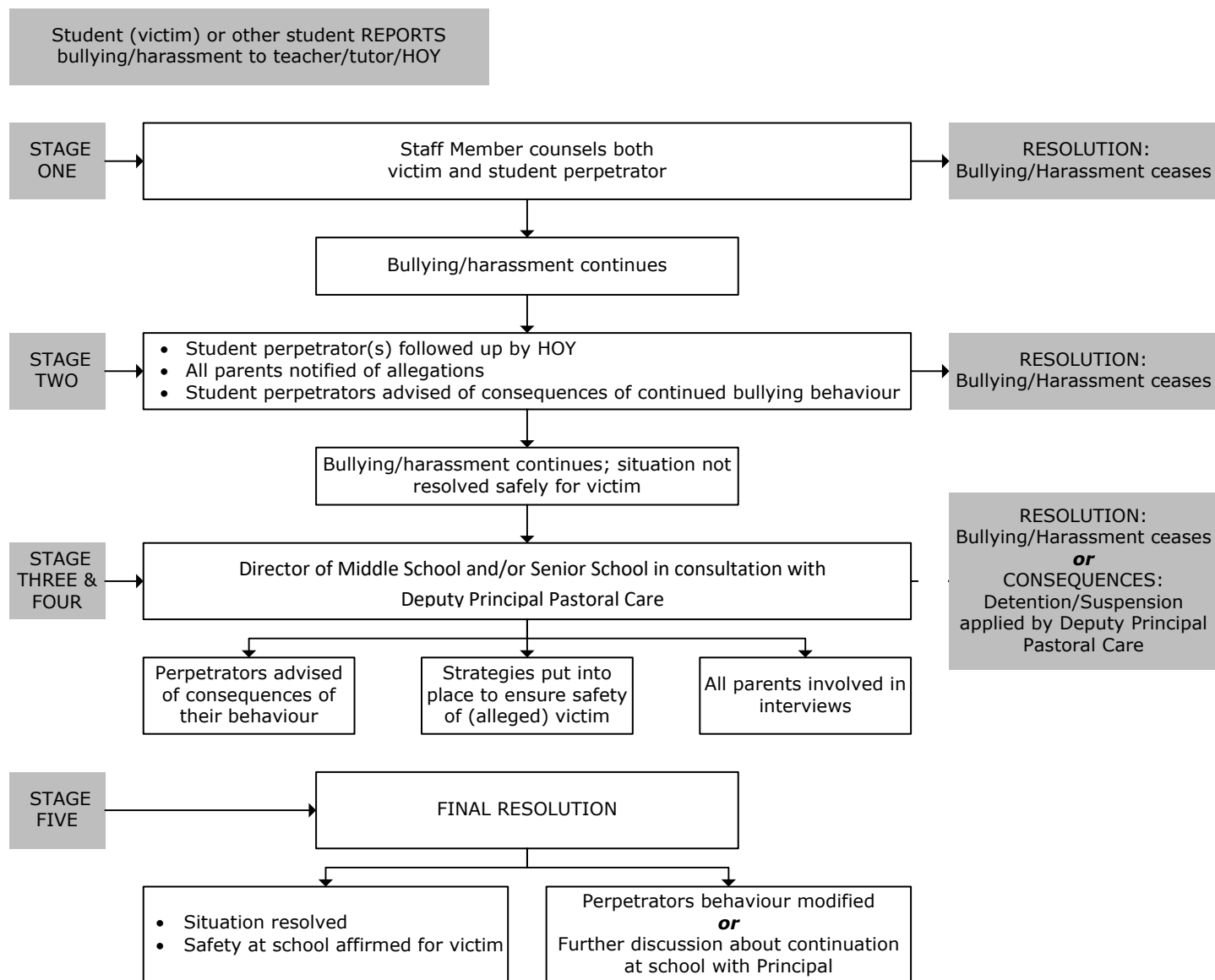
- 3.1. Staff are expected to model the values of Mercy and Justice in their interactions at school with students and colleagues.
- 3.2. Staff are alert to any signs of student distress or suspected incidents of harassment or bullying within the playground or classroom.

- 3.3. All staff have access to a copy of the Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy, which all staff are to make themselves familiar with.
- 3.4. All staff are to encourage and model positive ways of resolving conflict amongst their students within the classroom.
- 3.5. Staff undertake professional learning in the area of Anti-Bullying on a regular basis.

4. Advice to parents on bullying behaviours

- 4.1 Parents/carers should encourage their daughters to talk openly with them about their social life at school, who their friends are, and what positive/negative interactions they encounter.
- 4.2 Parents/carers should encourage their daughters to report to the classroom teacher, tutor, Head of Year or College Counsellor any incidences of alleged harassment or bullying behaviours to which they may have been subjected.
- 4.3 Careful monitoring of all methods of electronic communication such as the internet and mobile usage should occur at home at all times.
- 4.4 Parents are informed of the Anti-Bullying Policy through the student planner and Monte Matters.
- 4.5 Parents are provided with specific opportunities through iLearn Induction Evenings, Monte Matters and the use of P&F Forums to be better informed about the facts of Bullying and how they might become more aware when their daughter is the victim or perpetrator.
- 4.6 Parents/carers should openly discuss this Policy with their daughters.
- 4.7 It is often counter-productive to the internal inquiries for parents to contact other parents/students involved.
- 4.8 It is an expectation that parents will support and assist the College in any internal inquiries undertaken.
- 4.9 Parents/carers should understand that the resolution of a bullying internal inquiries will take time.

OVERVIEW OF PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO BULLYING BEHAVIOUR



PROCEDURES

The purpose of the following procedures is to provide a framework of reference for the College community where there are reasonable grounds to believe a student is being harassed or bullied, or is involved in bullying. Staff encourage those in their care to disclose bullying behaviours which they have witnessed or to which they have been subjected, so that a culture of disclosure is accepted. Depending on the nature of the incident, the following steps may be involved in dealing with an allegation of bullying.

STAGE 1:

Reporting and Information Gathering

- The College is notified of a bullying incident or claim of harassment. This includes cyber bullying.
- The alleged victim meets with the teacher/tutor/Head of Year. The Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy is discussed with the student and reassurance given that an internal inquiry is warranted, and the strategies to be put in place to ease the situation for the alleged victim. An appointment is made to meet again to follow up the matter.
- The alleged perpetrator may need to be interviewed with no assumption of guilt being made. This interview is purely a fact collecting exercise if the evidence is not clear from the victim or others.
- Background information is collected from various sources and documented by the staff member involved. In the case of cyber bullying information may be accessed through the College's internal filtering programs and iAssist staff. Information may also be collected from other students as witnesses to the events over time.
- It is made clear to all involved that any suggestion of retaliation by any party will be treated as harassment.
- At the reporting and information gathering stage, parent/carer contact is discretionary.
- Staff are obliged to act on or respond to any report of harassment or bullying. Parent and victim request for confidentiality notwithstanding.

STAGE 2:

Consultation and Inquiry

- A second meeting with the teacher/tutor/Head of Year takes place as planned in Stage 1.
- If the situation has improved a follow up meeting is planned for ongoing monitoring of the situation.
- If the situation has not improved then the alleged perpetrator is interviewed by the Head of Year and parents/carers from both sides are contacted.
- The allegation and College's Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy are discussed. Student/s are given the chance to respond to the allegation. Possible suggestions to deal with the situation are generated such as peer mediation or counselling.
- Follow-up appointments are made to see all parties involved and it is made clear that any suggestion of retaliation by any parties will be treated as harassment.
- Records of the meetings are documented and kept on the student's file.

STAGE 3:

Review

- Determined by the offence, the situation is re-assessed in a timely manner.
- Follow-up arrangements are made to assess if the situation has been resolved.

- If the situation has not resolved or has worsened the matter is referred to the Directors of Middle School and/or Senior School in consultation with the Deputy Principal Pastoral Care. Students are required to meet with the Director of Middle School or Senior School on their own.
- Parents/carers are informed.
- Records of the meetings are documented and kept on the student's file.

STAGE 4:

Further/Additional Review

- Students are interviewed by the Deputy Principal Pastoral Care and/or Director of Middle School or Senior School and Head of Year.
- Follow-up arrangements are made to assess if the situation has been resolved.
- If the situation has not settled or has worsened then the parents/carers of students are required to attend an interview with the Deputy Principal Pastoral Care, the Head of Year and the Director of Middle School and Senior School.
- Separate or collective interviews can be decided upon on an individual basis.
- Consequences may be implemented depending on the severity of each situation. (see below)
- Strategies are put in place to ease the situation for the alleged victim and an agreement can be reached about how the parties will interact with each other.
- A review of the situation will be conducted within a two week period (or reasonable timeframe).
- Records of the meetings are documented and kept on the student's file.

STAGE 5:

Final Resolution

- Students are interviewed by the Deputy Principal Pastoral Care.
- If the situation has been resolved then all participants are affirmed.
- If the situation has worsened, the Principal is informed and under the College's Discipline Guidelines and Procedures has the ability to make the final decision, as well as the parents/carers of the students, and appropriate action and consequences are discussed. (see below)
- Records of the meetings are documented and kept on the student's file.

CONSEQUENCES

(See Discipline Guidelines and Procedures)

Where the balance of evidence suggests that an incident of harassment or bullying has occurred any of the following consequences may apply, depending on the circumstances. All consequences may vary depending upon the severity of each individual incident.

Any student found to have engaged in bullying is expected to take action to make reparation, such as an apology. Parents are expected to cooperate fully and support the College's efforts to achieve a just outcome. The process of logical consequences according to the level of severity is outlined below.

1. Access to Digital Technology
2. Wednesday Afternoon Detention
3. Saturday Detention
4. Suspension
5. Expulsion

Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College does not permit the corporal punishment of its students, nor does the College condone the administering of corporal punishment by any student's parents/carers.

The College reserves the right to contact the police at any time in the cases of severe harassment or bullying towards others, which could constitute a criminal offence.

ENDORSED BY:	COLLEGE EXECUTIVE
MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY:	DEPUTY PRINCIPAL PASTORAL CARE
DISTRIBUTION:	STAFF, STUDENTS, PARENTS
EFFECTIVE FROM:	01/02/2024