# Bullying and Harassment Policy

**Rationale:**

The Department of Education and Training (DET) policy guidelines on bullying and harassment are informed by the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. The Brentwood Values for Community: compassion, empathy, integrity, respect and responsibility promote a positive culture where bullying is not accepted.

**Definition:**

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 may consist of physical harm, harassment, verbal insults or hurtful remarks, or actions designed to hurt somebody's reputation, social standing or to cause humiliation. Bullying is not a one-off disagreement between two or more people or a situation of mutual dislike. Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome and which is reasonably likely to humiliate, offend, intimidate or distress a person. Bullying may be carried out directly or indirectly, and may include the use of digital technologies such as the internet, email, apps, phones, social network sites or similar technologies. People who use the internet, email, apps, phones, social network sites or similar technologies to bully or harass others are cyber bullies. The term bullying in this policy encompasses instances of cyber bullying.

**Aims:**

- To reinforce within the school community what bullying is (including cyber bullying), and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- To alert everyone within the school community of the signs and evidence of bullying and to ensure bullying is reported to staff whether a person is an observer or a victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

**Implementation:**

- There is zero tolerance of bullying.
- Bullying will be countered by providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment.
- Parents/guardians, teachers, students and the community are made aware of types of cyber bullying, and its legal and hurtful ramifications. Teachers are regularly reminded of their duty of care regarding protection of students from all forms of bullying.
- The Bullying and Harassment Policy will be posted on the college website.
- There is a four-phase approach to bullying.

*Ratified by School Council 29 August 2016*

**Bullying and Harassment Policy Procedures**

**A. Primary Prevention:**
- Professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and proven counter measures.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify with students the types of bullying, as well as the consequences and impact of bullying.
- Teachers will be trained in cybersafety. Cybersafety awareness will be incorporated into parent information sessions and cybersafety will form part of each child's ICT curriculum.
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the school's programs and response, complemented by clear processes for reporting suspected bullying.
- The provision of programs that promote inclusiveness, resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving will form an integral part of our curriculum. In particular, assertiveness training and bystander training that builds skills in children to challenge and/or report unacceptable behaviour will be central to our curriculum.
- A student bullying survey to be administered and responded to annually.
- Anti-bullying messages and posters will be displayed around the school.
- Student Representative Council, peer support delegates, staff and students to promote the philosophy of 'No Put Downs'.
- A peer support program will operate for all year 7 students, complemented by a peer mediation program.
- All students to be provided with individual and confidential computer and network passwords. Processes to be put in place to facilitate tracking of student activity on the school's computer equipment and network when required. Firewalls are used to eliminate outside traffic into the school's network.
- All students are made aware of their responsibilities outlined in the Digital Technologies Policy.

**B. Isolated, Infrequent or Less Serious Incidents:**
- All instances of suspected bullying or inappropriate behaviour must be responded to by staff.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the school if they suspect a bullying or behaviour problem.
- The school will reinforce with children the importance of appropriately reporting incidents of inappropriate behaviour involving themselves or others.
- Staff will respond appropriately and proportionally to each allegation consistent with the school's Student Engagement Policy, including the proper reporting and recording of the incident on Compass.
- Parents/guardians are to be contacted if their child is alleged to have been bullied or experienced inappropriate behaviour, or if their child appears to have behaved inappropriately or bullied someone else.
- Appropriate and proportional consequences may include a verbal apology, writing a letter of regret, having a restorative conversation, completing a Behaviour Incident report, loss of privileges etc.
- Public recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems will occur as appropriate.

**C. Repetitive or Serious Incidents:**
- Serious incidents and/or repetitive incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour must be reported, responded to by staff and documented.
- Serious incidents are those that include physical assault, sexual assault, criminal activity involving theft or serious damage of property, serious threats or vilification.
- All such incidents or allegations will be properly investigated and documented. Depending upon the nature of each incident, they may also be reported to and investigated by police, reported to the Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit, and/or reported to the Department's Emergency and Security Management Unit.
- The school may contact support professionals such as Welfare officers, Welfare coordinators or Councillors and/or Student Support Officers for assistance and support.
- Students, staff and parents/guardians identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations.
- Both bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support.
- All repetitive or serious incidents must be brought to the attention of the principal class members of the school.
- The most appropriate staff member will contact parents/guardians of the targeted child. Principal class members will contact alleged perpetrators unless advised by police etc not to do so.
- Regional office will provide support as appropriate, and the principal will monitor the investigation and review the situation until matters are appropriately resolved.
- Consequences of repetitive or serious incidents may include criminal charges, suspension, expulsion, loss of privileges (including access to the school network or digital technologies), counselling, conciliation or any other consequences consistent with the school's Student Engagement Policy.
- A management strategy for all parties will be developed in consultation with the students and parents/guardians involved.
- Parents/guardians or community members who bully or harass or abuse staff will be provided with official warnings, and if necessary referred to the police, and/or have Trespass restrictions placed upon them by the principal consistent with the Summary Offences Act.


**D. Post Incident:**
It is important that appropriate strategies are put in place after the incident has been resolved for all students involved. Appropriate strategies may include:-
- conciliation meetings between all parties
- ongoing monitoring of students involved, including network traffic
- identification of an agreed key contact staff member for each student involved
- follow-up meetings regarding each child's management strategy
- ongoing communication with parents
- counselling from appropriate agencies of support officers etc for both parties
- reinforcement of positive behaviours and appropriate behaviour strategies.


**Evaluation:**
This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's review cycle.


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