

'NOT IN OUR SCHOOL'

Mount Waverley Secondary College

Policy on Preventing Bullying

Our values and rights

These are the values and rights that we believe are important for the personal development of each individual student, and for each member of the college community.

1. respect for self and others
2. responsibility, concern and care for others and the learning environment
3. honesty, integrity and trust

Our guiding principles

1. Students have a right to learn and staff have a right to teach in a safe, secure and stable environment. Bullying, harassment or discrimination of any kind are unacceptable
2. An environment free of bullying is everyone's responsibility: students, staff and parents. This means that it is everyone's responsibility to report incidents of bullying
3. All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and dealt with thoroughly and appropriately
4. Targets of bullying will be supported
5. Individuals responsible for bullying will be assisted and supported to alter their unacceptable behaviour
6. We will display our commitment to each other in a consistent, supportive and caring manner

What we mean by bullying

Bullying occurs when a person or group causes pain, hurt, embarrassment or discomfort to someone, and does so repeatedly.

Bullying:

- involves an abuse of power
- can be planned, organised or it may be unintentional
- can take many forms – some common examples would include:
 - **physical bullying:** this can include fighting, kicking, pushing, unwanted touching, aggressive 'play' fighting
 - **verbal bullying:** this can include name calling, teasing people about their gender, race, religion, family or friends; putting others down; spreading rumours
 - **exclusion:** this can include deliberately leaving people out of activities, treating them as if they do not exist; not recognising or acknowledging their presence
 - **gestural bullying:** this can include deliberately turning away from someone; making obscene or threatening gestures

- **cyber bullying:** using technology such as mobile phones and SMS, email, internet etc, to send cruel messages, post pictures online, creating websites with photos, jokes, information which might embarrass or hurt someone
- **extortion:** demanding money or favours in return for 'protection'; removing or damaging others' belongings; intimidating someone to do what they would not normally do out of fear or embarrassment.
- **harassment:** this can include (a) sexual harassment: touching or brushing against someone in a sexual manner; making unwelcomed jokes or comments of a sexual nature; asking intrusive questions about someone's personal life and affairs, or appearance;
(b) racial harassment: putting people, their family or friends down, making hurtful comments, jokes or gestures based on their racial or ethnic background.

Bullying at school is everyone's problem and not a personal predicament

What the college will do

Mount Waverley Secondary College will work towards:

- providing and sustaining a safe, secure and stable environment for all members of the school community
- providing and sustaining an environment which fosters respect for self and others, responsibility, concern and care for others and the learning environment; honesty, integrity and trust
- Providing curricular and co-curricular programs that focus on developing personal and social skills, values and behaviours, and problem solving skills for dealing with and resolving conflict
- Supporting its student wellbeing programs to ensure connectedness with the college, peers and teachers
- Dealing with all complaints of bullying and providing support and counselling to both the victims and the bullies
- Provide staff with appropriate and ongoing professional development to raise awareness of the issues and strategies for dealing with bullying, and to develop skills to support this policy

What staff will do

Staff at Mount Waverley Secondary College will:

- Be positive role models for students in their behaviours and words
- Provide engaging curriculum and manage classes so as to provide a cooperative learning environment that promotes positive relationships
- Make every effort to remove opportunities for bullying
- Be observant for signs of bullying both in the classroom and when on yard duty or at school events
- Take immediate and appropriate action, consistent with this policy, when they identify cases of bullying

What students can do

If you are being bullied you should:

- Confront the bully, if safe to do so and firmly ask them to stop what they are doing
- Walk calmly to a safer area if you feel unsafe
- Report the bullying to a teacher or other staff whom you feel comfortable with and who will deal with the situation on your behalf
- Talk to friends or parents who may help you to make appropriate plans and identify courses of action for dealing with the bullying

If you witness bullying you should:

- Refuse to be a part of the bullying by not simply watching and doing nothing
- If appropriate and safe, take some action:
 - encourage and help the student being bullied by taking them away from the situation
 - have the courage to tell the bullies that their behaviour is hurtful, unacceptable and not tolerated at this school
 - reassure the student being bullied that they are being treated unfairly and that you understand how hurtful and distressing it is for them
- inform a member of staff about what is happening

What parents can do

- Watch for any indications that your child is being bullied such as unwillingness to attend school, deterioration in academic performance, missing or damaged equipment, uncharacteristic patterns of 'illness', increased anxiety, etc.
- Reassure your child that they are not at fault and that you and the college will support them to deal with the bullying
- Encourage them to deal personally with and report the incident to the college
- Inform the college if bullying is suspected, or you are aware of bullying situations that might not directly involve your child
- Keep written records of the bullying
- Do not encourage retaliation
- Be willing to attend interviews and to support action that the college might take

How the college will deal with bullying

Bullying Behaviour is Identified



Reported to Coordinator who makes a decision as to the type and severity of bullying

1. *The level of severity will be a professional judgement by the staff member involved. The level determined will be based on the nature, severity, frequency and the circumstances surrounding the bullying behaviour; whether the bullying is a repetition of similar behaviour previously dealt with; and the degree of impact of the bullying behaviour on the victim*
2. *All reported incidents of bullying will be recorded and dealt with by the staff member to whom the incident is reported.*
3. *In all cases of reported bullying, the parents of all students involved will be contacted.*
4. *Parents will be kept informed of the outcomes of meetings with those involved in the bullying incident.*

Low severity	Moderate severity	High severity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student/s will be interviewed. The teacher will point out the evidence of the victim's distress and will suggest alternatives of behaving and the behaviour monitored. • Parents of students involved, both the bullies and the victims, will be contacted and informed of the incident and the outcome of the interviews • If there is no change in behaviour, the students will be referred to the Year Level Coordinators and parents again notified of the repeat behaviour. The repeated behaviour would then be considered of medium severity • A problem solving process may then begin with possible consequences for breaching the College Code of Conduct. Year Level Coordinators talk with the victim to establish the circumstances and then offer strategies to deal with low severity bullying and how to access help and resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Year Level Coordinators/Managers deal with this level of severity directly or with the assistance of the Student Services (Welfare) staff. • They engage the Method of Shared Concern or the Restorative Justice approach. • Bully(s) is/are seen individually. Concern is shared about the way bullying has affected the victim and those around him/her. • The bully is invited to reconcile/remedy the situation by taking responsible action. • Group work with the victim and bully follows; developments and outcomes are monitored and evaluated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying at this level referred to the Campus Principal or Manager. • Student Services (Welfare) staff become involved for support and advice on direction. • After information is gathered and documented, severe sanctions applied. • Welfare support is offered to the victim and bully. • Student Services (Welfare) will design a management plan for the bully and a contract implemented.

In order to avoid bullying situations and in dealing with incidents of bullying which arise, staff and students may focus on using the Habits of Mind to resolve such issues and to create a climate in which reconciliation and restitution can occur.

Building relationships and avoiding conflict

1. **Managing impulsivity** – controlling one's actions and taking the time to think
2. **Listening with empathy and understanding** – listening to others' points of view and how others are affected; understanding the perspective of the others.
3. **Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision** – keeping a focus on the issue; asking clarifying questions.
4. **Thinking flexibly** – considering alternative points of view and dealing with all sources of information without prejudice or bias.
5. **Thinking interdependently** – working together cooperatively to resolve issues.
6. **Metacognition** – thinking and reflecting about our thoughts, words and behaviours.

Dealing with problems

1. **Persisting** – not giving up.
2. **Taking responsible risks** – not being afraid to try other options; well thought out actions.

Finding solutions

1. **Questioning and posing problems** – asking new questions, raising new possibilities.
2. **Applying past knowledge to new situations** – drawing from our previous experiences.
3. **Creating, imagining and innovating** – thinking about different solutions: novel, clever or ingenious ways of doing something differently for the benefits of everyone involved

Evaluation of the policy

This policy was developed by members of the College Code of Conduct Committee. This group includes an Assistant Principal, Leading Teachers and teaching staff from the college.

Feedback about the policy was obtained from staff, students and parents by way of written surveys and in the case of students, additional feedback was sought in the form of focus group discussions.

This policy, and the College Code of Conduct, will be continuously monitored by this committee which will be responsible for their implementation and evaluation.

Evaluation will take the form of ongoing anecdotal evidence as well as the periodic collection of data to establish the effectiveness of the policies.