

# Mullauna College

## Anti-Bullying & Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy

### STATEMENT

Mullauna College prides itself on providing a safe and supportive learning environment to ensure optimum personal development and educational excellence for all students. Behaviours, such as bullying and cyber bullying, which in any way prevent another person from enjoying these rights, are not tolerated at this College.

Bullying includes:

- teasing or ridiculing others;
- making rude and unwanted personal comments;
- offensive body language;
- pushing , hitting, kicking or pinching;
- making rude gestures;
- malicious gossip;
- mischievous complaints;
- racist or sexist comments;
- exclusion;
- supporting the bullying or harassment of others;
- telephone or internet abuse;
- writing abusive notes or letters;
- writing graffiti about someone or their family;
- sexual harassment;
- damaging another person's personal property;
- cyberbullying

Bullying that is carried out through an internet service or social media sites, such as email, chat room, discussion group or instant messaging or through mobile phone technologies such as short messaging service (SMS) is cyber bullying. Cyber bullying can be very destructive and will not be tolerated at any level, and serious consequences exist for students who choose to bully others.

### PURPOSE

- To reinforce within the school community what bullying is, and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- To alert everyone within the school community of the signs and evidence of cyber bullying and to have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are investigated appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

### GUIDELINES

The following guidelines will be adhered to in relation to bullying and cyber bullying at the College:

- 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 may be carried out directly or indirectly, and may include the use of digital technologies such as social network sites, websites or on-line chat rooms.
- The College has adopted a zero tolerance position on bullying.
- The College will combat bullying by providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment based on the Effective School's and Curiosity Powerful Learning models.

### Responsibilities of staff

- To inform students as to what constitutes bullying and harassment.
- To implement an annual *Bullying Survey* and provide counselling to students who are identified in the survey.
- To model positive behaviours towards all members of the College community.
- To deal with all reported and observed incidences of bullying or harassment.

### Responsibilities of students

- To treat other members of the College community with respect.
- To help someone who is being bullied or harassed.
- To approach a staff member or an appropriate peer if they, or someone else, is being bullied or harassed – either at school or on the way to or from school.
- To actively disapprove of bullying.

### Responsibilities of parents

- To monitor their children for signs of bullying. These signs can include:
  - uncharacteristic aggressiveness at home;
  - reluctance to go to school;
  - nightmares;
  - lowered self-esteem and negative statements about self;
  - tearfulness;
  - loneliness.
- To actively support the College in preventing bullying by:
  - discussing bullying with their children and assuring them that something can be done about it;
  - encouraging their children to approach a member of staff if they are being bullied or harassed or see others being bullied or harassed;
  - contacting the College if they believe that any student might be being bullied or harassed.

### Primary Prevention:

- Regular professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and proven counter measures.
- 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 students to challenge and/or report unacceptable behaviour
- To implement an annual *Bullying Survey* and provide counselling to students who are identified in the survey.
- Anti-bullying messages and posters will be displayed around the school.
- Student Leadership team, peer support leaders, staff and students to promote the philosophy of 'No Put Downs'.
- Structured activities will be available to students at lunch breaks to prevent student isolation.
- Teachers will be trained in cybersafety. Cybersafety awareness programs will be provided for parents and cybersafety will form part of the curriculum.
- Educate the school community about the seriousness of cyber-bullying, its impact on those being bullied, how cyber-bullying occurs and consequences of cyber-bullying
- All students to be provided with individual and confidential computer and network passwords. Processes to be put in place to ensure tracking of student activity on

the school's computer equipment and network. Firewalls to be installed to eliminate outside traffic into the school's network and intranet.

**B. Isolated, Infrequent or Less Serious Incidents:**

- All instances of suspected bullying or inappropriate behaviour must be responded to by staff.
- Once identified each perpetrator, victim and witnesses will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they suspect a bullying or behaviour problem.
- The school will reinforce with students the importance of appropriately reporting incidents of inappropriate behaviour involving themselves or others, and the imperative that staff respond appropriately and proportionally to each allegation consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct, including the proper reporting and recording of the incident on our on-line behaviour tracker.
- Parents 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, loss of privileges etc.
- Removal of cyber-bullies from access to the school's network and computers for a period of time.
- 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 homophobic bullying etc.
- All such incidents or allegations will be properly investigated and documented. Depending upon the nature of each incident, they may be 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 and staff and parents identified by others as perpetrators will be informed of allegations.
- Both perpetrators 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 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, counselling, conciliation or any other consequences consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct.
- A management strategy for all parties will be developed in consultation with the students and parents involved.

- Parents 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.
- 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 or support officers etc for both parties.
- reinforcement of positive behaviours and appropriate behaviour strategies.

**EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed every three years, with recommended changes being presented to College Council.

**Reviewed:** August 2015

**Date of next review:** 2018