



# Mary MacKillop College South Gippsland

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## **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy**

### **The Hazard – Bullying**

Bullying is the repeated and intentional behaviour of causing fear, distress or harm towards another person that involves an imbalance of power. It can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and harassment. In any bullying incident there are likely to be three parties involved: the bully, the person being bullied, and bystanders.

Bullying can take many forms including:

- Physical bullying which involves physical actions such as hitting, pushing, obstructing or being used to hurt or intimidate someone. Damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying.
- Psychological bullying is when words or actions are used to cause psychological harm. Examples of psychological bullying include name calling, teasing or making fun of someone because of their actions, appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background.
- Indirect bullying is when deliberate acts of exclusion or spreading of untrue stories are used to hurt or intimidate someone.
- Cyber bullying is the ongoing abuse of power to threaten or harm another person using technology. Cyber bullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or on mobile phones.

### **What Bullying is Not**

There are many negative situations which, whilst being potentially distressing for students, are not bullying. These include:

- Mutual Conflict Situations which arise where there is disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation; or
- One Off Acts (of aggression or meanness) including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do not normally constitute bullying.

### **Signs of Bullying**

Major behaviour changes in a student may be indicative of bullying. Such behavioural changes may include:

- Crying at night and having nightmares;
- Refusing to talk when asked "What's wrong?";
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches;
- An unwillingness or refusal to go to college;
- Feeling ill in the mornings;
- A decline in quality of college work;
- Becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence;
- Beginning to bully siblings; and
- Acting unreasonably.

Parents/carers are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the college through a trusted staff member immediately (such as a class teacher, Director or Coordinator, college counsellor etc), if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

## **Mary MacKillop College's Policy**

Mary MacKillop College recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the College is respected and accepted.

Bullying is not tolerated at Mary MacKillop College. It is our policy that:

- Bullying be managed through a 'whole of college community' approach involving students, staff and parents/carers;
- Bullying prevention strategies be implemented within the college on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/carers to recognise bullying and respond appropriately;
- Bullying response strategies be tailored to the circumstances of each incident;
- Staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture;
- Bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice.

## **Implementation**

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- Staff training;
- Student and parent/carer education and information;
- Effective incident reporting procedures;
- Effective management of bullying incidents when reported;
- The creation of a 'no bullying' culture within the college community;
- Effective record keeping procedures; and
- Initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

## **Discipline for Breach of Policy**

Where a staff member breaches this policy Mary MacKillop College may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

## **Related Policies**

Assault (Student against Student) Policy

Cyber Safety Policy

Counselling Services (Student)