

Bullying Policy

Rationale:

Mt Hira College will provide a positive culture where bullying is not accepted, and in so doing, all will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and the right to feel safe and secure in our College environment at all times.

Aims:

- To reinforce within the College community what bullying is, and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- To alert everyone within the College 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:

- Bullying may consist of physical harm, harassment, verbal insults, 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.
- Mt Hira College has adopted a zero tolerance position on bullying.
- Mt Hira College will combat bullying by providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment.
- We have adopted a four-phase approach to bullying.

A. Primary Prevention:

- Mt Hira College staff to be handed a copy of the Bullying Policy at the beginning of each year so that they are aware and familiar with the College's processes and procedures.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify with students the types of bullying, as well as the consequences and impact of bullying.
- Restorative practices to be implemented throughout Mt Hira College so that students may understand the consequences of their actions.
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the College'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 part of our curriculum. In particular, assertiveness training and bystander training that builds skills in students to challenge and/or report unacceptable behaviour will be central to our curriculum.
- Anti-bullying messages and posters will be displayed around the College.

B. Isolated, Infrequent or Less Serious Incidents:

- All instances of suspected bullying or inappropriate behaviour must be responded to by staff and staff to fill in an 'incident report.'
- Parents are encouraged to contact the College if they suspect a bullying or behaviour problem.
- The College 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 College's Student Code of Conduct, including the proper reporting and recording of the incident.
- 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.
- 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.
- The College may contact support professionals counsellors and psychologists for assistance and support.
- Students, staff and parents 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 relevant sub-school-heads of Mt Hira College
- The most appropriate staff member will contact parents of the targeted child. Sub-school heads will contact alleged perpetrators unless advised by police etc. not to do so.
- Consequences of repetitive or serious incidents may include:
 - Criminal charges
 - Suspension or loss of privileges
 - Counselling
 - Conciliation or any other consequences consistent with the College's Student Code of Conduct
 - Expulsion
- 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.¹

¹ SUMMARY OFFENCES ACT 1966 - SECT 17

Obscene, indecent, threatening language and behaviour etc. in public

- (1) Any person who in or near a public place or within the view or hearing of any person being or passing therein or thereon—
- (a) sings an obscene song or ballad;
 - (b) writes or draws exhibits or displays an indecent or obscene word figure or representation;
 - (c) uses profane indecent or obscene language or threatening abusive or insulting words; or
 - (d) behaves in a riotous indecent offensive or insulting manner— shall be guilty of an offence.

D. Post Incident:

Discipline consequences for bullies (depending on severity) may involve:

- After school detentions
- Removal from class
- Conduct card
- Internal suspension
- External suspension
- Formal apology
- Expulsion

The severity of the incident along with the level of remorse and previous behavioural history of the bully will affect the severity of the discipline involved.

It is imperative that appropriate strategies are put in place after the incident has been resolved for all students involved. Strategies may include:

- Ongoing monitoring of students
- Follow up meetings with students involved
- Ongoing communication with parents
- Counselling – internal/external
- Reinforcement of positive behaviours and appropriate behaviour strategies

Parents, teachers, students and the community will be aware of the College's position on bullying / cyberbullying, through the school website.

Definition:

A person is bullied 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.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Cyberbullying Policy.

Ratified by the Board on: 30/03/2016

Chairperson: Mr. Ken Yucel

This policy will be communicated to staff, parents, students and the wider community through one or more of the following channels: newsletter, assemblies, staff/student handbook, College website, staff meetings, information sessions.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's 2 year review cycle.