

Wangaratta High School

Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy



WANGARATTA
HIGH SCHOOL

Rationale:

Wangaratta High School has a zero tolerance to any form of bullying. All members of the High School community have the right to feel safe and comfortable. The school will provide a positive culture where bullying is not accepted. All will have the right of respect from others including the right to learn or to teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in their environment.

We are committed to providing a safe and respectful teaching and learning environment. We believe that all students have the right to learn in a school environment where they feel safe and secure.

The Anti-bullying and Harassment policy should be read in conjunction with the Wangaratta High School Student Engagement Policy Framework.

Aims:

- To reinforce within the school community that bullying is unacceptable at Wangaratta High School
- To educate staff, parents and students in our school community about what bullying and harassment are and about the importance of maintaining a safe and comfortable environment
- Identify and report incidents of bullying
- To respond to incidents of bullying that have been reported to the school quickly and effectively
- Appropriate action/support for incidents

Definitions:

Being bullied means that individuals or groups target an individual or group with behaviour which is hurtful, threatening or frightening and this behaviour is repeated more than once. Bullying can take many forms such as verbal, physical, social isolation, stalking, racial, cyber bullying, extortion and sexual harassment. Actions can be observable or hidden.

There are four types of bullying: physical, verbal, covert and cyber bullying.

1. Direct physical bullying – includes hitting, tripping, kicking, pinching, pushing or damaging property.
2. Direct verbal bullying – includes name-calling, insults, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks or verbal abuse.
3. Covert Bullying - This sort of bullying is often harder to recognise and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause

humiliation. Covert bullying includes: lying and spreading rumours, negative facial or physical gestures, menacing or threatening looks, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking unkindly, encouraging others to socially exclude someone or damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance.

4. Cyber-bullying can be overt or covert bullying behaviours using digital technologies, including hardware such as computers and smartphones and software such as social media, instant messaging, texts, websites and other. Cyberbullying can happen at any time. It can be in public or in private and sometimes only known to the target and the person bullying. It includes: abusive or hurtful texts emails or posts, images or videos, deliberately excluding others online, nasty gossip or rumours or imitating others online or using their log-in.

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. For example, teasing a student because of their speech impediment or touching another person without their consent.

Implementation:

- Parents, staff members, students and the community will be aware of the school's position on bullying.

The school will adopt a four-phase approach to bullying:

A. Primary Prevention:

- Professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and proven counter measures to include restorative practices processes
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the programs and responses. Speaking at information nights about the school bullying policy
- To provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving
- A Health and Wellbeing Audit will be administered and acted upon every 12 months
- Each classroom teacher to clarify at the start of each year the school policy on bullying
- Developing mentor/student relationships so everybody (including families) is comfortable with speaking about bullying issues. Mentors to clarify the bullying policy with each class at the beginning of the year
- Curriculum across subjects to include anti-bullying messages and strategies
- Policy to be available to the community on the school website, staff manual and school policy booklet
- School prefects, staff and students to promote the philosophy of 'No Put Downs' and 'Bullying is unacceptable'
- Structured activities available to students at recess and lunch breaks

B. Early Intervention:

- Promote parent, student and staff reporting of bullying incidents involving themselves or others
- Classroom teachers, ES Staff and principal class on a regular basis reminding students and staff to report incidents of bullying
- Provide designated areas for students to access at recess and lunch breaks
- Students identified on the Health and Wellbeing Audit as a bully, will be spoken with and placed in a Wellbeing Program if appropriate
- Recognise positive behaviours

C. Intervention:

- Once identified each bully, victim and witnesses will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented. Where appropriate, victims and the alleged bully will be asked to record in writing what has occurred
- Students identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations
- If appropriate victims and/or the alleged bully will be referred for counselling or other avenues of support
- If student bullying persists parents will be contacted and a Student Support Group meeting will be conducted. Consequences of actions (consistent with the school's Student Expected Behaviour Basics) and strategies to improve behaviour will be discussed in this meeting. Mentor, student and parent will be in attendance and if appropriate a principal class member will be asked to attend.

D. Post Violation:

- Sanctions will vary according to the nature and frequency of the bullying or harassment and the individual circumstances of the victim and the offender. The severity of sanctions will be increased for repeat offenders
- Sanctions which the School may impose includes any one or a combination of the following:
 - Warning (written or verbal – this is to be recorded on Compass)
 - Loss of privileges including exclusion from yard or yard restrictions
 - Informing and consulting parents/carers
 - Mediation/Restorative Practises
 - Ongoing counselling for both victim and bully

- Social skills training – Wellbeing program
- Loss of Leadership title
- Detention
- Exclusion from class
- Internal or external suspension
- Expulsion
- Other actions deemed appropriate by the School
- Police notification
- Reinforcement of positive behaviours
- Classroom meetings
- Support structures (Literacy support, etc)
- Ongoing monitoring of identified bullies

Please refer to the Social Media/CyberBullying Guidelines document (as on the school website) for detailed information about useful terminology, student responsibilities and expectations, suggested strategies to assist parents and caregivers and consequences of the misuse of social media.

It must be noted that any use of social media forums outside of school hours that impact on the wellbeing of a student when at school will be dealt with under the same intervention and post violation processes as any other incident.

Staff Responsibilities and Expectations:

- Teaching and regularly reminding students of our values and mantra.
- Employing the strategies set out in the Student Engagement framework.
- Upholding high expectations of student behaviour and recording incidents of unacceptable behaviour on our Compass system.
- Following up, including the classroom teacher, mentor teacher, Quality Team Leader, a member of the wellbeing team, parent and/or others as may be deemed appropriate depending on the nature and frequency of the incident to ensure that the incident is addressed as quickly as possible.
- Modelling appropriate behaviours to students and parents at all times.

- Using restorative practices to support students to work through issues.
- Fulfilling all duty of care expectations both inside and outside the classroom.
- Building positive and supportive relationships with their students.
- Explicitly teaching all students the expectations of this policy.
- Delivering regular proactive activities/programs that promote resilience, social skills, assertiveness, tolerance, conflict resolution, including restorative practices and problem solving skills both at year level and mentor group meetings.
- Providing specialised support via our wellbeing team.

Students Responsibilities and Expectations:

- Learning and modelling our school values of Ready to Learn, Personal Best, Safe and Respectful, and our Mantra “Learning matters, Relationships matter, I matter”.
- Monitoring their own behaviours and ensuring that they are not engaged in bullying or harassment incidents.
- Supporting and encouraging their peers to do the right thing.
- Participating in activities that the school offers to build their skills, talents and connectedness to the school and their peers.
- Stopping minor unacceptable behaviours and reporting more serious incidents immediately.

If you are being bullied, you are encouraged to do the RITE thing:

R = RECOGNISE

You have the right to feel safe and to operate in an environment free of bullying

I = INFORM

The bullies that you want them to stop. Do this in a polite but firm way.

T = TELL

A responsible adult about the bullying

E = EVALUATE

The situation. If it does not improve, seek further help.

Parents Responsibilities and Expectations:

- Taking part in school activities offered so that we work together to support your child's education.
- Encouraging young people to report incidents of bullying or harassment immediately when they occur.
- Modelling appropriate behaviours for their children in dealing with bullying or harassment incidents.
- Participating in workshops offered by the school, such as Restorative Practices, Building Resilience, and Cyber Safety.

See Appendices:

- A. Template for reporting a Bullying or Harassment incident

References & Resources:

www.amf.org.au The Alannah & Madeline Foundation

www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/default.aspx Department of Education & Training, sample policy from the Advisory Guide.

www.safeschoolscoalition.org.au - Safe Schools Coalition

Related Policies:

Student Engagement Framework

This policy was endorsed by School Council on:
February 2018

(date) and is due for review in

Appendix A – Reporting an incident of Bullying or Harassment

Staff member who had the incident reported to them:

_____ Date: _____

Name of student/s who appear to have instigated the bullying/harassment (include Mentor Group for each student)

Name of student victim/s (include mentor group for each student)

Name of any witnesses (include mentor group or staff name)

Brief description of the incident: (what was allegedly said or done by the perpetrator?)

What form of bullying took place? (Please tick)

Verbal Physical Covert (indirect) Cyber Other

When: Date: _____ Time: _____

Where: (location, in maths class, on the bus, near canteen)

Is this the first occurrence? Yes / No How many times has this happened previous to this occurrence?

Has this been dealt with before? Yes/ No How was the situation dealt with?

