



Bacchus Marsh
Grammar

School POLICY

GOVERNANCE

GOV-030 Student Bullying and Harassment Policy

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Student Bullying and Harassment Policy

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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Every person has the right to attend the School feeling secure and comfortable. At Bacchus Marsh Grammar (the School), we are committed to providing a safe and caring environment for all School community members. We encourage every person in the School community to feel respected and valued and strive to ensure that all members are treated with fairness, integrity, and equality. **Bullying and Harassment is unacceptable and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.**
- 1.1.2 The School will employ a range of strategies to work with students who are either the perpetrators or subject of bullying and harassment. Ultimately the School reserves the right to cancel the enrolment of any student for repeated acts of bullying and harassment or serious acts of bullying and harassment in accordance with the Student Discipline Policy, Student Code of Conduct, School Community Code of Conduct and the School's Enrolment Policy.
- 1.1.3 The School understands that learning how to behave appropriately is a natural part of the educative process and that at times students will make inappropriate decisions from which they need to learn.
- 1.1.4 This Policy concentrates on student to student bullying and harassment, however, the School acknowledges that other forms of bullying and harassment may exist within the School environment. Two of these (Teacher/Student, Student/Teacher) are covered briefly in this Policy.
- 1.1.5 A Harassment Policy, Staff Bullying Policy and Procedures and Anti-Discrimination Policy exists for bullying and harassment issues for employees of the School. The School Community Code of Conduct deals with such issues within the School Community. This document may, however, provide further guidance regarding the School's approach to matters of bullying and harassment for employees and School community members.

2 What is Bullying and Harassment?

- 2.1.1 When a person is harassed, they may experience anger, embarrassment, fear, loss of self-confidence and humiliation.
- 2.1.2 Under discrimination law, it is unlawful to treat a person less favourably on the basis of particular protected attributes such as a person's sex, gender identity or sexuality and sexual orientation, race, disability or age. Treating a person less favourably can include harassing or bullying a person. The law also has specific provisions relating to sexual harassment, racial hatred, and disability harassment (Human Rights Commission)

Below are some listed common forms of harassment, and some examples of each.

2.2 Bullying

- 2.2.1 Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening. 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.
- 2.2.2 Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, over time.
- 2.2.3 Bullying in any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium, and long-term effects on those involved, including by-standers. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.
- 2.2.4 Bullying can take a number of forms:
 - **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** which 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** which is when deliberate acts of exclusion or spreading of untrue stories are used to hurt or intimidate someone.
- **Cyberbullying** which is the ongoing abuse of power to threaten or harm another person using technology. Cyberbullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or on mobile phones.

2.2.5 Some examples of bullying include but are not limited to:

- Any form of physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting on others;
- Interfering with another's property by stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying it;
- Using offensive names, teasing or spreading rumours about others or their families;
- Using put-downs, belittling other's abilities and achievements;
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about others;
- Making degrading comments about another's culture, sexuality, religion or social background;
- Hurtfully excluding others from a group;
- Ridiculing another's appearance;
- Forcing others to act against their will;
- Extortion – demanding food, money or school-work;
- Spreading offensive notes or messages about people by any means including electronic forms such as emails, messenger, mobile phone or social media;
- Nuisance phone calls, SMS messages or direct messages via social media.

2.2.6 Some examples of a negative situation which, whilst potentially distressing for students, are NOT bullying:

- Mutual conflict situations which arise where there is a disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power
- One-off acts (of aggression or meanness) including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do not normally constitute bullying.

2.2.7 The School makes clear that any issue or allegation that involves potentially criminal activity will be reported to the Police. In such circumstances the school will actively assist the Police in any investigation.

2.3 Sexual Harassment

2.3.1 Sexual harassment may be broadly defined as verbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature that is unwelcome or considered to be offensive. Sexual harassment occurs when a student is subjected to unwelcome and uninvited sexual conduct by another student which could be expected to make a student feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated. Sexual harassment can also result when a sexually intimidating or offensive environment is created. Sexual harassment can be physical, verbal, written or pictorial, and can range from relatively mild sexual banter to actual physical violence. It is important to remember that it is the way the victim perceives the behaviour that is important in determining whether or not harassment has taken place, not the intent of a particular individual. Mutual attraction or consenting friendships do not constitute sexual harassment. Sexual harassment includes comments, gestures or actions that embarrass the person (male or female) they are directed to. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- unwanted physical contact, touching, brushing against another student, hugging.
- persistent jokes or innuendos of a sexual nature.
- repeated requests to go out.
- offensive gestures.
- persistent or intrusive enquiries into another student's private life, sexuality, or physical appearance.
- sexual propositions.

- sexually offensive phone calls, messages on email, voicemail or in writing.
- displaying offensive screen savers, photos, calendars, or objects.
- sexually explicit emails, text messages, or posts on social networking sites (refer to our Cyber Safety policy).
- Stalking.
- sexual assault.

2.3.2 The School makes clear that any issue or allegation that involves potentially criminal activity will be reported to the Police. In such circumstances the school will actively assist the Police in any investigation.

2.4 Racial Harassment

2.4.1 Racial harassment is also found in many forms. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Abusive, threatening, or insulting words and behaviour.
- Deliberate exclusion from conversations.
- Displaying abusive writing and pictures.
- Insensitive jokes related to race.
- Pranks.

2.5 Disability Harassment

2.5.1 Examples of disability harassment include:

- Humiliating comments or insults about a student's disability.
- Disparaging remarks to students who have received learning adjustments.
- Comments or actions which create a hostile environment for a student with a disability.
- Deliberately excluding a student where the disability is not an issue.

Refer to the School's Disability Discrimination Policy for more information.

2.6 Discrimination

2.6.1 Discrimination includes disadvantaging or harassing another, based on their race, appearance, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability.

2.6.2 The School expects students to respect diversity in other students, staff and all members of the School community.

2.6.3 Please refer to the Student Code of Conduct and Student Discipline Policy for further information.

2.7 Disability Discrimination

2.7.1 Please refer to the School's Disability Discrimination Policy for further information.

2.8 Libel

2.8.1 Libel is generally defined as spreading rumours about another person or their family. Such behaviour will not be tolerated and will be handled in accordance with the Student Discipline Policy.

3 Legal Implications of Bullying and Harassment

3.1.1 Law prohibits most forms of bullying and harassment with special emphasis given to acts of violence, sexual harassment, and racial discrimination.

3.1.2 Victims or witnesses of bullying and harassment are entitled to approach authorities such as the Police or the Equal Opportunities Board to have the issue resolved.

3.1.3 The School has a legal responsibility to report to Police certain alleged behaviours. It will strictly adhere to that responsibility.

4 Prevention of Bullying and Harassment

4.1 Staff and Parent/Guardian Responsibility

- 4.1.1 As a School community it is important that all members take responsibility to speak up against bullying and harassing behaviours, even though this may be difficult at times.
- 4.1.2 The School expects staff and parents/guardians to:
 - 4.1.2.1 Be role models in word and action and treat all members of the School community with respect at all times;
 - 4.1.2.2 Be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying and harassment;
 - 4.1.2.3 Take steps to help victims and remove sources of distress as quickly as possible;
 - 4.1.2.4 Report and document suspected incidents to the appropriate staff member e.g. child/ren's teacher;
 - 4.1.2.5 Refuse to be involved in any bullying situation. If present when bullying occurs:
 - a. If appropriate, take some form of preventative action or intervention;
 - b. Report the incident or suspected incident to the School and or appropriate external authorities (if required).
- 4.1.3 Staff and parents/guardians are expected to adhere to the School's expectations of behaviour as outlined in the Schools Community Code of Conduct.

4.2 Student Responsibility

- 4.2.1 Students should avoid behaviour that could be interpreted as bullying and harassing and act to prevent other students from engaging in bullying and harassment, where this is reasonably practicable.
- 4.2.2 Where students have witnessed bullying and harassment at the School, they are encouraged to report this to a staff member.

5 Grievance and Action Procedure

- 5.1.1 Any difficulty in defining what constitutes bullying and harassment should not prevent staff, students, or parents/guardians from reporting behaviour, which causes them distress.
- 5.1.2 The School will respect the particular sensitivity of complaints and their consequences as well as the need for confidentiality.
- 5.1.3 All members of staff will act within their obligations of Duty of Care. If a staff member feels that they are being subjected to bullying or harassment in any form, they should not feel that it is their fault or that they have to tolerate it.
- 5.1.4 In the event of a serious incident the Principal, or their delegate, may at their discretion, apply any of the sanctions listed in the School's Student Discipline Policy which is available on the School's website. Equally the Principal or their delegate may seek to employ remedies in relation to the matter which are appropriate to the nature of the incident and the age of the perpetrator.

5.2 Steps students can take in the first instance

- 5.2.1 Tell the offender calmly and politely to stop.
- 5.2.2 Discuss the difficulty with a friend, trusted adult and/or the student's Tutor Group Teacher or other teacher.

5.3 If the bullying and harassment continues

- 5.3.1 Students should inform a member of staff, who will support the student to complete an incident report. In cases involving group bullying and name calling, the teacher will arrange for the appropriate Head of Year to help the students repair the relationship. However, if goodwill is not shown, the School will take direct action in relation to the bullying and harassment in accordance with its Student Discipline Policy.

- 5.3.2 In other cases, the teacher will arrange for the appropriate Head of Year to inform the person concerned that their actions are inappropriate and considered bullying and harassment behaviours and discuss with them the likely consequences should the offending behaviour continue.
- 5.3.3 Any action taken will be clearly documented.
- 5.3.4 The student who has been bullied or harassed will be asked to record any future episodes noting down relevant and specific details, including who, what, where and when the instances of bullying occur.
- 5.3.5 The appropriate Head of Year / Deputy and Head of School will be informed of the circumstances and outcomes of any matter dealt with in this way. Parents/guardians will be appropriately informed.

5.4 If the Complaint is not yet resolved

- 5.4.1 The Head of Year will explain to the subject of the bullying and harassment their options and rights and the issue will be referred to a Deputy Principal. The Deputy Principal will interview the offender, and the alleged subject of the bullying and harassment and determine appropriate consequences. Parents/ guardians will be appropriately informed.
- 5.4.2 Parents/guardians need to be aware that this is their child's recollection of events and until further investigation is completed should not necessarily be interpreted as factual information.
- 5.4.3 The Deputy Principal in consultation with the Principal may request the involvement of the School's Student Wellbeing Team or external assistance as appropriate to the nature of the issue.

5.5 If the bullying and harassment continues

- 5.5.1 If it is established that repeated, explicit, or potentially criminal bullying and harassment has occurred, then the following procedures will be implemented:
 - 5.5.1.1 The perpetrator may be suspended and may be expected to complete a prepared unit of work on bullying and harassment. The Principal or their delegate will decide the number of days of removal from classroom privileges;
 - 5.5.1.2 The perpetrator and their parents/ guardians will be requested to meet with the Principal or their delegate, and/or Head of Year to determine further action and consequences of the inappropriate behaviour;
 - 5.5.1.3 In the case of potentially criminal harassment or bullying, the Police will be informed immediately, and the student's enrolment may be terminated.

5.6 If the issue is not resolved

- 5.6.1 The Principal may elect to remove a student from the School or issue a final warning to that effect.
- 5.6.2 If it is found that any student has deliberately or falsely accused another person of bullying and harassment, then the accusing student will be dealt with in the same manner as an offending student.
- 5.6.3 All serious incidents will be directed to the Principal or their delegate, bypassing the above procedure, and dealt with as deemed appropriate.

6 Examples of Other Forms of Harassment and Bullying

6.1 Teacher/Student

- 6.1.1 Any student who feels they are a victim of bullying and/or harassment, by a teacher should report the incident to any staff member with whom they feel comfortable. It is mandatory that the staff member to whom the claim was made, reports the matter to the Principal or a Deputy Principal.

6.2 Student/Teacher

- 6.2.1 Any staff member who feels that they have been a victim of bullying and/or harassment by a student, or students should report the incident to a Deputy Principal or Head of Year. The matter will be dealt with according to this policy and appropriate action will be taken.

6.3 Teacher/Teacher

6.3.1 Any staff members who feel they have been a victim of bullying and/or harassment should inform one of the following: the Principal, a Deputy Principal or the Human Resources Manager. Appropriate action will be taken in consultation with the Principal.

Note: For any incidents outlined in this section, further reference should also be made to the School's Anti-Discrimination Policy, Harassment Policy and Staff Bullying Policy and Procedure.

7 Disciplinary Action

7.1.1 The School will deal very severely with those who retaliate against someone for reporting incidents of harassment, this will include suspension or termination of the student's enrolment.

7.1.2 Any students failing to take heed of processes put in place to remove bullying or harassment or limit the escalation of an issue will be regarded as having breached the intent of this policy and subject to appropriate disciplinary action under the School's Student Discipline Policy.

8 Recommendations to Parents/Guardians

8.1.1 The School recommends that parents/guardians:

8.1.1.1 Remain calm and assist their child in understanding the situation and the need for a process to occur in relation to resolving the issue.

8.1.1.2 Watch for signs of distress in their child, for example, unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches or stomach aches, missing equipment, requests for extra money, damaged clothing, or bruising.

8.1.1.3 Watch for major behavioural changes in their children which can be signs 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 school.
- Feeling ill in the mornings.
- A decline in quality of schoolwork.
- Becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence.
- Beginning to bully siblings.
- Acting unreasonably.

8.1.1.4 Advise their child to tell a staff member about the incident or inform the School if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying or harassment.

8.1.1.5 Be willing to attend interviews at the School if their child is involved in any bullying incident.

8.1.1.6 Be willing to inform the School of any cases of suspected bullying even when their own child is not directly affected.

8.1.2 When staff, students and parents/guardians work together, we create an environment where all students and staff can feel secure, confident, and safe.

9 Related Policies

- Anti-Discrimination Policy
- Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy
- Child Safe Policy
- Cyber Safety Policy
- Harassment Policy
- Physical Violence (Student Against Student) Policy
- School Community Code of Conduct

- Staff Bullying Policy and Procedure
- Student Code of Conduct
- Student Discipline Policy

10 Authorisation

School Document Name	GOV-030 Student Bullying and Harassment Policy	
Approval Authority	Chair of the School Board	
Approval Signature	Cathy Jeffkins Chair of the School Board Bacchus Marsh Grammar	
Administrator	Company Secretary	Greg Gough
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11 History

Date	Amendment
22 October 2019	1. Reviewed and new format
28 October 2020	2. Reviewed
27 October 2021	3. Reviewed and updated harassment and bullying definitions
26 April 2023	4. Reviewed and updated to include additional examples. Added sections 2.4 and 2.5.
26 February 2025	5. Reviewed and updated the staff and parent/guardian responsibilities in section 4.1.3