

Bullying, Harassment and Cyber Bullying Prevention Policy

1. Introduction

Djerriwarrh Community College (the College) is an independent specialist senior secondary school based in Melton. The College delivers the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) at Foundation, Intermediate and Senior levels for students aged 15-19 years. It provides a safe and inclusive learning environment for young people who may have been disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education. The College is committed to supporting students to reach their personal, social and educational potential by providing the tools and skills to reflect, set goals and plan.

The College is committed to ensuring that all students, staff and school community are treated with respect and that the learning environment at the College is free from bullying, harassment or discrimination of any kind.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide an overview of the measures in place to prevent bullying and harassment including cyber bullying from occurring and to effectively manage any complaints of bullying and harassment including cyber bullying.

Djerriwarrh Community College is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated. Bullying in any form is unlawful and will not be tolerated at the College.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- explain the definition of bullying so that there is shared understanding amongst all members of the college community
- make clear that no form of bullying at the college will be tolerated
- ask that everyone in our school community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying behaviour, and accept responsibility to report bullying behaviour to school staff
- ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated and addressed
- ensure that support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying behaviour (including targets, bystanders and students engaging in bullying behaviour)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at the college.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Djerriwarrh Community College aims to:

- be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- find a constructive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- restore the relationships between the students involved

Djerriwarrh Community College acknowledges that school staff owe a duty of care to students to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

3. Scope

This policy applies to College staff, volunteers, students and Parents/Guardians.

4. Definitions

Bullying	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
Harassment	language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. It can take many forms, including sexual harassment and disability harassment.
Cyber-Bullying	direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example via a mobile device, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal, written and include images, video and/or audio.

5. Responsibility

The Principal is responsible for ensuring:

1. this policy is implemented in accordance with commonwealth and state legislation; and
2. information in this Policy is kept up to date.

6. Policy

The College will:

- Create and promote a healthy and safe environment which is free from bullying and harassment including cyber bullying where all students, staff, stakeholders and volunteers are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect;
- Provide an effective procedure for complaints based on the principles of natural justice; and,
- Promote appropriate and high standards of conduct at all times.

What is bullying?

Bullying

In 2018, the Education Council of the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the following definition of bullying for use by all Australian schools:

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.

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, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records)

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Bullying has three main features:

- It involves a misuse of power in a relationship
- It is ongoing and repeated, and
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Bullying can be:

1. *direct* physical bullying – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. *direct* verbal bullying – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. *indirect* bullying – e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.

Cyberbullying is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example via a mobile device, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal, written and include images, video and/or audio.

6.1 Other distressing and inappropriate behaviours

Many distressing and inappropriate behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing and inappropriate behaviours should report their concerns to College staff.

Mutual conflict involves an argument or disagreement between people with no imbalance of power. In incidents of mutual conflict, generally, both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the issue. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

Social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Djerriwarrh Community College will use its Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy to guide a response to single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression.

Harassment is language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. It can take many forms, including sexual harassment and disability harassment. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. The College will use its Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy to guide a response to students demonstrating harassing behaviour, unless the behaviour also constitutes bullying, in which case the behaviour will be managed in accordance with this Bullying, Harassment and Cyber Bullying Prevention Policy.

6.2 Bullying Prevention

Djerriwarrh Community College has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance and respect.

Bullying prevention at Djerriwarrh Community College is proactive and is supported by a multifaceted approach. At our school:

- We have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing.
- We strive to build strong partnerships between the school, families and the broader community that means all members work together to ensure the safety of students.
- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
- A range of programs are planned for each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts.
- In the classroom, our social and emotional learning curriculum teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- The Peer Mediation program encourages positive relationships between students. We seek to empower students to be confident communicators and to resolve conflict in a non-aggressive and constructive way.
- Students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to teachers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.

For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

6.3 Incident Response

Reporting concerns to Djerriwarrh Community College

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school.

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff as soon as possible.

Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students and/or parents and carers reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by the College are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to any trusted member of staff including teachers, education support staff, youth worker etc.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at the College should contact the Principal.

7. Communication

This Policy is available on the College website, Compass and hard copies can be obtained from the College Reception.

8. Associated documents

Associated policies and procedures	Duty of Care Policy Duty of Care Procedure Behaviour Management Policy Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy Information Communication Technology User Policy Restrictive Intervention and Seclusion Policy and Procedure Bullying, Harassment and Cyber Bullying Prevention Policy Supervision Procedure Internet Use Policy
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Other associated documents Internal	Student /Parent Handbook Student Code of Conduct Student Reflection Sheet Wellbeing Referral Form Student Services Referral Form User Acceptable User Agreement Student Behaviour Management Plan
Relevant legislation	<i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)</i> <i>Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)</i> <i>Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)</i> <i>Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</i> <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</i> <i>The Racial Hatred Act 1995 (Cth)</i> <i>The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)</i> <i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)</i> <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)</i> <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic)</i> <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)</i> <i>Disability Act 2006 (Vic)</i> <i>Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)</i> <i>Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic)</i>
Other associated documents External	VRQA: Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration

9. Issuance and approval

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