BULLYING PREVENTION
POLICY

PURPOSE

Mortlake college is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated.

The purpose of this policy is to:
- explain the definition of bullying
- make clear that all forms of bullying at Mortlake College will not 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 victims, bystanders and perpetrators)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Mortlake College.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Mortlake College aims to:
- be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- find a constructive and positive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- restore the relationships between the students involved.

Mortlake 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.

SCOPE

This policy addresses how Mortlake College aims to prevent and respond to student bullying behaviour. Mortlake College recognises that there are many other types of inappropriate student behaviours that do not meet the definition of bullying which are also unacceptable at our school. These other inappropriate behaviours will be managed in accordance with our *Student Code of Conduct* and *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* and *Equal Opportunity policy*.
This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

POLICY

Definitions

Bullying occurs when someone, or a group of people, deliberately and repeatedly upset, harass, intimidate, threaten or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying, where the bully or bullies have more power than the victim due to their age, size, status or other reasons.
Bullying may be direct or indirect, physical or verbal, and includes cyberbullying. Bullying is not a one-off disagreement between two or more people or a situation of mutual dislike. In this policy any reference to 'bullying' includes all forms of bullying including cyberbullying.

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.

Harassment can also constitute bullying if it amounts to a pattern of behaviour or course of conduct towards another person that is demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person.

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

Other distressing behaviours

Many distressing behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing behaviours should report their concerns to school staff and our school will follow the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy. *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 harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, they are not being bullied. Harassment, nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school.

BULLYING PREVENTION

Mortlake 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, kindness and respect.

Bullying prevention at Mortlake College is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effect way to prevent and address bullying. 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 year level incursions and 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.
- Students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to teachers and older peers 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/Student Engagement Policy.

INCIDENT RESPONSE

Reporting concerns to Mortlake 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.

In most circumstances, we encourage students to speak to their class teacher or house group teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including teachers & wellbeing staff,.

Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Mortlake College should contact Welfare Officer or Assistant Principal.

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 Mortlake College are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

Investigations

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:

1. record the details of the allegations in restorative records folder; and
2. inform class teacher or house group teacher.

The Welfare Officer is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the class teacher / house group teacher / Welfare Officer /Principal or Assistant may:

- speak to the students involved in the allegations, including the victim/s, the alleged perpetrator/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- speak to the parents of the students involved
- speak to the teachers of the students involved
- take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference
- obtain written statements from all or any of the above.

All communications in the course of investigating an allegation of bullying will be managed sensitively. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for the behaviours to be addressed in a timely manner.

The objective of completing a thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged bullying behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the students involved. A thorough understanding of the alleged bullying will inform staff about how to most effectively implement an appropriate response to that behaviour. Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: Brodie's Law.

Responses to bullying behaviours

When the school has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and the students involved, a number of strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation with Student Wellbeing Team.

There are a number of factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When making a decision about how to respond to bullying behaviour, Mortlake College will consider:

- the age and maturity of the students involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the victim student
- whether the perpetrator student or students have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the perpetrator demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour

- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

The school may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:
- Offer counselling support to the victim student or students, including referral to outside agencies.
- Offer counselling support to the perpetrator student or students, including referral to outside agencies.
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the victim student, including referral to outside agencies.
- Facilitate a restorative practice meeting with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the person who has bullied someone and forgiveness by the person who has been bullied.
- Facilitate a mediation between some or all of the students involved to help to encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance. Mediation is only suitable if all students are involved voluntarily and demonstrate a willingness to engage in the mediation process.
- Facilitate a process using the Support Group Method, involving the victim student(s), the perpetrator students and a group of students who are likely to be supportive of the victim(s).
- Implement disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator students, which may include removal of privileges, detention, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy, the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant Department policy.
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare a Individual Management Plan restricting contact between victim and perpetrator students.
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved, including.
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.
- Implement year group targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours.

The Welfare Officer is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

Mortlake College understands the importance of monitoring and following up on the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Where appropriate, school staff will also endeavour to provide parents and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Parent Complaints policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Equal Opportunity Policy

The following websites and resources provide useful information on prevention and responding to bullying, as well as supporting students who have been the target of bullying behaviours:
- Bully Stoppers
- Kids Helpline
- Lifeline
- Bullying. No way!

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or earlier as required, following analysis of school data on reported incidents of, and responses to bullying to ensure that the policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Data will be collected through:
- discussion with students
- regular student bullying surveys
- regular staff surveys
- assessment of school based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented.

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with student representative groups &, school council

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on November 2018 and is scheduled for review in November 2019

| This policy was last ratified by School Council in.... | **November 2018** | |

Appendix A

Anti-Bullying (including cyber-bullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures.

What are Bullying, cyber bullying and Harassment?

Bullying

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, who have more power at the time, deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance, on more than one occasion.

Types of Bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying:

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 verbal bullying – this form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied students back. It is designed to harm someone's reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bully occurs:
   - Lying and spreading rumours
   - Playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
   - Mimicking
   - Encouraging others to socially exclude someone
   - Damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
   - Cyber-bullying, which involves the use of electronic means to humiliate and distress.

What Bullying is not

Many distressed behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying.

Mutual Conflict

In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation

Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied.
Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different sudents is not the same as bullying.

Cyber-bullying

Consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums such as cell phones, web logs and web sites, online chat rooms, 'MUD' rooms (multi-user domains where individuals take on different characters) and Xangas (on-line personal profiles where some adolescences create lists of people they do not like). It is verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various mediums available.

Harassment

Is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

Why do we have a Policy on these?

To provide a safe and friendly school environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the *Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act* and the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act*.

What are the effects of Bullying and Harassment?

- Poor health – anxiety, depression
- Lower self esteem
- Reduced study performance
- Missed classes, social withdrawal
- Reduced career prospects

Am I bullying or harassing someone?

If you are not sure about your behaviour you can:
- Check it out by asking if it is offensive or inappropriate
- Stop it
- Apologise
- Take it seriously if someone says they are feeling uncomfortable
- Talk it over with an advisor or somebody who has an understanding of the issues

What are some of the feelings victims of bullying or harassment may experience.

- *"I will ignore it and it will go away"*
  If anything it will make things worse – you will give the impression that you agree with the situation.

- *"I don't want to cause trouble"*
  Most causes of harassment are sorted out quite simply. By speaking up, action can be taken to address the problem.

- *"Am I to blame?"*
  Victims of harassment or bullying sometimes feel that it is their fault. Victims are made to feel guilty by the offender and often blame themselves. It is your right to have a safe environment free from harassment or bullying.

- 'Am I imagining things"
  Often our hunches are correct. Rather than put up with nagging doubts, talk to someone about your feelings.

What should you do if you see another person being bullied or harassed?

Tell the person that you witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. However, if your friend is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable.

Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully.

Bullying can involve

- Grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching, kicking, pushing and shoving
- Publicly excluding a person from your group
- Knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desks
- Teasing a person because of their looks

Cyber-bullying can involve

- *Flaming* – online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages
- *Harassment* – repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages
- *Denigration* – posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
- *Outing* – sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online
- *Exclusion* – intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
- *Cyber-stalking* – repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear.

Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities – it can be subtle or explicit

Subtle (the most common) they include:
- Offensive staring and leering
- Unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference
- Racist or smutty comments or jokes
- Questions about another's sexual activity
- Persistent comments about a person's private life or family
- Physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body
- Offensive name calling

Explicit (obvious) they include:
- Grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving etc.
- Unwelcome patting, touching, embracing
- Repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal
- Offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or emails
- Sexually and/or racially provocative remarks
- Displays of sexually graphic material – pornography
- Request for sexual favours
- Extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution

What do you do if you are being bullied or harassed?

- Tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop
- Discuss the matter with a Coordinator, Student Welfare Coordinator or peer mentor, peer support leader or a teacher that you feel comfortable with
- The school will take your concerns seriously – all complaints will be treated confidentially

How will your complaint be dealt with?

Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

School procedures for responding to a student who bullies or harasses others are set out below.

Level 1

If bullying or harassment incident is minor or first time occurrence, teachers may elect to use one or more anti-bullying practices:

- Stopping the bullying/re-statement of rules and consequences
- Restorative questioning
- Think time detention
- Private conference
- Shared control discussion

If the student does not take control over his/her behaviour, an Incident Report Form should be completed and submitted to the student welfare coordinator, who keeps all documentation.

Level 2

If the bullying or harassment continues or in instances of severe bullying ir harassing, a referral should be made to the Student Welfare Coordinator. (Copies of all documentation on Welfare Database and in folder)

Here, the Student Welfare Coordinator (or another who has responsibility for student welfare) may:

- Meet with the student to develop a behaviour contract
- Provide discussion/mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies including structured learning activities
- Conduct a restorative conference separately with the perpetrator and "target"

Level 3

For 'at risk' students (many risk factors, few protective factors) whose bullying or harassing behaviour is severe and for other non-at risk students whose bullying or harassing and other aggressive behaviour is resistant to change, an individual 'strength building' plan should be developed by the student welfare coordinator in consultation with student, parents/carers and teachers. Individual strength-building plans and associated interventions help connect the student to positive people, programs and actions in the community, school and home as well as develop the student's inner social and emotional strengths (skills, values).

Level 4

Students whose severe bullying or harassing behaviour resists school efforts and represents a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing should be referred to outside agencies for evaluation. Student Welfare Coordinators will need to be familiar with those community agencies and organisations that can offer more intensive services to the student and student's family

Note: The school may choose, if bullying or harassment persists or the initial incident is of such magnitude, that parents/carers will be contacted and consequences implemented consist with the school's Student Code of Conduct. Furthermore, the principal may commence formal disciplinary action in line with '**Effective Schools are Engaging Schools – Student Engagement Policy Guidelines**' (DEECD at any stage in the process depending on contextual information relating to the severity of the bullying (including cyber-bullying) and harassment.

Appendix B

Reporting on Incident of Bullying / Harassment

(THIS FORM SHOULD BE USED BY CLASSROOM TEACHERS, STAFF ON YEARD DUTY, MENTORS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS & WELFARE OFFICERS)

Staff member recording incident: _____

Date : ___/___/___

Name of student(s) who appears to have instigated bullying _____

_____

_____

Year/House:_____

Name(s) of target(s)

_____

_____

Name(s) of witnesses

_____

_____

Did you observe the incident?   YES ☐   NO ☐

If 'NO' who reported the incident to you?_____

Brief description of incident (what was allegedly said or done to the student who appears to have been bullied?

_____

_____

_____

What form (s) of bullying took place?

Verbal ☐   Physical ☐   Indirect ☐   Cyber ☐

Other ☐_____

Was the incident of bullying   Mild ☐   Severe ☐

Describe how you responded (Did you use a school anti-bullying practice?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Describe how student responded to your intervention

_____

_____

_____

_____

Where / when / time incident took place:

Location: _____

When: before school ☐   recess ☐   lunch ☐   in class ☐   after school ☐

Time: ____:____am/pm

Date incident took place: ____/___/___

Additional Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C

Formal Referral of Student who has bullied / harassed other to Student Welfare Coordinator

(This form may be completed by a classroom teacher, year level coordinator, school administrator or Student Welfare/Wellbeing Coordinator)

Staff member recording incident: _____

Date:____/____/____   Position: _____

Name of student being referred: _____

Year/Class:_____

History if incident(s) of bullying (date, description)

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

Have parent/guardians been notified?   YES ☐   NO ☐

If 'NO' why not? _____

_____

Have they attended a conference: YES ☐   NO ☐

If 'NO' why not? _____

_____

Are they willing to participate   YES ☐   NO ☐

If 'NO' why not? _____

_____

What appears to be the reason for the students bullying behaviour (family, peer, school, personal, other)? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What practices have been tried?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Impact

_____

_____

_____

_____

What has been the student's attitude towards student(s) who have been targets?(e.g. any concerns or remorse expressed)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

A brief description of academic performance of student over past year or more.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Distinguishing 'at risk' factors of student (e.g. limited English: economic disadvantage of family; ADHD)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix D. DEFINITION OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR- STAFF

Workplace bullying can be either direct or indirect behaviour which is perceived as undermining an employee's right to dignity and respect at work. It can be manifested through intimidation, threats, victimisation, offensive and/or humiliating behaviour towards another person or group and is defined by the effect of the behaviour, even though there may not be a specific intent to bully.

> Bullying may involve more than one person and can occur between colleagues, groups of employees, line manager to employee, or employee to line manager.

Isolated incidents of inappropriate behaviour do not constitute bullying. Single incidents of this nature should not be ignored and should be documented for potential future reference and/or raised with the person concerned or with the line manager/principal.

It is important for employees to differentiate between a legitimate request and bullying. All line managers/principals have a legal right to direct and control how work is done, and to monitor and provide feedback. This feedback needs to be given constructively, free from personal insults or derogatory remarks.

Bullying using online technologies such as emails, text messaging and social networking sites (for example, Facebook and Twitter) is commonly known as cyberbullying. Further information is available in the support material available via the HRMweb.

DIRECT BULLYING

Direct bullying behaviour may include, but is not limited to:
- abusive, insulting or offensive language in the context of face-to-face, telephone calls, texts, emails, or social networking sites;
- behaviour or language perceived as frightening, intimidating, humiliating or degrading;
- spreading malicious rumours;
- inappropriate comments about a person's appearance, lifestyle or their family;
- teasing or making others the brunt of practical jokes;
- interfering or tampering with a person's personal effects or work equipment;
- harmful or offensive initiation practices;
- undue pressure to produce work or meet impossible deadlines;
- isolation of workers from others; and
- physical assaults or threats.

INDIRECT BULLYING

- Indirect bullying is less obvious and more difficult to identify. It is repeated behaviour intended to cause humiliation, undermine or disempower an individual. Examples include:
- deliberately excluding, ignoring or isolating a person;
- unreasonably overloading a person with work;
- setting tasks beyond a person's skill level;
- applying restrictive work rules without justification;
- denying access to information, consultation or resources;
- over-monitoring an employee with malicious intent;
- denying opportunities for meaningful work;
- invasion of personal space; and
- unfair treatment in relation to accessing entitlements such as leave or training.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRINCIPALS

Line managers/principals must:

• _demonstrate professional and ethical behaviour;

• _inform employees of relevant legislation, policies and support services related to workplace bullying in an induction process and as required during their employment;

• _take steps to prevent bullying in the workplace;

• _monitor the workplace for unreasonable and inappropriate conduct that may constitute bullying and address any occurrences;

• _address unreasonable or inappropriate conduct of visitors (including parents/guardians, contractors and community members);

• _manage workplace bullying by addressing complaints/grievances in accordance with the _Grievance Framework_; and

   • _report incidences of workplace bullying that may constitute misconduct to the Standards and Integrity Directorate (SID).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES

Employees must:

• _not place the safety and health of others at risk by engaging in bullying as outlined in section 20 of the _Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984_;

• _adhere to expected standards of professional and ethical behavior.

• _report incidences of workplace bullying, where personal resolution is not possible, to their principal (or superordinate, if the line manager/principal is the subject of the complaint); and

• _cooperate with complaint/grievance resolution processes and abide by any grievance resolution agreements or directives.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Line managers/principals and employees must maintain confidentiality in relation to bullying complaints/grievances, with information kept in trust and divulged only to those with a need to know, with due regard to the requirements of the _Freedom of Information Act 1992._