Collingwood College

Bullying Prevention Policy

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Review By: Sam Luck



Help for non-English speakers
If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school office.
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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- explain the definition of bullying
- make clear that all forms of bullying at Collingwood College will not be tolerated
- ask that everyone in the 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 Collingwood College.

Scope

This policy addresses how Collingwood College aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Collingwood 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, Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* and *Inclusion and Diversity Policy*.

This policy applies to all school activities both face-to-face and online, including camps and excursions. It also applies to bullying behaviour between students that occurs outside of school hours, where the behaviour impacts on student wellbeing and safety at school.

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Definitions

Bullying

In 2018 the Education Council of the Council of Australian Government 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.

There are four main types of bullying behaviour:

- *Physical* – examples include hitting, pushing, shoving or intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence.
- *Verbal/written* – examples include name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic.
- *Social* (sometimes called relational or emotional bullying) – examples include deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, sharing information that will have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.

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- *Cyberbullying* – any form of bullying behaviour that occurs online or via a mobile device. It can be verbal or written, and can include threats of violence as well as images, videos and/or audio.

Bullying can be a form of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia or other type of social prejudice when the behaviour is targeted at an individual or group because of a personal characteristic, such as race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

For further information about bullying, refer to: Bully Stoppers (education.vic.gov.au) and the Department's Bullying Prevention and Response policy on the Policy and Advisory Library.

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 school staff and our school will follow our *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* and/or *this Bullying Prevention Policy* where the behaviour constitutes bullying.

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. Collingwood College will use its *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* and/or *this Bullying Prevention 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.

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Discrimination is behaviour that treats someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic (for example, race, religious belief or activity, disability, sex or intersex status, gender identity or sexual orientation). Discrimination, harassment, and any other inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated at our school and there may be serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. This includes any form of racism, religious or disability discrimination, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, or any other behaviour that targets an individual or group. Further information about discrimination and harassment, including definitions, is set out in our *Inclusion and Diversity Policy*.

Policy Implementation

Rationale

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

Bullying Prevention

Collingwood College has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture. Collingwood College strives to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

Bullying prevention at Collingwood College is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effective way to prevent and address bullying.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Collingwood 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.

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Collingwood College:

- has a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing
- strives to build strong partnerships between the school, families and the broader community that means all members work together to ensure the safety of students.
- Encourages teachers to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour
- implements a range of year level incursions and programs each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts
- has developed a social and emotional learning curriculum that teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving
- implements the Respectful Relationships (RR) and School Wide Positive behaviours (SWPBS) programs and student leadership initiatives that encourage positive relationships between students in different year levels. The school seeks to empower students to be confident communicators and to resolve conflict in a non-aggressive and constructive way
- encourages students 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 the school's engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see the school's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* Action Plan.

Incident Response

Reporting concerns to Collingwood College

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at 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, Collingwood College will encourage students to speak to homegroup teachers or year level co-ordinators or members of the wellbeing team.

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However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff (including teachers, wellbeing staff, school social worker etc).

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Collingwood College should contact the homegroup teacher or year level co-ordinator in the first instance. The Leading teachers in both the Primary and Secondary schools can also be contacted.

Investigations

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

1. record the details of the allegations in Compass; and
2. inform the wellbeing team and the relevant Year Level Coordinator, Learning Community Leader or Assistant Principal.

The Year Level Coordinator and/or Learning Community leader is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the teacher/leader 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.

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Responses to bullying behaviours

When a member of the leadership team (leader) 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 the Student Wellbeing team, teachers, other leaders, support staff, Assistant Principal, and Principal.

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, Collingwood College will consider:

- the age and maturity of those involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the victim
- whether the perpetrator has 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.

Leaders may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- offer counselling support to the victim student or students, including referral to the Student Wellbeing team, Student Support Services (SSS) or an external provider.
- offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the victim student, including referral to the Student Wellbeing team, SSS, or an external provider to 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
- implement disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator students, which may include removal of privileges, detention, suspension and/or expulsion,

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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 Safety Plan, Individual Management Plan, or Behaviour Contract restricting contact between the victim and perpetrator students
- provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved, including connecting affected students with an older student mentor, and/or resilience programs
- 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, for example the SWPBS, Respectful Relationships programs, or homegroup programs

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

Collingwood College understands the importance of monitoring the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. The college's ability to reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Collingwood College are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

Communication

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our college website and through COMPASS
- Included in staff induction processes
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Referenced at least annually in the school newsletter

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- Discussed at student forums
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Further Information and Resources

Related School Policies/Documents:

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct and Statement of Commitment
- Digital Learning Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Yard Duty and Supervision Policy

Related Department of Education and Training Policies

- Bullying Prevention and Response
- Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies
- Equal Opportunity and Human Rights - Students
- LGBTIQ Student Support 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
- Report racism or religious discrimination in schools
- Kids Helpline
- ReachOut Australia
- Lifeline
- Bullying. No way!
- Student Wellbeing Hub
- eSafety Commissioner
- Australian Student Wellbeing Framework

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Policy Review and Approval

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or earlier as required following an incident or analysis of new research or school data relating to bullying.

Data to inform this review will be collected through:

- discussion and consultation with students and parent/carers
- regular student bullying surveys
- regular staff surveys
- assessment of other school-based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented
- Attitudes to School Survey
- Parent Opinion Survey

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with year level teams, whole staff, wellbeing team members, and at School Council.

Policy last reviewed	December 2022
Approved by	Principal
Consultation (Mandatory)	School staff/School Council August 2022
Next scheduled review date	December 2024

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