



MATER DEI COLLEGE

Bullying, Harassment, Aggression & Violence Policy

Originally released: 2017

Latest date for review: 2022

Mater Dei College

This policy should be read in conjunction with Appendix 1 – Cyber Bullying – as appropriate

Rationale

Learning outcomes, physical health, emotional, psychological and spiritual wellbeing can be adversely affected by bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. Students who are bullied, subjected to aggression, or harassed tend to have poorer health, lower self-esteem, more interpersonal difficulties, and higher levels of loneliness, depression, suicidal ideation and increased anxiety. They are also more likely to have a dislike of and want to avoid school, higher absenteeism and lower academic competence. The effects of bullying can begin early in life and, for some, last a lifetime.

Mater Dei College is committed to providing an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person and, therefore, aims to encourage the development of positive relationships between students to reduce all forms of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. We are all responsible for creating an environment which is safe and inclusive.

Terminology

The Australian Government's National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) adopts a whole school approach to safety and wellbeing.

The term 'bullies & victims' are not recommended as appropriate terminology to use when identifying, reporting, recording and responding to bullying incidents. More appropriate terms to use may include 'bullied students', 'students who are bullied', 'students who bully' and 'students who engage in bullying behaviour'. Using this language will ensure that the unacceptable behaviours are addressed in a manner that supports the individuals involved to learn and demonstrate more acceptable social behaviours without the impact of enduring labels.

Definitions of Bullying, Harassment, Aggressive & Violent Behaviour

- **Verbal**: The repeated use of words to hurt or humiliate another individual or group. Verbal bullying includes using put-downs, insulting language, name-calling, swearing, nasty notes and homophobic, racist or sexist comments.
- **Emotional/Psychological**: Includes repeated stalking, threats or implied threats, unwanted email or text messaging, abusive websites, threatening gestures, manipulation, emotional blackmail, and threats to an individual's reputation and sense of safety.
- **Relational**: Usually involves repeatedly ostracising others by leaving them out or convincing others to exclude or reject another individual or group, making up or spreading rumours, and sharing or threatening to share another's personal information.
- **Physical**: Includes repetitive low level hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing, tripping, 'ganging up', and unwanted physical or sexual touching and damage to personal property. More serious violent

behaviours are not necessarily treated as bullying and may be better managed through the College’s discipline processes.

- **Cyber:** Involves the use of information and communication technologies such as email, text messages, instant messaging and websites to engage in the bullying of other individuals or groups. This technology provides an alternative means for verbal, relational and psychological forms of bullying.
- **Bystanders:** Bystanders are those who are aware of, or witnesses to, bullying but are not directly involved in bullying or being bullied themselves. All members of a school community need to know how to support those who are being bullied and how to discourage bullying behaviours. Any member of the school community can be a bystander and can learn ways to act successfully in preventing or stopping bullying.

Confirming if the behaviours were intentional is not required to implement the strategies for responding effectively. Young people involved in bullying are not always fully aware of the impact of their actions on others. It is more important to act as a result of the effects on the targeted individual, immaterial of the determination of intent.

Strategies

Mater Dei College will strive to:

- Provide and sustain a safe, secure and stable environment for all members of the school community
- Implement effective classroom behaviour management approaches that teach and encourage positive behaviours, and effectively address negative behaviours
- Promote a developmental social/emotional learning curriculum to include the behaviours that constitute bullying, the impact, effective bystander behaviour, development of positive social problem solving skills and understanding cyber-bullying
- Provide learning resources for staff, students and parents in identifying, preventing and addressing bullying
- Promote a school culture that seeks to be proactive and restore relationships affected by persistent or unresolved conflict

Rights and Responsibilities of School Community Members

Mater Dei College will not tolerate bullying, harassment, aggression and violence and encourages all members of the school community to take a pro-active stance that promotes safety and wellbeing. We aim to promote collaborative relationships between the school, parents and the wider community on developing and implementing school based strategies and programs with students.

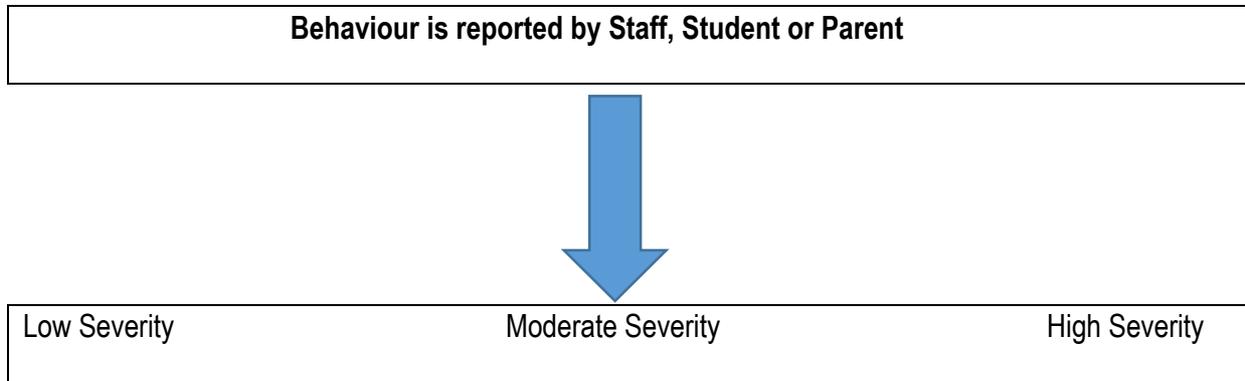
MEMBERS	RIGHTS	RESPONSIBILITIES
<p>All students, teachers, parents, wider school community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are safe and supported in the school environment • are included • are treated with respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate and contribute to school positive behaviour programs • build positive relationships



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate respect and tolerance towards others
School leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develops the school’s plan to prevent and effectively manage bullying implements the strategies and programs in the school’s plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides leadership in resourcing the school’s plan ensures the school community is informed of the plan implements the plan supports staff to implement the strategies and programs in the plan
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feel safe and supported in the workplace are informed of the school’s bullying plan have access to professional learning in preventing and effectively managing bullying have access to curriculum resources suitable for supporting students in building positive relationships, resilience, safety and bullying prevention (including social/emotional learning) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> promote and model positive relationships participate in developing the school plan identify and respond to bullying incidents deliver the strategies and programs to students in effectively responding to bullying promote effective bystander behaviour promote social problem-solving use appropriate terminology when referring to bullying and the students involved
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have access to curriculum that supports the building of resilience and social skills are informed of the school’s bullying plan are provided with supports to stop bullying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand and value the concepts of inclusion and tolerance identify and respond effectively to bullying are aware of themselves as bystanders seek help for themselves and others as needed
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are treated with respect are confident their children are provided with a safe and supportive school environment are provided with access to information on the prevention and management of bullying are informed of the school’s bullying plan and opportunities to participate in such 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support and encourage children to treat others with respect and tolerance act in accordance with the school plan if they observe/ know about bullying encourage children to report bullying incidents work effectively with the school in responding to bullying
Wider community: including other professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are strategically included in prevention and bullying management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide support and input into the school’s approach to preventing and managing bullying



How Mater Dei College will deal with Bullying, Harassment, Aggression & Violence



The level of severity is based on the professional judgement of the staff member involved. Consideration should be taken of the nature and severity of the behaviour together with the frequency and impact on the person being affected.

Low Severity

- Students interviewed by person receiving information. (Members of non-teaching staff should share information with the relevant Year Coordinator).
- Evidence of the distress caused to be highlighted to the person engaging in negative behaviours. Alternative behaviours suggested and situation monitored.
- Follow up meeting within 21 days.
- Parents of both students notified and outcomes of the interviews discussed.
- Details of incident and outcome recorded on SEQTA.
- If at follow up interview, no change in behaviour is identified, both students referred to Year Coordinator. Both sets of parents notified of repeat behaviours. Information recorded on SEQTA.
- Consideration given to problem solving via restorative practice or consequences imposed on student in breach of College Code of Conduct.
- Both students offered support and guidance.

Moderate Severity

- Refer information to Year Coordinator.
- Year Coordinator to interview students involved.
- Consideration given to problem solving via restorative practice or consequences imposed on student in breach of College Code of Conduct.
- Both students offered support and guidance.
- Sanctions applied, depending upon severity and individual case.
- Follow up meeting within 14 days.
- Parents of all students notified and outcomes discussed.
- Record of incident and outcome recorded on SEQTA and hard copy, sighted and signed by student and Year Coordinator.



- If at follow up interview, no change in behaviour is identified, students referred to Deputy Principal and/or Principal.

High Severity

All of the above, and in addition:

- Behaviours at this level are referred to the relevant Deputy Principal or Principal.
- Sanctions applied, which may include suspension, depending upon the individual case.



Appendix 1 – Cyber Bullying

Definition

Cyber Bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies such as email, text messages, instant messaging and websites to engage in the bullying of other individuals or groups.

This technology provides an alternative means for verbal, relational and psychological forms of bullying.

This Appendix is to be read in conjunction with the College's *Bullying, Harassment, Aggression & Violence Policy*.

Mater Dei College adheres to a strict ICT policy for both students and staff. The policy focuses on the use of ICT within the College; however the College recognises the impact of cyber bullying outside of the school grounds and the impact it may have on a student's wellbeing and learning.

Cyber Bullying is an extension of face to face bullying. Mater Dei takes a holistic approach to education, prevention and interventions when faced with incidents of cyber bullying. The whole school (students, staff and parents) should be involved as active participants in resolutions.

What will the School do?

1. Mater Dei College provides numerous opportunities to engage students in learning about respectful relationships, bullying, cyber bullying and appropriate use of social media. Programme content is tailored to suit the developmental stages of each year group.
2. All students agree to adhere to the Mater Dei ICT policy. Unacceptable use constitutes a serious breach of school rules and possibly the law and may result in a student losing the right to use ICT resources for a period of time and/or the application of other sanctions.
3. Incidents which occur outside of school using personal ICT devices, which impact directly on the learning and wellbeing of a student whilst they are at school, will be investigated by the school upon receiving a report.
4. Parents of all parties involved will be notified. All students will be offered support and guidance where necessary. Students and parents will be reminded that cyber bullying can be a crime under either WA or Federal Law.
5. Where incidents of cyber bullying continue, Mater Dei will seek to resolve the situation with the support of parents. Restorative Practice will be considered alongside more punitive methods for failing to adhere to the Mater Dei Code of Conduct.
6. Mater Dei will provide advice and guidance to parents including support in reporting matters to the police.

What Can Parents Do?

"Because most cyberbullying happens in the home, parents need to be aware of the technology that young people are using, so that they can be in that space with them and look at the ways in which they are engaging with their friends" (Professor Donna Cross, Edith Cowan University, Perth)



1. Familiarise yourself with www.esafety.gov.au website. The website covers all aspect of cyberbullying including how to make a complaint.
2. Look at ways to support your child. Information can be found on a number of websites including: <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>
3. Inform the College if it is affecting your child's safety and wellbeing at school.
4. Report incidents of repeated bullying to the police.

What can Students do?

1. Talk about it

Tell someone if you're the target of cyberbullying.

Whether it's your parents, a teacher, or another trusted adult, or even your best friend, never keep the fact that you're being bullied to yourself. We know it's not fun and it's hard to talk about it, but you should give others a chance to come through for you. It could help make the problem go away, which is the ultimate goal.

2. Ignore them

If there is an isolated incident where you are being bullied don't respond to the instigator. Cyberbullies who do not get a response from their target may just move on. They are looking for a response—don't give it to them!

3. Never retaliate

Be the bigger person and never retaliate against a cyber-bully. Retaliation only further perpetuates the cycle of violence, and does nothing to solve the problem. Plus, if you retaliate you could get into trouble for what you are doing or saying to them!

4. Tell them to stop

For repeated bullying, if ignoring the student who bullies doesn't work, tell them to stop. Let them know that what they are doing is hurtful and, more importantly, lame and uncool. Be respectful in approaching them and never come off in an aggressive manner.

5. Laugh

If someone says something funny about you, try to laugh it off. Maybe they really are just trying to be funny and not hurtful. Sometimes we say funny things or make fun of a friend as a way of fitting in. Of course this can be taken too far. If it is not funny at all, and you really are hurt by what was said, try one of the other responses listed here.

6. Save the evidence

Record all instances of cyberbullying. Print out Facebook messages and emails, save text messages, and capture screen shots when cyberbullying occurs. Then turn these documents over to an adult who you believe can help.

7. Block access to people who cyberbully

Block people who cyberbully from contacting you. Most websites and software programs have the ability for you to block certain users from messaging you or even being able to "see" you online. Some phones have the capability to block preset phone numbers, and you can also contact your mobile phone service provider to help. If certain people simply cannot reach you, it will be more difficult for them to bully you.

8. Report it to the content provider

If you don't know who the person engaging in cyberbullying is, contact the content provider of the site where the cyberbullying is occurring and make a report. The most popular web sites (like Facebook, YouTube and Google) make it pretty easy to report cyberbullying. Harassment is a violation of the terms of service of all reputable websites.



9. Never pass along messages from people who cyberbully

If you receive hurtful or embarrassing messages or photos of someone else, delete them and refrain from forwarding them to others. Don't be part of the problem, be part of the solution. You can help to stop cyberbullying by letting your friends know that it simply isn't cool.

10. Call the police

If you feel your safety (or the safety of someone else) is in danger, call the police immediately. Any time there is a threat, tell an adult.

Sameer Hinduja, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor at Florida Atlantic University and Justin W. Patchin, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor at the University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire. Together, they lecture across the United States and abroad on the causes and consequences of cyberbullying and offer comprehensive workshops for parents, teachers, counselors, mental health professionals, law enforcement, youth and others concerned with addressing and preventing online aggression. The Cyberbullying Research Center is dedicated to providing up-to-date information about the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of cyberbullying among adolescents.

For more information, visit <http://www.cyberbullying.us>

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