

## Bullying and Harassment Policy

Wirreanda Secondary School adopts a “zero-tolerance policy” towards all forms of bullying and harassment. All members of Wirreanda Secondary school have the right to be included and have respect from others, to right to learn or to be taught, and a right to feel safe and secure in their school environment.

### What is Bullying?

Bullying is repeated intimidation of someone or a group of people with whom the offender means to hurt, isolate, threaten, exclude or embarrass. Bullying impacts negatively on the victim's safety and wellbeing

### What is Harassment?

Harassment differs from bullying in that it offends an individual or group based upon certain characteristics, including (but not limited to):

- identity, race, culture or ethnic origin
- religion
- physical characteristics
- gender, gender identity and gender expression
- sexual orientation
- marital, parenting or economic status
- age
- ability or disability

Harassment is a behaviour that offends, humiliates, intimidates, or creates a hostile environment. Harassment may occur even if it is not intentional. It is the impact of the behaviour on the person concerned that is important, not the intention of the ‘harasser’. Language that uses sexual orientation or sexual identity as a put-down is a form of harassment. This includes calling someone a faggo\*t, homo, dyke, leso or calling a person, object or situation “gay” to mean something negative. This language is harassment as it creates a hostile environment and reduces a sense of safety for students who hear this language even if not directed at them.

### Bullying and harassment happens in different ways:

Physical- hitting, pushing, touching, rubbing, grabbing, spitting, taking/damaging property, using a weapon

Verbal and written- spoken or written insults, threats, suggestive comments, name-calling, unfair criticism, rumour spreading

Face and body signals- looks, stares, facial expressions, hand signs

Cyber- using emails, voice and text messages, photographic, video images, web pages, social networking sites and chat rooms.

Graffiti- using pictures, tags or words

Group- forming groups to leave out, ignore and disrespect

Indirect- influencing or organising someone else to use physical, verbal and written, graffiti, face and body signals, cyber and group ways

### Bystanders to Bullying and Harassment

Be part of the solution not part of the problem. A bystander is a witness or close-by person who sees bullying and harassment happening. Things that you may consider doing as a bystander, as long as you feel safe, could be:

- Tell the person who is bullying/harassing to stop
- Tell the person that you will tell a teacher if they continue
- Go and tell a teacher immediately
- Help the person who is being bullied to get away from the situation
- Talk with your friends about how as bystanders you can take a stand against bullying and harassment non-violently at school
- encourage your friends to all tell the person to stop

However if as a bystander you are seen to be encouraging any form of bullying or harassment, you may be dealt with in line with the school's behaviour management policy.

#### **If it happens to you.....**

If you are bullied or you know someone who is being bullied, report it. Report the bullying as soon as it happens. Do not ignore it. If you ignore bullying it may get worse.

- Make sure you are always safe
- Don't react, explode or take revenge
- If it's safe tell the person to stop
- Tell a teacher, school counsellor, parent or friend
- think of ways to stay safe
- Ask teachers, parents and friends for help
- Tell yourself that you never deserve to be bullied or harassed
- Report the bullying and harassment as soon as it happens

#### **The steps to make it stop.....**

Each bullying and harassment incident is different. We do not use a 'one size fits all' approach.

Teachers will deal with bullying and harassment in different ways depending on how serious it is.

**Step 1** If safe tell the person or group to stop.

#### **If bullying continues**

**Step 2** Tell a parent, teacher, friend, youth worker or someone you trust.

Write a bullying and harassment incident report and hand it in to the Learner Wellbeing Centre, a teacher, school counsellor or year level manager.

Strategies to intervene include counselling for students who are bullied and who bully (applying consequences as necessary), student negotiated agreements to support safety and respect, assertiveness and conflict management skills, suspension, talking with parents/caregivers etc

#### **If bullying continues**

**Step 3** Repeat Step 2 if the situation continues or happens again. Similar and more serious intervention strategies as in step 2.

#### **If bullying continues**

**Step 4** Make a complaint directly to your teacher or year level manager. They will ensure follow up.

#### **If you bully and harass.....**

A teacher must respond. This response will depend on the seriousness of your behaviour. You will be given fair opportunity to show that you are willing to take responsibility for your behaviour.

Listen to the effects of your behaviour. Show that you are sorry for what you did. Make suggestions to help repair harm or damage. If you continue our school's Behaviour Management procedures will be enforced.

#### **Restorative Practices :**

Restorative Practices is a process through which victims and others are given an opportunity to confront the offender, express their feelings, ask questions and have a say in the outcome.

Offenders hear firsthand how their behaviour has affected people.

They may begin to repair the harm by apologising, making amends and agreeing to a simple contract.

Restorative Meetings hold offenders accountable while providing them an opportunity to discard the “offender” label and be reintegrated into the school community.

### **Safe School Coalition**

Wirreanda Secondary School is a proud member of the Safe Schools Coalition.

The School acknowledges the diversity of those within our community and the world around us. Students and staff are expected to support efforts in making the school more inclusive for same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse young people.

Homophobic or Transphobic behaviour will be treated in the same way as any other form of harassment and bullying outlined in this policy.

What the staff/ school will do:

1. Staff will challenge homophobic and transphobic language every time they hear it and name the issue. For example, “It is not okay to use the word ‘gay’ as a synonym for something negative. That is hurtful to the people who are gay and does not contribute to our school culture of respect for inclusion.” Additionally, staff can refer to this policy and the School’s commitment to the Safe Schools Coalition.
2. Staff should give consequences for homophobic language and acts of discrimination. These consequences should be consistent with those outlined for breaching the Bullying and Harassment policy
3. The School will address all issues of homophobia and transphobia brought to their attention, including peer pressure and social stigmatisation.
4. The School will foster a culture of openness and a celebration of diversity
5. The School will respect students who wish to remain unidentified
6. As per the Australian Curriculum, staff will affirm diversity

### **Need more information?**

The following telephone numbers and websites can provide support and useful information about bullying and harassment.

- DECD Parent Helpline: 1800 222 696
- Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800
- Child and Youth Parent Helpline: 1300 364 100
- <http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au>
- <http://www.kidshelp.com.au>