

Student Bullying and Harassment Policy

Purpose

Perth College aims to create a safe and supportive learning environment where students can manage and resolve conflict in a proactive and non-aggressive manner. Bullying and harassment are not tolerated at Perth College. This policy is intended for student-to-student interaction.

Definition

Bullying is any behaviour that is unwelcome, degrading, intrusive, intimidating, violent, abusive, or offensive to a person. It is a targeted and repeated behaviour or action, intended to cause harm (physical, social, emotional, psychological) to another person. Characterised by an imbalance of power, bullying can be defined by the impact it has on the vulnerable person. Every member of the Perth College community has the right to be treated with respect, dignity and courtesy.

Harassment is any behaviour that targets an individual or group for an unacceptable reason such as identity, race, culture or ethnic origin, religion, physical characteristics, gender, sexual orientation, marital, parenting or economic status, age, ability or disability. Harassment offends, intimidates or creates a hostile environment but need not be a repeated behaviour nor form a pattern.

Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person(s) that results in psychological harm, injury or in some cases death. It may involve provoked or unprovoked acts and can be a single incident, a random act or can occur over time.

Types of Bullying

Bullying can by nature be verbal, emotional/psychological, physical or may occur through misuse of technology.

Verbal bullying includes, but is not limited to, name calling; 'putting people down' either to their face or behind their back; comments about appearance, culture or religion; offensive or annoying messages /phone calls; sending notes; name calling and teasing in person.

Emotional/psychological bullying includes, but is not limited to, deliberately ignoring or excluding others from the group or withdrawal of friendship; acts of extortion such as demanding the victim provide copies of notes/assessments; pressuring others to act against their wishes; spreading rumours; stalking.

Physical bullying and **property abuse** includes, but is not limited to, unwanted physical touching; physical violence such as kicking, pinching, pushing, scratching, slapping, biting, or tripping someone; stealing money repeatedly; interfering with someone's belongings; damaging personal items; repeatedly hiding someone's possessions; throwing objects with the intent to injure or annoy.

Cyber bullying includes, but is not limited to, spreading gossip and rumours of a personal nature through social media, chat rooms, instant messaging programs, email, phone and internet; sending offensive text/phone and email messages including photos and video; impersonating a person's screen name to pretend to be them; sexting; intentionally excluding others from an online group; posting personal information including photos and video on internet sites and social media without permission to cause distress and humiliate; using technology to cause harm to others.

Sexual bullying includes taunts about body parts and development; teasing about sexual orientation; unwanted/unsolicited sexual attention from another, notes or pictures depicting sexual content.

What Bullying is Not

There are many negative situations which, whilst being potentially distressing for students, are not bullying. These include:

Mutual conflict situations which arise where there is disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation; or

One-off acts (of aggression or meanness) including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing.

Perth College undertakes to:

- promote a supportive environment which encourages the development of positive relationships between staff, students and parents;
- explore personal strengths, friendship and social dynamics, personal best philosophy through Pastoral Care programs and the InsideOut program;
- work proactively with students in dealing with conflict resolution;
- provide appropriate disciplinary action when warranted;
- provide appropriate counselling for students;
- promote anti-bullying messages;
- periodically undertake surveys of student wellbeing and bullying behaviour and follow up on identified perpetrators and targets;
- engage student groups (e.g. Student Representative Council) to promote anti-bullying initiatives; and

- promote responsible bystander behaviour among students, staff and parents/carers. Bystanders can encourage bullying by joining in or by colluding through remaining silent. Responsible bystanders will find ways to support the victimised student in a way which decreases the negative behaviour of the perpetrators. All members of the school community are potential bystanders.

Perth College expects all students to:

- contribute to the development and maintenance of a positive and supportive school environment;
- participate in Pastoral Care programs and the InsideOut program;
- refuse to be involved in any bullying behaviour or situation;
- acknowledge that one's own behaviour impacts on others;
- actively participate in mediations to resolve bullying and take steps to change behaviour;
- be responsible bystanders and work to reduce incidents of bullying;
- report any bullying behaviour they observe, or suspect is occurring;
- encourage victims to seek help from adults; and
- use technology for learning and healthy social interactions.

Perth College expects parents to:

- support the School's student bullying and harassment policy and procedures, including the no blame approach;
- watch for signs of distress in their child such as school refusal or withdrawal from normal activities;
- encourage their child to freely discuss any incidents of bullying or harassment with them;
- inform the School if bullying is suspected. In Junior School contact the Class Teacher, in the Senior School contact the Kaya Teacher and/or Head of Year;
- discourage their child from retaliating to incidents of bullying;
- actively supervise their child's use of technology including use of mobile phones, websites, social media, chat rooms, email and discussion groups; and
- consider the possibility that their child may bully other people and work with the School to modify their behaviour.

Scope

This policy applies to all members of the Perth College community.

Associated Policies and Procedures

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Learning Powered by Technology Code of Conduct

Mobile Communication Policy

Student Behaviour Management Policy

Student Code of Behaviour

Relevant Legislation and Authority

Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum

School Education Act 1999 – Sections 89 to 96, 223

School Education Act Regulations 2000 – Regulations 38 to 46

Student Bullying and Harassment Procedures

Students are encouraged to report bullying or harassment, whether they are being bullied or harassed themselves, or have observed actions of others. Students may seek the support of any staff member to report observed incidences of bullying or to discuss their own concerns. The School Counsellor, School Psychologists and Chaplain are available to all students, staff and parents. In some cases, external counselling may be recommended. Serious issues of bullying must be reported directly to the Head of Junior School, or the Dean of Students and/or Head of Senior School, where appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. The Principal will be informed. External bodies will be contacted where necessary.

Bullying and harassment is taken seriously and the student coming forward is supported and affirmed during the process. Incidents will be investigated using the no blame approach, where discussions with the students involved are used to ascertain the nature and extent of the problem. In many cases, a cause is identified, and actions are taken to change behaviours and attitudes of the students involved. Restorative practices including mediation is the preferred course of action and are particularly effective in dealing with bullying. For subsequent or serious incidents, parents will be informed, and further action taken as deemed appropriate in the circumstances. Disciplinary action is taken where necessary, generally in cases where mediation has not resulted in a change in behaviour, or where a serious incident occurs.

Action to be taken by students:

- If you are being harassed or bullied, make it known to the person that their comments, actions or behaviours are unwelcome. Ask them to stop.
- If the harassment or bullying continues, consider your own actions. Would a change in your behaviour make a difference?
- If the harassment or bullying continues, tell someone. Talk it over with a trusted adult e.g. your parents, Kaya teacher, class teacher, School Counsellor and make a plan to deal with the problem. Follow it through. If the harassment or bullying stops, no further action is required. If not....
- In the Senior School, report the matter to your Head of Year, who will consult with the Dean of Students to resolve the issue. In the Junior School, report the matter to the class teacher who will refer this to the Head of Junior School.