

(Anti Bullying & Harassment Policy)**Rationale**

The duty of care requires principals and teachers to take all reasonable steps to reduce risk, including:

- provision of suitable and safe premises
- provision of an adequate system of supervision
- implementation of strategies to prevent bullying
- ensuring that medical assistance is provided to a sick or injured student.

The duty of care is non-delegable, meaning that it cannot be assigned to another party.

Weeroona College Bendigo is committed to ensuring a harmonious and safe environment for all members of the College community, where students, teachers and parents work co-operatively to ensure the college values can be successfully upheld. We are a child safe school and have a zero tolerance to child abuse. All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe.

Definition

Being bullied or harassed means that someone is subjected to deliberate behaviour which is hurtful, threatening or frightening and this behaviour may be an isolated incident or repeated over time. Any behaviour, which sets out to cause other people pain or unhappiness, may be regarded as bullying.

Bullying is not in the intention (eg just mucking around) but in the perception of the behaviour.

Bullying or harassment may involve students, staff or other members of the College community.

Bullying can take many forms, and without limiting its forms may include:

Physical bullying - any intentional and unwelcome use of physical contact or deliberate property damage. It includes fighting, pushing, interfering with another's property by stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying.

Verbal bullying - use of language to threaten or hurt. This includes name-calling, offensive language, putting people down, back stabbing, making degrading comments about another's family, religious, social or racial background.

Exclusion bullying - leaving someone out on purpose to cause feelings of non-acceptance. It includes spreading malicious rumours, writing on poster/walls/books etc.

Extortion bullying - use of threat or power to obtain favour or goods, e.g. bullying others to provide food, money, or schoolwork.

Racial/Religious bullying - antagonism or prejudice directed towards someone on the basis of their race/religion.

Sexual bullying - Homophobia, unwelcome and uninvited comments, attention, contact or behaviour of a sexual nature that is found to be humiliating, offensive or intimidating.

Gesture bullying - use of non-verbal signals to cause intimidation or fear.

Electronic (Cyber) bullying - use of language or images to threaten and hurt by electronic means. (SMS text, emails, web sites, MSN etc)

Psychological bullying - spreading rumours, excluding, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions.

Any other conduct that is intimidating, unwelcome or uninvited - e.g. "Just Joking" which causes discomfort to others.

Harassment is any behaviour, verbal or physical which is:

- unwelcome;
- degrading, intrusive, violent, abusive, sexual in nature;
- offensive to a person.

Some examples of harassment may include:

- unwelcome physical contact;

- unwelcome questions about a person's private life;
- comments about a person's sexuality or sex life;
- sexual jokes;
- wolf whistles, cat calls or unwelcome noises;
- graffiti about people;
- offensive pictures and written materials;
- suggestive or offensive comments about a person's appearance or lifestyle;
- racist comments.

Effects of bullying and harassment

Some signs that a child is being bullied may include:

- An unwillingness or refusal to go to school;
- Feeling ill in the mornings;
- Doing poorly in their school work;
- Becoming withdrawn, starting to stammer, lacking confidence;
- Suffering sleep difficulties, feeling ill in the mornings;
- Desire to avoid social contact;
- Disrupted relationships with family and friends;
- Asking for money or starting to steal (to pay the bully)
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches or damaged clothes or property;
- Becoming aggressive and unreasonable;
- Refusing to talk about what's wrong.

College Values

Each student at Weeroona College Bendigo has the right to feel safe, happy and supported. The College is against bullying in any form. Emphasis is placed upon:

1. **Respect** - accepting difference and treating others with empathy and tolerance.
2. **Integrity**- behaving truthfully, in a trustworthy manner and taking responsibility for one's actions.
3. **Personal Excellence**- seeking to perform at one's own highest possible standard.

Advice to Students/What to do

If bullying is a problem for you, there are things you can do. Listed below are a few examples.

1. Don't give the bully opportunities. Whenever possible, have others around for support.
2. Remain calm (no reaction means no power for the bully).

3. Ignore the bully or walk away calmly.
4. Try to respond to the bully with confidence. Look at him/her in the eye and hold your stare for a few seconds. Gather up all the strength and power you have! It's in there!
5. Use strong body language. That means stand up tall and straight. Try to look confident even if you feel scared. You will feel strong if you think strong!
6. Assertive "I" statements will work in many situations Use your loud voice and say something like ***"I'm tired of this teasing and I want you to stop!"*** ***"I do not like you saying that to me."*** or ***"I do not like you doing that to me."*** Keep the eye contact for a few more seconds.
7. If the bully is not backing off, you could use another response before you walk away. ***"Don't you have anything else to do?"***
8. If these do not work – Seek help and report the incident.

If this does not work - seek help

- From another student.
- Speak to your Advisor, classroom teacher or Learning Community Leader.
- Speak to a member of the College Support Team- chaplain, Student Welfare Coordinator or School Nurse.
- Tell an adult everything
- Decide with the adult upon a plan
- Your plan of action may include speaking with someone in the college or speaking to a parent/s.
- Persevere until you find an adult who will help you with your problem.
- If you feel unable to speak to an adult, you can email the college – Weeroona.co@edumail.vic.gov.au
- If you feel unable to speak to an adult face to face, you can contact **Kids Help Line** on 1800 55 1800 www.kidshelp.com.au or www.reachout.com.au

Consequences

Any student found to be bullying another person may face a range of consequences. These range from detention to suspension/expulsion for severe repetitive offences.

The College will deal very seriously with those who retaliate against someone for reporting incidents of bullying.

The specific types of consequences include:

- Restorative Discussion
- Parent notification and involvement
- Formal apology
- Name removed from 'It's My School Too' board for a period of time.
- Counselling
- Exclusion from school yard/areas of the school yard
- Exclusion from class/classes
- Withdrawal of privileges
- After School Detention

- Police involvement
- Suspension (in serious or repeated instances)
- Expulsion (in cases of aggravated or persistent harassment)

If you are aware of other students being bullied or harassed, then encourage them to speak to their teacher advisor, learning community leader a staff member, member of the college support team or their parents.

What we do to prevent bullying

Staff will:

- Include material on bullying, tolerance and assertive behaviour in the curriculum.
- Provide a safe environment for students, teachers, other staff and visitors.
- Provide a supportive environment which encourages positive relationships between students, their peers and teachers.
- Implement College policies in a consistent and fair manner.
- Respond to all reports of bullying by students.
- Model appropriate behaviour on a consistent basis.
- Arrive at classes on time and move promptly between lessons.
- Use Restorative Practices to assist students to develop skills for resolving conflict and dealing with bullying behaviour.
NB: This policy should be read in conjunction with the WCB Student Code of Conduct

Students will:

- Sign up to the WCB 'My School Too! Belief Statement' ...All members of the Weeroona College Bendigo community have a right to participate in school life without being bullied or harassed.
- Refuse to be involved in any bullying situation;
- Report any incident or suspected incident and help break down the code of secrecy.
- Respect the rights of all students and recognise their differences;
- Speak out and report incidents of bullying as it could ease a student's pain and prevent other students from being bullied;
- Be helpful bystanders. When you see bullying going on, ask yourself: ***"What can I do to help stop it?"***

Parents are encouraged to:

- Watch for signs of distress in your child;
- Advise your child to tell a staff member about the incident. Encourage their child to report and deal with the problem themselves as this empowers them to deal with the problem without parental involvement;
- Inform the College if bullying is suspected and continuing, even if your own child is not directly affected;
- Assist your child to develop positive strategies and encourage them not to retaliate;
- Do not directly approach any other students who they believe may be involved in bullying their child or the parents of other students. This may make the situation worse;
- Communicate to your child that parental involvement may be deemed necessary by the College to fully address the problem;

- Work with the College to solve the problem. The College takes our responsibilities in relation to bullying seriously and will have more success when parents work with the college to establish a plan for dealing with the current situation and future bullying incidents.
- Attend interviews at the College if your child is involved in a bullying incident as a victim or perpetrator.
- Support your child to sign up to the WCB 'My School Too! Belief Statement' ...All members of the Weeroona College Bendigo community have a right to participate in school life without being bullied or harassed.
- Make use of the college email address to contact the College about bullying- weeroona.co@edumail.vic.gov.au

Further useful links:

- **Kid's Help Line** website (www.kidshelpline.com.au)
- This site provides information about the Kids' Help Line free 24 hour telephone and online counseling service. Other useful information can also accessed through this site, including strategies to help children and parents deal with bullying ([click here](#)).
- **Beyond Blue** website (www.beyondblue.org.au)
- This site provides contact details and professional advice for people who feel as though they may be suffering from depression.
- **NetAlert** (www.netalert.gov.au)
Advice about protecting children online. Particularly relevant for parents and teachers.
- **The Reachout Foundation's** site (www.reachout.com.au)
An excellent site which provides advice about a range of youth related issues including bullying.
- **Evelyn Field's** site (www.bullying.com.au)
This site contains valuable information for parents, teachers and students.
- **Kidsmart** (www.kidsmart.org.uk)
Award winning website providing practical advice about internet safety. Specific sections for students, teachers and parents are included on this site.
- **Cybersmart Kids** Online (www.cybersmartkids.com.au)
A great site with plenty of fun links for young people, as well as a section for parents and teachers.
- **Bullying – No Way!** (www.bullyingnoway.com.au)
Plenty of useful information and fun resources for young people and adults can be found on this site.
- **Friendly Schools and Families** website (www.friendlyschools.com.au)
Another site containing valuable information with sections for young people, parents and teachers.

Policy evaluation and review:

This policy will be reviewed regularly and revised to ensure that our school's bullying prevention practices remain effective. Weeroona College Bendigo will;

- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy and make adjustments when needed
- review the policy annually in line with the school's Annual Implementation Plan
- report the effectiveness of the the schools' bullying prevention strategy to the school community annually.