BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY

RATIONALE

All members of the school community have the right to feel safe and work in a safe learning environment free from bullying and harassment. This belief is articulated in the school’s vision:

VISION STATEMENT

We aim to provide a stimulating, quality education so that students of all ability levels are supported to reach their full potential within a caring and secure environment.

SCHOOL MOTTO

“nurturing individual successes”

AIMS

To maintain a safe, inclusive environment free from bullying and harassment that is conducive to learning. This includes the safety of physical spaces such as classrooms, common areas and school grounds as well as creating a cyber-safe environment.

To communicate a clear message that bullying and harassment are not acceptable behaviours within our school and wider community.

To provide intervention and support to the victims and perpetrators of bullying and harassment.

To empower bystanders to stand up for what is right.

GUIDELINES

Students at Penola High School are expected to interact in a respectful manner with other members of the school community. Guidelines regarding student behaviour can be found in the Behaviour Code and the Student Management Policy.

Bullying and Harassing Behaviour

Bullying and harassment can take many forms: physical, verbal and social. Bullying and harassment can be conducted using a variety of mediums that can include face to face, indirect, mobile technologies and cyberspace.

Bullying and harassment are repeated actions. However, a single incident of aggressive or abusive behaviour may be responded to as part of the Student Management Process as unacceptable behaviour.
Not all distressing or hurtful behaviour is bullying; although social rejection can be hurtful, it is not bullying unless accompanied by repeated and deliberate attempts to distress or hurt; conflict is not bullying when two people are both upset and neither one is misusing power over the other. Conflict may still give rise to unacceptable behaviour which will be responded to as part of the Student Management Process.

Behaviour that occurs outside of school hours that impact on a student’s ability to learn in a safe environment or their social, emotional and physical wellbeing whilst at school will result in school based sanctions.

Bullying and Harassment can include but is not exclusive to:

**Physical**
- pushing, hitting, tripping, kicking.
- taking or vandalising other’s belongings.

**Verbal**
- spreading rumours, teasing, name calling, threatening.
- making fun of peoples’ abilities, weaknesses or achievements.
- sexist or racist remarks such as making fun of people’s physical features, religion or accent.

**Sexual**
- touching or grabbing in an unwelcome way.
- comments that are unnecessary or sexually explicit.
- teasing about parts of the body.

**Cyber & Indirect**
- emails, messages, phone calls, photos and distribution of information used to tease, abuse, threaten or intimidate.
- deliberate exclusion from activities and friendship groups.
- spreading rumours, nasty looks and gestures.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

**School**
All reported and suspected incidents of harassment will be investigated by a member of the leadership team. Evidence will be collected. This may include information in student’s possession or to which they have access, including phones, email account, mobile devices and cyberspace. Actions in response to incidents may include:
- speaking with all of the students involved, including the bystanders
- contacting parents
- interview with the Principal, Deputy Principal or Counsellor
- listening to the victim and their ideas of outcomes
- conferences with bully and victim
- follow up by school if required
The following consequences will be implemented in response to incidents of bullying and harassment:

**Formal Warning**

Students found to be perpetrators of harassment will:
- receive a formal warning in the first instance (the warning will be documented);
- revisit the harassment guidelines and be given an explanation of the behaviours they have been exhibiting that contradict the policy guidelines;
- be provided with an opportunity to develop strategies to change their behaviours through counselling and ongoing support;
- be given the opportunity to participate in a mediation conference with the victim.

**Harassment Letter**

A letter will be sent to parents / care givers notifying them if their student does not cease their bullying and harassment of another student.

In addition to a letter students will:
- be asked to cease behaviours constituting harassment of other individuals;
- be informed that continued or further instances of harassment may result in further consequences;
- be required to meet with a member of the Leadership team to develop strategies to change their behaviours;
- be given the opportunity to participate in a mediation conference with the victim.

**Further Consequences**

Ongoing behaviour will result in consequences that could include:
- loss of privileges (internet use, lunch pass)
- community service
- suspension
- counselling
- documentation for files
- interview with student and parents
- police referral

**Staff**

Staff members observing bullying and harassment must ask the perpetrator/s to cease the behaviour. Staff must then pass information on to the Year Level Organiser, Counsellor or Deputy Principal. This should be done using the appropriate documentation:
- *Outside of Classroom Incident*;
- *Student Behaviour Record Sheet*;
- *Wellbeing Referral*.

Staff made aware of bullying and harassment must pass the information on to either a YLO, Counsellor or Deputy Principal. This can be done by encouraging the individual reporting the incident to accompany them to see the relevant staff member.
Students

Victims
In the first instance students should clearly ask the perpetrator to stop what they are doing. If that doesn't work:
- report the harassment to a teacher (home group teacher, Year Level Organiser or any other teacher).
- talk to parents / care givers.
- get support from a student counsellor, Christian Pastoral Support Worker or talk to friends.
- continue reporting the harassment as often as it continues.

Perpetrators
In the first instance should refrain from bullying and harassment others.
When an instance of bullying or harassment occurs perpetrators must acknowledge their responsibility and cease the behaviour when notified.

Students who continue or repeat their bullying and harassment of others will work with a counsellor or CPSW to develop strategies to cease and/or change their behaviour.

Bystanders
Students must not support bullying and harassment to continue through either their actions or inaction. Students who are found to be enablers of bullying and harassment will be responded to as a part of the Student Management Policy due to their unacceptable behaviour.

When witnessing bullying or harassment students should:
- tell the bully to stop.
- get a staff member to help.
- report the incident.
- stand up for what is right and not be part of the bystander group.

Parents / Care Givers
Parents / caregivers are encouraged to get the full story and find out exactly what happened when students share information about bullying and harassment.

Parents / caregivers are asked to not speak directly to the perpetrator/s or their parents.
Parents/caregivers should aim to:
- support rather than rescue students;
- assure students they have done the right thing in talking about the harassment;
- support them to report the issue to a staff member, Counsellor or Year Level Organiser;
- empower students to handle it themselves;
- contact the Counsellor, Year Level Organiser or Deputy Principal regarding concerns about harassment.
REVIEW DATE

The Bullying and Harassment Policy will be tabled for discussion at one Staff Meeting each year. If, as a result, amendments are agreed upon, these shall be published for discussion by the school community, before formal adoption.

The Harassment Policy will be formally reviewed in 2013.

RELATED POLICIES / DOCUMENTS

Behaviour Code
Bullying and harassment at school: Advice for parents and caregivers (pamphlet)
Cyber bullying, e-crime and the protection of children and young people: Advice for families (pamphlet)
Grievance Procedures
Harassment Letter
Student Behaviour Record Sheet
Student Management Policy
Outside of Classroom Incident Form
Wellbeing Referral