

 BERWICK COLLEGE POLICY	TITLE	BULLYING PREVENTION		
	VERSION/YEAR	2/2016		
	PUBLISHED LOCATIONS	eWorkspace, Website		
	ISSUE DATE	OCTOBER 2016		
	REVIEW DATE	OCTOBER 2017		
	REVIEWED BY	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	RATIFIED BY	COLLEGE COUNCIL
PURPOSE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that Berwick College policies and procedures accurately reflect the College operations, values, service standards, educational philosophy and goals and meet all legislative, compliance and duty of care requirements. The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) requires Victorian schools to have a policies which provide students with a safe learning environment where the risk of harm is minimised and they feel physically and emotionally secure. 			
BACKGROUND:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Berwick College seeks to provide a positive culture where bullying is not accepted and ensure that all students and staff members will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in their school environment. 			
RELATED DOCUMENTS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DET Bullying Prevention Policy DET STUDENT Engagement and Inclusion Guidance Staff Handbook Berwick College Mandatory Reporting and Student Engagement Policy 			

RATIONALE:

Berwick College will actively promote a positive and welcoming personal environment for all members of the school community. When people are bullied or harassed some effects might be anger, embarrassment, fear and humiliation, loss of self-confidence and reduced function and potential. Bullying and harassment will be addressed, individual differences will be respected and students and staff will be enabled and supported in their pursuit of learning and teaching.

AIMS:

Berwick College will:

- To reinforce within the school community what bullying is, and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- Everyone within the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and to have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

DEFINITION:

Bullying is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

Bullying can take many forms and can be planned and organised. It may be demonstrated as follows:

- Cyber-bullying:** Consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums. It is verbal (using phones), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various mediums available.
- Harassment:** Any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.
- Physical bullying:** Includes fighting, pushing, shoving, pinching, kicking, aggressive ‘play’ fights, or any unwanted touching that is used to harm or hurt or intimidate.

Verbal bullying:	Includes name calling, offensive language, putting others or their family down directly or behind their backs, teasing people because of their culture, gender, sexuality, family, friends, appearance, social background or religion and humiliating someone through sarcasm or insults.
Visual bullying:	Includes offensive notes or electronic material either handwritten or computer generated, damaging other people's possessions, giving 'looks' and non-verbal signs which are used to intimidate.
Exclusion:	Deliberately leaving people 'out' of activities or treating them as if they don't exist, spreading rumours, deliberately making social invitations in front of them but not to them.
Extortion:	Includes using stand-over tactics to control someone else's behaviour, e.g. to give up possessions, buy food or drink or do work for them, picking on others, using threats to 'get' people.
Sexual bullying:	Involves touching or brushing against one in a sexual manner, sexually oriented jokes, drawing or writing about someone's body, unwanted invitations of a sexual nature, using rude names, and asking questions about another person's private life.
Telephone bullying:	Includes students repeatedly telephoning the target's home/ mobile phone with the intention to harass or cause discomfort or spread rumour.

Sending email, or SMS text messages, pictures/images or any form of digital communication is bullying when it harasses, intimidates or causes discomfort or spreads rumours. The filming/videoing (and distribution) of an 'incident' or image if it defames or embarrasses those targeted or brings the College in disrepute, whether to another or to social media is not permitted.

IMPLEMENTATION:

What will Berwick College do?

Berwick College will do its best to:

- Provide a safe environment for members of the school community
- Communicate the College's policy to parents, teachers, students and the community
- Provide a supportive environment, which encourages positive relationships between peers, staff and parents
- Provide curriculum material and discussion that focuses on appropriate social skills and behavior. Lessons will be delivered during pastoral care sessions and Health and Human Relations classes
- Assist students to develop skills for resolving conflict and dealing with bullying incidents
- Maintain a pastoral care system that enables students to develop a feeling of connectedness, belonging and trust. All reports/complaints of bullying are taken seriously and will be investigated in a timely manner
- Document incidents of bullying and harassment as a pastoral note on eWorkspace
- Peer mediation will deal with minor disputes between students, whereas the student coordinators, assistant principals, student coordinator and welfare Coordinators will deal with more serious situations

In extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour the Berwick College Principal reserves the right to expel a student whose behaviour contravenes the College's policies. Such cases may also be referred to the police if appropriate. In line with DET legislation, corporal punishment is not permitted at the College

The College has a four-stage approach to address bullying.

***Stage 1. Prevention**

- Provide professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and the strategies that counter-act them
- Increase community awareness and gain feedback relating to bullying, its characteristics and the school's programs and response

- Provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving
- Twice a year administer a bullying survey and act upon the results
- Each classroom teacher to clarify the school policy on bullying at the start of each year
- Staff members, students and peer support delegates to promote the philosophy of 'No put downs'
- Provide activities to students at recess and lunch breaks

***Stage 2. Early Intervention**

- Promote children reporting bullying incidents involving themselves or others
- Classroom teachers are to regularly remind students to report incidents, and that reporting is not "dobbing"
- Encourage parents to contact the College if they become aware of a problem

***Stage 3. Intervention**

- Both bully and victim, identified through the bullying survey or following investigation of a report to the College, a witness, will be offered counselling and support
- If bullying is ongoing, parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the Berwick College's student code of expectations

***Stage 4. Post incident**

- **Consequences** may involve:
 - Peer mediation
 - Student welfare mediation
 - Exclusion from class
 - Exclusion from yard
 - School suspension
 - Withdrawal of privileges
 - Community conference
 - Referral for counselling from an appropriate external professional agency for both victim and bully
 - Police involvement
 - Expulsion
- **Ongoing monitoring** of identified bullies
- **Rewards** for positive behaviour

Staff members are required to follow the Mandatory Reporting policy and:

- Act as role models in their manner of relating to other members of the school community
- Observe signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- Make efforts to remove occasions for bullying by active patrolling during supervision duty
- Arrive to class on time to eliminate the opportunity for bullying
- Do not ignore incidents of harassment in the classroom
- Take steps to support both victim and bully and remove sources of distress without placing the victim at further risk
- Consistently report suspected incidents or patterns of bullying behaviour to the appropriate staff member i.e. Student Learning Leader, Assistant Principal promptly, and ensure that all reported incidents are followed up and documented appropriately

Berwick College recommends that Parents/Caregivers:

- Watch for signs of distress in their children e.g. unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches, missing equipment, requests for extra money, damaged clothes or bruising
- Take an active interest in their children's social life and acquaintances, including online activity

- Encourage their children to report incidents of bullying to a teacher. If possible get students to report and deal with the problem themselves. They can gain respect through taking the initiative and dealing with the problem without parental involvement.
- Inform the College if bullying is suspected, even if their child is directly/indirectly involved
- Keep a written record (who, what, when, where, why, how)
- Do not encourage your child to retaliate
- Communicate to your child that parental involvement, if necessary, will be appropriate for the situation
- Be willing to attend interviews at the College if your child is involved in any bullying incident and to work with the College to find effective solutions.

What students can do to stop bullies and to support their peers:

- Tell someone when it happens
- Ask the bully to stop it in a firm but not angry voice
- If you witness bullying, talk to your parents or a teacher. Ask them for their advice. If you feel confident, tell the bully 'to stop it'
- Reassure the person being bullied. Make sure they are fine and then tell a teacher. This will help to build up their confidence
- Stay cool and walk calmly away
- Talk to a teacher, your parents or friends that you trust
- Go to a safe area within the school and report it to a teacher
- Remember the DOB stands for "Don't Obey Bullies". If you do anything to support bullying either by giving encouragement to the bully or not reporting the incident then you help to keep it going.

Additional support can be provided by:

- **Kids Help line – 1800 55 1800** Australia's only free, private and confidential, phone counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25.
- **Youth Resource Officer:** a policing youth framework that increases the capacity of police to deal with police and youth issues; meeting the needs of modern policing, operational police, the local community and government located at each local police station

EVALUATION:

- This policy will be reviewed annually in line with the College's Annual Implementation Plan.