



MERCY CATHOLIC COLLEGE

ANTI – BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT POLICY

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The Mercy College community believes:

- You have the **RIGHT** to feel safe and comfortable at school
- You have the **RIGHT** to travel to and from the school feeling safe
- You have the **RIGHT** to learn free of harassment
- You have the **RESPONSIBILITY** to keep yourself and your learning environment safe
- You have the **RESPONSIBILITY** to show respect for yourself, for others and for property

Mercy College is a Catholic school which expects all members of the College Community to care for one another – In the words of Jesus “Love one another as I have loved you.” Any form of harassment is against the values of our church, of the College, and in some cases it is unlawful.

What is bullying/harassment?

Bullying/Harassment makes you feel uncomfortable or fearful. It is behaviour which is unwelcome and repeated. It may come from an individual or group.

There is general consensus that this behaviour:

- is deliberate and often repeated
- intends to cause fear, distress, hurt or harm to another
- is action by a more powerful individual or group over a less powerful individual or group

IT MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE

Sometimes you may not be sure if something is harassment or not. It is easy to think that, if a person becomes angry with you or criticises you, it is harassment. It may not be. For instance if you are continually doing something wrong a teacher will tell you about it. However, if you are unsure about it, do something about it anyway.

Bullying/Harassment can take many forms.

CYBER - BULLYING

Cyber-space is an emerging arena for bullying, harassment, and vilification, often under some anonymous guise. It has devastating power to circulate rumours, hearsay, secrets and downright nastiness in an instant to a huge public audience. This form of communication has the capacity to crush individuals and expose them to unnecessary humiliation, anxiety and distress. It is really important that parents acquaint themselves with their child's use of messaging, MySpace, Facebook and YouTube. There is nothing wrong with using cyber-space for healthy, respectful communication, but, the Department of Education has issued memos to its schools warning students aged 10 and

over of the potentially criminal nature of using the internet, emails or mobile phones in an offensive, harassing or menacing way; of using mobile phones to film friends' behaviour that is regarded as criminal; of using fake guns, and of encouraging others to commit a crime. For respectable use, refer to the College's Acceptable Use Policy of Internet in the student diary. At home, good advice (Dr Michael Carr-Gregg) suggests that computers should be positioned in 'public' family space to prevent inappropriate use that can lead to harm.

BULLYING

Someone

- Hiding, damaging, destroying or stealing your work or belongings.
- Verbal bullying – name calling, putting you down, teasing, pulling faces, using abusive language.
- Physical bullying – hitting, pushing, pinching or threatening you with body language.

DELIBERATE EXCLUSION

Someone

- Isolating you, not associating with you or not letting you join in.
- Not accepting you because you are new or different.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Someone

- Touching you or brushing against you when you have asked them to stop.
- Whistling, gesturing or making comments about your body.
- Telling offensive jokes or showing offensive reading matter.
- Making comments about your sexuality.

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Someone

- Making degrading comments or gestures about your culture or your background.
- Calling you names because of your race.
- Telling offensive jokes or showing offensive material.
- Deliberately excluding you because of your race.

LIBEL/SLANDER

Someone

- Spreading rumours about you or your family.
- Writing unpleasant notes about you.
- Writing graffiti about you or any groups to which you belong.
- E-mailing or SMS about you or any groups to which you belong.

ABOUT THOSE WHO HARASS

These people usually are feeling inadequate. They try to feel better by “putting others down”. They often seek to have a group around them to feel safer. Those in the group are sometimes frightened that if they do not join in the bully might turn on them.

DO YOU HARASS TEACHERS OR STUDENTS?

- Do you bully, tease or hit others?
- Do you call people names?
- Do you insult, belittle or intimidate?
- Do you take part with a group in helping to insult, offend or exclude others?
- Do you repeatedly act disrespectfully to your teacher and disrupt the learning in your class?
- Do you permit harassment of others by laughing or by failing to intervene?

YES?

Then you are guilty of harassment.

STOP NOW!

If you are not being harassed but are aware of others who are – you can decide to do something about it and help to protect others.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

You can control what happens.

- Do you retaliate by physical or verbal harassment?
- Simply knowing you can do something about it makes a difference.

You have to decide what action to take.

Step 1. Ignore it. Show that it does not upset you. The harasser is then not encouraged and may stop.

If it does not stop:

Step 2. Confront the person harassing you. Tell them their actions are unwanted or illegal. Remind them of the College Policy on harassment.

If the harassment continues:

Step 3. Talk it over openly with your friends, parents or colleagues. They can help you make a decision.

If the harassment continues:

Step 4. Report the matter directly to your subject teacher, homeroom teacher or counsellor. Make a plan with them to deal with the problem. Allow them to take action to stop the harassment.

If the harassment still does not stop:

Step 5. Go with your homeroom teacher or parents to see your Year Co-ordinator. Allow these people to take the necessary action.

OUTCOMES

All incidents will be dealt with.

The College will deal very seriously with those who retaliate against a person for reporting harassment. Consequences of harassment may include counselling, consultation with families, consultation with the Police Youth Liaison Officer, detention or temporary or permanent exclusion from school.

THE MERCY COLLEGE COMMUNITY WILL NOT TOLERATE HARASSMENT

Remember...

It is important to tell someone if you are being harassed or if your friends are. Everyone has a right to feel safe at all times.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed not less frequently than once every three years.

POLICY DATES

Date of completion of formulation and adoption
Date of next review

January 2015
January 2018