



**Mount
Carmel
College**

We nurture.
We challenge.
We care.

Respectful Relationships Policy

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

The mission of Mount Carmel College is for staff and students, supported by parents, to work together to provide for the growth of each individual by building positive relationships, mutual respect and responsibility within a secure and supportive structure. This draws on fundamental Gospel values of the intrinsic worth and dignity of each person and of service to others: "Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 13:34).

At Mount Carmel College we are committed to reducing bullying and providing a safe and supportive environment for students and staff. We support the science of positive psychology and current research findings that indicate that bullying requires a consistent group response to intervene effectively.

POLICY

Each member of the Mount Carmel College community shares the collective responsibility to develop positive relationships and to ensure every member feels safe, supported and valued at all times. When individuals share healthy relationships with one another, personal growth is enhanced and aiming high for levels of achievement in all areas is encouraged. Bullying has a negative impact on relationships and the learning environment.

AIMS OF POLICY

- to provide a safe, secure learning environment for all.
- to create a supportive climate and break the code of secrecy.
- to raise awareness of the issues involved with bullying and provide information to students, staff and parents.
- to support and empower students who are targeted.
- to help young people become aware of the impact of their behaviour on others through personal accountability and being open to learn from conflict situations.
- to implement procedures to address bullying behaviour and so develop in those involved respect for others.
- to empower bystanders to take intervention measures appropriate to the situation.
- to inform our practices and procedures using the science of positive education.

DEFINITION

Bullying is a repeated and intentional act of aggression of a physical, verbal or psychological nature that involves a power imbalance between a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons through repeated intimidation. Such harassment is unwanted and uninvited and can be verbal, physical, psychological or sexual conduct, used to intimidate, coerce, create fear, control, embarrass, exclude or cause pain or discomfort.

Three main groups are usually involved: the targeted persons, the perpetrators and the bystanders. **Bystanders may or may not give verbal support, but their presence will make the situation worse if they do not provide support for those who are being bullied.**

TYPES OF BULLYING

Physical

Involves any harmful actions against a person's body including hitting, kicking, pushing, choking. It also includes interference with another person's property such as stealing or damaging. Physical harassment relates also to sexual harassment in the form of unwanted touching, making suggestive comments or gestures.

Verbal

Involves speaking to or about a person in a way that shows disrespect e.g. using offensive or abusive names, teasing, spreading rumours, making hurtful comments, using putdowns. This includes use of homophobic language, e.g. "That is so gay".

Cyber

Involves the misuse of technology such as social networking sites, email, etc. to communicate aggressive, sexual or degrading information about someone or to start rumours.

Psychological

Includes behaviours that upset, exclude or embarrass another person e.g. exclusion, rude gesture, unpleasant looks, silent treatment.

Homophobic

Can include verbal, physical, psychological and cyber bullying towards a person on the basis of perceived sexual orientation status e.g. gay, lesbian, transgender or bisexual.

Signs which may indicate a student is being bullied:

- the student reports that they are being bullied.
- change in attendance at school.
- change in achievement levels.
- unexplained injuries.
- change in sleeping or eating patterns.
- withdrawal from activities / groups.
- mood changes.
- bullying is observed by others.

IMPLEMENTATION

To implement this policy at Mount Carmel College, each of us - students, staff and parents - must be prepared to act to stop bullying. Tackling bullying is everyone's responsibility. Proactive measures will be established to prevent or reduce bullying including:

- formulation and communication of school-wide positive behaviour expectations.
- school-wide supervision and effective, consistent behaviour management by all staff.
- school curriculum and pastoral initiatives which address discrimination and harassment.
- opportunities and structures for students to report bullying and discuss concerns.
- Restorative Practice principles.
- Application of the psychology of Positive Education.

The College will:

- take all allegations of bullying seriously.
- refuse to accept that bullying is inevitable. Programs conducted at the College seek to increase our awareness of this social issue and develop our awareness of the impact of bullying on others.
- provide support for all involved.
- aim to restore damaged relationships.
- implement school disciplinary consequences as deemed appropriate.

Students are expected to:

- respect the rights of all community members and recognise and accept their differences.
- refuse to take part in any form of bullying.
- support the targeted student if possible.
- take some form of preventative action if appropriate.
- report any incident, or suspected incident, and help break the code of silence.

Staff are expected to:

- promote an ethos of respect for self and others.
- model appropriate behaviour consistently.
- provide information to students about the types and nature of bullying and incorporate these principles into their learning program at every opportunity.
- be observant for signs of suspected bullying or distress.
- explicitly teach appropriate and positive behavioural rights and responsibilities.
- inform and challenge students when their behaviour is offensive and explain that it is not acceptable at Mount Carmel College. This includes the use of homophobic, racist or sexist language or behaviour.
- be receptive and supportive to targets of bullying.
- be vigilant in supervision to reduce opportunities for bullying.
- arrive at class on time.
- respond appropriately to suspected incidents (see recommended action) and then report to the relevant staff member.
- recognise that bullying is often a complex issue and initiate further discussion with key staff about ongoing strategies as required.
- contribute to a process of ongoing monitoring, evaluation and review of policies and procedures.

Parents are encouraged to:

- promote an ethos of respect for self and others.
- encourage their son / daughter to have confidence to speak up / report concerns.
- be aware of the College's policy.
- watch for signs of distress or suspected instances of bullying.
- treat student's fears seriously.
- support student emotionally: let them know the situation is unacceptable (it is not a normal part of school life.) and will change.
- encourage student not to retaliate.
- inform the College if bullying is suspected, or encourage the student to tell a teacher.

Break the code of silence!

CONSEQUENCES FOR THOSE WHO BULLY

Students found to be bullying face a range of consequences from a formal interview with a staff member to losing their place at Mount Carmel College. All incidents will be placed on record in the Pastoral Care Database. Any retaliation against someone who reports bullying will be dealt with very seriously.

Consequences include:

- restorative conference or mediation.
- recording of incident on College files.
- formal interview with key staff.
- parent notification and involvement.
- counselling.
- restitution for any damage to property or personal possessions.
- detention.
- suspension (for serious offences or persistent inappropriate behaviour).
- where persistent and / or serious bullying occurs, negotiated transfer to an alternate school.

Appendix A – Restorative Practice Framework

We adopt Restorative Practices at Mount Carmel College as our way of relating to each other. The aim of Restorative Practice is to restore right relationships and bring about healing after some hurt or harm has been done to another or others. It has, at its heart, the key Gospel values of reconciliation, responsibility, reintegration and resolution of conflict. Restorative Practice offers processes that can help all students learn to understand and deal with their own emotions in ways that build stronger relationships.

The Restorative Practice motto within the College is Triple R: **Respect, Restore, Repair.**

Restorative Practice includes the following four key elements:

- Focus upon harm and relationships, not on blame and punishment.
- Working **with** one another.
- Importance of fair process
- Key restorative questions:
 - ⇒ What happened?
 - ⇒ What were you thinking of at the time?
 - ⇒ What have you thought about since?
 - ⇒ Who has been affected by what you have done?
 - ⇒ In what way?
 - ⇒ What do you think you need to do to make things right?

By incorporating these key elements in the process of Restorative Practice the students build a powerful basis for experiencing and building healthy dialogue with each other.



Reconciliation Statement

At Mount Carmel College we respect and recognise the importance of the Palawa people in the history of our country and their spiritual connection to the land. We are sorry for the mistakes of the past.

Let us strive to turn dreams into reality and open our hearts to a future where we work together and learn from each other.

POLICY REVIEW

The *Policy* shall be reviewed every three years, or in the event of any information that would demonstrate the need for a review, or any legislative or organisational change that would warrant a review.

POLICY DATES			
<i>Implemented</i>	November 2016	<i>Reviewed</i>	
<i>Next Review Due</i>	NOVEMBER 2019		
POLICY AUTHORISATION			
<i>Principal</i>	Mrs Susan Ryan	<i>Signature</i>	