THE HEIGHTS SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Rationale:

We believe that if our students are to learn effectively to achieve their best, and if all members of the school community are to contribute effectively to the learning process then the school needs to be free from all forms of harassment, violence and bullying.

Students are entitled to receive their education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. Bullying affects everyone, not just those who bully and are bullied. It also affects those other students who may witness violence, intimidation and the distress of the person bullied. It can damage the atmosphere of a class and even the climate of a school. A whole school approach in partnership with the wider school community ie Parents, Students and local community agencies, is one we adopt.

Maintaining a safe school is everyone’s responsibility. A safe school is one in which harassment and bullying focused on gender, race and ability is minimised, diversity is embraced, others are valued and positive behaviours are encouraged. A list of people will be published and prominently displayed at the beginning of each school year for students, staff and parents to contact in regards to bullying and harassment issues.

Policy Statement:

Harassment, bullying and violence in all its forms have no place in The Heights School Community. Therefore, our school affirms the right of all members of the school community to work, learn and play in a safe and secure environment.

Aims of the Policy

1. To counter views that bullying is an inevitable part of school life.
2. To provide a safe, secure learning environment for our pupils.
3. To create a supportive climate and break down the code of secrecy.
4. To create an environment where the person bullied is able to return to school life.
5. To provide suitable counselling services for the person who bullied as well as the person who is bullied.
6. To provide a physical environment which engenders good behavioural patterns.
7. To move beyond a crisis-management approach to an environment free from abuse.

Policy Context:

This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies and is supported through our curriculum:

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Yard Duty and Management
- Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Policy
- DECD policies – Anti Racist and Sexual Harassment
- Smoking Policy
- Drug Policy
Definitions

“Harassment and Bullying are terms along a continuum of aggressive behaviours which deliberately target individuals or groups on the basis of:

- Gender
- Racial background
- Religious or cultural beliefs
- Sexual orientation
- Ability, disability or medical condition
- Socio-economic status
- Position or role
- Clothing choice.

(After Bullying – No Way)

“Central to both bullying and harassment is the inappropriate use of power which deprives others of their rights.” (Queensland Education)

“Bullying involves a desire to hurt + hurtful action + power imbalance + repetition + an unjust use of power + evident enjoyment by the aggressor and a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim.” (Rigby)

Bullying and harassment behaviours or actions can be physical or non-physical, direct or indirect as illustrated in the chart below.

Examples of Bullying and Harassment (after Rigby 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Indirect</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal and written</td>
<td>Verbal insults</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Unfair criticism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Name calling</td>
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<td>Unwanted sexual comments</td>
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<td>Using racially derogatory language</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘Put down’ jokes and comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gestural</td>
<td>Threatening or obscene gestures</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Menacing stares</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Staring with the intent to cause embarrassment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Striking</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Unwanted contact of a sexual nature</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Throwing things</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Using a weapon</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Removing and hiding belongings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>“Ganging up” on another person</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Deliberately excluding someone from a group</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ruining friendships purposely</td>
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<td>Sending poisonous notes</td>
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Harassment and bullying can occur:
- Between students
- From a student to a staff member
- From a student to other parents
- From a staff member to a student
- Between staff members
- From a parent to a staff member or vice versa
- From a parent to a student.

**Preventing bullying & harassment**

The violence of bullying and harassment can damage the atmosphere of both the class and climate or culture of the whole school. There is no “quick fix” to addressing issues of violence in the community in general and schools in particular. Creating violence-free schools involves long-term planning and commitment from teachers, students and the community.

There is no ideal intervention that will be effective in all situations. We need to take into account the different needs of different people in different settings. **Therefore, at The Heights School we adopt a whole school, multiple strategy approach, in partnership with the wider school community. This approach recognises that bullying can be addressed by the students, parents, school staff and community members in a consistent manner.**

**Teaching staff will:**

- Create a school climate in which bullying is less likely to occur – model respectful behaviour, maintain good classroom management, engage interest of all students, include tasks that require cooperation, minimise situations where students are unoccupied or near students they don’t wish to be near.
- Actively discourage bullying – be observant, inform other staff, initiate procedures, provide advice and support, listen and be open to students (acting discreetly when and where appropriate), help access counselling.
- Respond to all bullying and harassment incidents in the classrooms and yard even though they may not be responsible for students who are involved at that time.
- Educate – facilitate class discussions, teach the Child Protection Curriculum, teach social skills programs, develop student’s skills in assertiveness, conflict resolution and peer mediation, have class discussions, use books/videos to promote discussion.
- Provide feedback for students and parents regarding processes used and results of attending to bullying and harassment incidents.
- Share behaviour management strategies with parents.

**Non-teaching staff will:**

- Assist in creating a school climate in which bullying is less likely to occur – model respectful behaviour in all dealings with students
- Actively discourage bullying – be observant, inform other staff, initiate procedures, provide advice and support, listen and be open to students, help access counselling.
- Respond to all bullying and harassment incidents in the classrooms and yard even though they may not be responsible for students who are involved at that time.

**The school leadership team will:**

- Create a school climate in which bullying is less likely to occur – model respectful behaviour, support teachers to maintain good classroom management and deliver curriculum which engages the interests of all students and minimise situations where students are unoccupied
- Support teachers in their dealings with bullying and harassment incidents through listening and discussing possible strategies (level 1&2)
- Manage and implement level 3 bullying and harassment procedures
- Ensure all parties (ie students, staff, parents) are kept informed about the consequences of the bullying and harassment incidents
Students will be encouraged to:

- Not bully or harass other students or their teachers.
- Take responsibility for their own behaviours – tell the person or people that are harassing you to stop; if the harassment continues approach a class teacher, other trusted teacher, counsellor, Year-level Coordinator, Junior/Middle/Senior School Leaders; go to the friendship garden and find a friend to talk to; go to a peer mediator and talk to them; talk to your parents or caregivers.
- Report all incidents of bullying to a class teacher, other trusted teacher, counsellor, Year-level Coordinator, Junior/Middle/Senior School Leaders, even if they are not directly involved.
- Be compassionate, empathetic and understand the effects of racism and sexual harassment and bullying on individuals and groups within our society.
- Develop appropriate skills and behaviours in communicating and working effectively with people from a variety of backgrounds.

Parents will be encouraged to:

- Watch for signs of distress in your child. There could be an unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches or stomach aches, equipment that has gone missing, request for extra pocket money, damaged clothing or bruising. Early contact is essential at this point.
- Remind your child know that they are highly valued and assist them in maintaining a positive sense of self.
- Keep a written record if the bullying persists: Who, What, Where and When?
- Discuss positive strategies rather than “getting even”.
- Advise your child to tell a trusted teacher.
- Inform the Class Teacher/Home Group Teacher/Year-level Coordinator immediately if you think your child is being bullied. If you feel dissatisfied with the results from the initial meetings make an appointment to see the Assistant Principals or the Managers of Junior/Middle/Senior Schools.
- Go directly to the Junior, Middle or Senior School Leader if you feel your child is being bullied by a teacher.

Responding to Bullying and Harassment

In responding to bullying/harassment, staff will need to consider the severity of the incident. The following factors will be taken into account:

- The nature of the action
- The frequency/duration of the acts
- The physical and emotional effect of the bullying or harassment on an individual.

This continuum of harassing and bullying behaviours can encompass the following:

Level 1 Bullying and Harassment

Most bullying and harassment involves thoughtless periodic teasing, name-calling, occasional exclusion or theft of belongings. This can be annoying and hurtful and can escalate and then involve more serious forms of bullying. This behaviour may be initiated by an individual or be in response to previous actions by someone else.

Response to Level 1 Bullying and Harassment

- These incidents must not be ignored.
- All staff are responsible for dealing with bullying and harassment at this level.
- Talk with the perpetrator(s) about the incidents discussing the effects of their actions on other people. Explain how their actions are inappropriate and not acceptable at our school.
- Impose an appropriate consequence.
- Talk with the receiver of the harassment, and try to suggest ways of dealing with such situations.
- Monitor carefully what happens next and be prepared to intervene.
- Complete and forward incident report/behaviour slip to homegroup or class teacher.
Level 2 Bullying and Harassment

Bullying can also occur when a student is subjected for a time to forms of harassment that are both systematic and malicious. These may include cruel teasing, continual exclusion and some threats or relatively mild physical abuse, for example pushing or tripping and theft of property.

Response to Level 2 Bullying and Harassment

These incidents will be investigated by a formal process, which could include the following strategies for either the person who has bullied and the person who has been bullied:

- Formal documentation
- Contact with parents
- Counselling, mediation, resolution
- Attendance at a social skill workshop
- Appropriate consequence – eg detention.

Members of the Leadership team supported by class teachers, home group teachers, Year Level and Curriculum Coordinators will be responsible for this.

Level 3 Bullying and Harassment

Bullying at this level is when the harassment is cruel, malicious and intense, it occurs over an extended period of time and is very distressing to the person who is experiencing it. It often involves serious physical assaults, but is still considered severe if non-physical methods such as name-calling and exclusion are used.

Response to Level 3 Bullying and Harassment

In dealing with incidents at this level actions would include:

- Formal investigation and documentation
- Interview with parents of the person who bullied / person bullied
- Required educational activities- eg anger management
- Suspension/exclusion from school.

A member of the Leadership team will be responsible for this action.

Grievance Procedures

In addition to the above, all members of the school community have available the full range of options as set out in DECS policies on antiracism and sexual harassment.

Review

Reviewed and updated 28th August 2012
This policy will be reviewed two years after its initial acceptance and implementation.