

## BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### What is bullying?

- Repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group toward another
- Cyber-bullying through information and communication technologies such as the internet, social media and mobile telephones

### What is harassment?

- Behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their identity, race, culture, ethnic origin, religion, physical characteristics, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, parenting status, economic status, ability or disability that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment
- Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour or a single act.

Mount Barker High School has **ZERO-TOLERANCE** towards Bullying and Harassment  
**WE ALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO FEEL SAFE.**

It is the right of every student to be able to learn and every teacher to be able to teach in an environment which is safe, secure and free from bullying and harassment. All members of the school community have a part to play in the establishment and maintenance of this situation. The staff at Mount Barker High School are committed to ensuring this process is in line with state and federal laws and The Department of Education policies.

When a person is bullied or harassed they may feel angry, embarrassed, frightened, humiliated, uncomfortable, scared or unsafe. Bullying and harassment may cause:

- Decreased academic performance,
- Refusal to attend school due to stress, anxiety, fear or sickness
- Withdrawal from school resulting in reduced post-school prospects
- Breakdown in classroom and yard friendships
- Loss of self-confidence and self-esteem.

### Bullying and harassment can happen in different ways:

- **Physical** - Fighting, pushing, shoving, hitting, spitting, invasion of personal space, an unwelcome act
- **Verbal** - Name calling, teasing, offensive language, spreading rumours, putting people down, degrading comments about culture, race, physical appearance, gender, religion or social background
- **Gestures** - Offensive signs, notes or material, graffiti or damaging property
- **Cyber** - Using email, voice and text messaging, photographic, social media and video images
- **Graffiti** - Using pictures, tags or words
- **In Groups** - Forming groups to exclude, ignore and disrespect
- **Indirectly** - By influencing, encouraging or organising someone else to be involved
- **Discreetly** - When there are no witnesses or in ways where no one else notices.

Mount Barker High School promotes respectful relationships and the responsible use of ICT through our Positive Education program.

### Bullying and harassment can happen in different places:

- **At school** - In the yard, classrooms, corridors, at the lockers, in the toilets, on the oval or in the canteen
- **On the way to and from school** – on the bus and when walking or riding a bike
- **On excursions or camps**
- **At home** – using the internet and by telephone (mobiles or landlines).

# Bullying and Harassment Procedures: Student Guidelines

Staff at Mount Barker High School can help you to resolve bullying and harassment problems, but they may not know if you don't tell them. Please make sure that you report instances of bullying or harassment so that we can maintain a school where you can learn and teachers can teach in a safe, secure environment.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

- I. **Take action.** Face the person who is bullying/harassing you (if safe to do so, if not go to step 3). Ask them to stop. Tell the person how their behaviour makes you feel and that their behaviour is unwanted.

If the bullying/harassment continues



2. **Take a stand.** Talk to a friend, teacher, parent or someone you can trust to help you to work out what to do next.

If the bullying/harassment continues



3. **Make a formal complaint** to a teacher or wellbeing coach who will ask you to write it down. The complaint will be referred to the appropriate Assistant Principal. At this stage an investigation will occur. Details will be placed on school records together with action taken to resolve the issue. Parents will be notified of the reported incident and details of further action / consequences if the matter does not stop.

If the bullying/harassment continues



4. **Never give up.** Report the continuing problem to a teacher, senior leader or to the principal. They will look at the action taken so far and will offer assistance. Consequences for the Bully / Harasser may include suspension, exclusion or police action. The Senior Leader will record the details and monitor the situation going forward.

## What else can I do?

- Stay in a group: there is safety in numbers
- Ignore the bully and walk away
- Try not to react: this is often what they want you to do
- Where possible, avoid the bully, the situation or the location (i.e. Social Media)
- Make sure that you keep talking to someone about what is happening.

## What if I am a witness or bystander?

- Being a witness makes it your business to help
- Report bullying to a staff member; it is not dobbing, it is supporting a friend or peer
- Step up for someone else.

## IF YOU BULLY OR HARASS OTHERS THEN

- You must stop
- You will be told to stop
- Your behaviour will be investigated and recorded at the school
- You will be subject to disciplinary action decided upon by the school which may include:
  - \* involving your parents / caregivers
  - \* involving suspension and / or exclusion
  - \* involving Departmental Authorities
  - \* involving the Police
- Students who are 16 years of age and over who sexually harass another person will be reported to the police.

## **SELF CHECK: AM I BULLYING OR HARASSING SOMEONE?**

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- Think of the effect your behaviour or actions and words may have on other people. Consider whether they are comfortable with your behaviour, especially if it is ongoing and whether they are embarrassed or hurt. Ask yourself “Is my behaviour respectful?” If not, then stop.
- Check your behaviour and language by asking if it is offensive or inappropriate. Ask yourself “Have I shown tolerance”?
- Stop behaving in a way that gives offence or causes embarrassment. Ask yourself “Am I attempting to understand how others feel”?

## **Bullying and Harassment : Parent Guidelines**

### **How might my child feel if they are being bullied or harassed?**

- They may not talk about it
- They may be afraid that it will only make matters worse
- That it is wrong to ‘dob in’ other students
- They may feel angry, embarrassed, frightened, humiliated, scared or unsafe.

### **Some signs a child or young person is being bullied or harassed may be:**

- Reduced ability to concentrate and learn
- Refusal to attend school and make excuses not to go
- Unexplained cuts, bruises or scratches
- Stolen or damaged possessions and/or clothing
- Headaches or stomach aches
- Asking for extra pocket money or food
- Acting out, tearfulness, sadness
- Withdrawn and lack of interest in usual activities
- Unwillingness to discuss or secrecy about their online communications (Social Media, mobile phone texts).

### **What should I do if I think my child is being bullied or harassed?**

- Stay calm
- Listen to your child
- Let your child know that telling you about the bullying or harassment is the right thing to do
- Validate their feelings by letting them know it is ok to feel the way they feel
- Find out what happened
- Find out who was involved
- Find out where it happened
- Find out if anyone else saw, read or heard it
- Make a few notes about what your child tells you to help you when you talk to the school.

### **What should I do now?**

- Make a time to speak to your child’s Teacher, Wellbeing Coach, Year Level Leader, Curriculum leaders, Head of School, Assistant Principal, Deputy Principal or Principal
- Be as clear as possible about what your child has told you
- Keep in touch with the school and let staff know if the problem continues.

Your child may not want you to talk to anyone about the bullying or harassment. However it is important that you let the school know so that we can work out a solution together. We can take action that does not identify your son/daughter.

# Bullying and Harassment : Staff Guidelines

Bullying and harassment are intentional and unwelcome acts. Staff need to clearly differentiate between one-off interactions between students, and repeated, intentional unwelcome acts which are about the establishment of power relationships.

If a student or parent approaches you to report an instance of bullying or harassment it must be dealt with using the following process:

- Find out what has been happening and document the details
- If it is an incident that you can reasonably resolve, discuss with the student what interventions may help, (e.g. change to seating arrangements and/or group activities)
- Communicate concerns and agreed strategies to the Year Level Manager via email
- If the situation needs to be referred on, get the student to fill in a bullying / harassment form
- Refer the matter to the Year Level Manager / Senior Leader / Executive Team / Principal
- Refer to wellbeing team if appropriate

If the matter is referred to the Year Level Manager / Senior Leader / Executive Team / Principal the matter **will** be recorded into EDSAS.

**HARASSMENT IS UNACCEPTABLE.**

**MOUNT BARKER HIGH SCHOOL HAS ZERO-TOLERANCE TOWARDS BULLYING AND HARASSMENT.**

**EVERYONE'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING IS VALUED.**

**WE ALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO FEEL SAFE.**

## The School's Commitment

Under The Department of Education School Discipline Policy Mount Barker High School has a firm commitment to take action when students:

- Threaten the safety and wellbeing of others
- Interfere with the rights of others
- Perpetrate acts of violence, threatened or actual.

Mount Barker High School considers bullying and harassment as acts that:

- Cause emotional and/or physical harm, either directly or indirectly
- Place a person in reasonable fear of harm, or damage to property
- Place a person in a hostile environment
- Infringe on the rights of others
- Disrupt the educational process.

## Important points to remember:

- Bullying and harassment are wrong and may be against the law
- Bullying and harassment can occur anytime, anywhere by anyone
- Acknowledging harassment and bullying is the first step to stamping it out
- Bullying and harassment is bad for your health, and can affect your wellbeing
- You will be listened to.

## **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON BULLYING AND HARASSMENT**

- Contact the school
- Access DECD advice : [www.decd.sa.gov.au](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au)
- Visit these websites:
  - [www.bullyingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au)
  - [u www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)
  - [www.reachout.com.au](http://www.reachout.com.au)
  - [www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)
  - [www.racismnoway.com.au](http://www.racismnoway.com.au)
  - <http://qlife.org.au/support>