ROSEBUD
SECONDARY
COLLEGE

*MINDS CONSCIOUS OF RIGHT*

**BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY**

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY**
- **CHILD SAFE POLICY**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

Every person in our school community, students, teachers and other staff, families and members of the local community - has the right to feel safe and have a sense of belonging. A person who bullies another is denying them that right. The school will take the necessary steps to ensure that every person's right to feel safe is supported. The involvement and commitment of the whole school community is required to achieve a culture in which everyone feels safe, respected and has the opportunity to learn. Internet and digital technologies are now very much a part of life and learning. As an increasingly interactive medium, it brings with it exciting educational opportunities, however at the same time it also carries risks.

**DEFINITION**

Bullying is when a person or a group of people deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance in a repeated manner over time. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to factors such as age, size, status or other reasons.

Bullying may occur because of perceived differences including but not limited to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, age, economic status or the holding or expression of particular personal or political views. Bullying may be motivated by jealousy, distrust, fear, misunderstanding or lack of knowledge. It can continue over time and is often hidden from adults. The behaviour may continue if no action is taken.

There are several types of bullying:
- **Direct physical bullying** - hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing, continuously invading personal space or damaging property
- **Direct verbal bullying** - name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.
- **Indirect bullying** - often hard to recognise and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes: lying and spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, and encouraging others to socially exclude someone, damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance.

- **Cyberbullying** is direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces.

  It can include:
  - Flaming (online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages),
  - Harassment (repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages),
  - Denigration (posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships)

**NOT BULLYING**

Bullying is not;
- Mutual conflict: An argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem.
- Social rejection or dislike; Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.
- Single-episode: Acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation – while unacceptable are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied.

**1. PREVENTION**

Rosebud Secondary College is constantly reviewing bullying data and adapting the use of early intervention strategies to ensure all students are educated on what constitutes bullying.
We will continue to;
- Use our positive behaviour expectations to build and foster an environment enabling respect and safety.
- Teach students a curriculum that promotes resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Emphasise roles and strategies for all involved in a bullying episode – including the role of bystanders.
- Organise student programs to raise student awareness about bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion of matters and to aid development of attitudes. Some matters will be dealt with formally in the curriculum and in peer support programs, leadership programs, extra-curricular programs and occasional activities run by outside experts and workers.
- Use data collection tools to identify students' perceptions of safety, hot spots for bullying behaviour, and associated patterns of behaviour. The data from this tool is reviewed by the Wellbeing  and Student Management teams  with appropriate responses implemented

2.  **BULLYING SITUATION**
We do not tolerate bullying. If you find yourself in a bullying situation, one or more of the following strategies may be effective:
- Try to act unimpressed or unaffected.
- Use other strategies to diffuse the situation (e.g. agreeing in an offhand way with the bullying when they say offensive or negative things, this is known as fogging).
- Say 'No!' firmly.

- Talk to the teacher or another staff member, e.g. student wellbeing coordinator.
- Act confidently even when you don't feel it.
- Walk away when the bully approaches you.
- Use positive self-talk. Try saying to yourself something like "I know I am better than that".
- Give a quick reply to surprise or disarm the other child.
- Use a routine response (e.g. okay, whatever) that implies that the child is not bothered.

## 3.  RESPONDING TO BULLYING

A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying and harassment in a consistent and systematic way. Staff programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues and strategies for dealing with these issues. Teaching staff are responsible for ensuring that incidences of bullying are dealt with as soon as possible and in a manner consistent with the Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy.

**3.1** When a bullying incident is reported or observed we use the following actions:
- The school leadership team and the teachers will work together to ensure the safety of all school members in situations of bullying and harassment, by:
- Thoroughly investigating all complaints while respecting the need for confidentiality, notifying parents/guardians and planning interventions.
- Finding out the circumstances and who are involved.
- Talking to each student involved in the incident to ascertain their actions.
- Speaking to any bystanders as needed. If a teacher feels a student is at serious and imminent risk from bullying and harassment they will pass on the information to the appropriate student management leader in order to ensure appropriate support for the student. It is important that teachers document fully their interaction with the student and verify the actions taken.
- After discussion with the victim, determine how they would like to proceed. If they indicate their willingness, act as a mediator so that the victim can discuss the matter with the bully/harasser following the process of Restorative Practice , so they can make amends and plans for future behaviour.
- Monitor the behaviour of students involved for an appropriate time following this discussion. Both the victim and initiator may need support to avoid repeated incidents and this will be monitored by teacher and leadership.
- Parents/guardians of both victim and initiator are contacted and informed.
- Other teachers are informed of incidents in order to help monitor any further incidents and to follow up consistently.

**3.2** Constructive strategies to deal with bullying include: education in coping strategies; assertiveness training; problem solving and social skills; counselling, reteaching experiences and behaviour modification. These strategies will be employed in preference to disciplinary actions and negative consequences, although disciplinary arrangements will be enacted where appropriate.

**3.3** If the bullying or harassment continues, or in instances of severe bullying or harassment, a referral should be made to the Year Level Coordinator or Student Wellbeing Coordinator. They may:
- Meet with the student to develop a behaviour support plan.

- Provide discussion/mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies including structured learning activities.

**3.4** For 'at risk' students whose bullying or harassing behaviour is severe and for other non-at risk students whose bullying or harassing and other aggressive behaviour is resistant to change, an individual 'strength building' plan should be developed. The plan will be developed by a member of the wellbeing team in consultation with student, parents/carers and teachers.

Individual strength-building plans and associated interventions help connect the student to programs and actions in the community, school and home as well as develop the student's inner social and emotional strengths (such as skills, values).

**3.5** A student whose severe bullying or harassing behaviour resists school efforts and represents a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing of themselves or other individuals within the school, will be referred to outside agencies for evaluation. Student Wellbeing Coordinator will connect the school, student and families to those community agencies and organisations that can offer more intensive services to the student and their family.

**Note:** Disciplinary consequences for bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will comply with the School's Engagement and Wellbeing Policy. The principal or their nominee will provide disciplinary consequences, including suspension in accordance with DET Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance at any stage in the process depending on the contextual information relating to the severity of the bullying

## LINKS AND APPENDICES (including processes related to this policy)

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/prinprevent.aspx

- https://www.esmartschools.org.au/Pages/default.aspx

- http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/default.html

## 10. RATIFICATION

This policy will be reviewed annually or as required should changes arise in regulation or if circumstances change.