



Divine Mercy College
326 Yangebup Road Yangebup WA 6164

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BULLYING AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT POLICY

Policy Statement

At Divine Mercy College, we are committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where every member of our community is valued and their dignity upheld. We prohibit all forms of bullying, harassment, and peer-to-peer abuse, and we emphasize respect for privacy and human dignity. This policy aligns with our Catholic Ethos, affirming the right of every person to be safe, respected, valued, and heard.

Scope

This policy applies to all students, staff members, contractors, volunteers, and visitors at Divine Mercy College.

Related Policy

- Code of Conduct
- Child Protection Policy
- Student Wellbeing Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Risk Management
- Pastoral Care Policy

Legislation

- Criminal Code 1913 (WA)
- School Education Act 1999 (WA)
- School Education Regulations 2000 (WA)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Disability Standards for Education 2005
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)

Definitions

- **Bullying (Physical and Cyber):** Bullying includes any repeated verbal, physical, social, or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves an imbalance of power. This can occur in person (physical) or through digital means (cyber).
- **Harassment:** Harassment refers to any unwanted or unwelcome behavior that offends, humiliates, or intimidates an individual or group.

- **Victimisation:** Victimisation occurs when a person is treated unfairly or subjected to reprisal for reporting bullying or harassment or for participating in an investigation related to such incidents.

Indicators that a Child May be Being Bullied

Parents may be the first to notice the signs that their child may be being bullied. The signs for parents often include the child not wanting to go to school, saying they are sick to avoid attending school and generally not enjoying going to school anymore. The child can often withdraw, have emotional outbursts, get upset easily, have difficulty concentrating, or complain of headaches or stomach aches. Listed below are some indicators that a child is being bullied.

Emotional

- Mood swings, sleep disturbance, eating disorders, depression

Physical

- Psychosomatic complaints, headaches, stomach aches, negative body language, tics

Social

- Social withdrawal, increased sibling rivalry

Behavioural

- Outbursts of temper, problematic behaviour

School/academic

- Erratic/decline in school attendance, truancy, decline in work standards

While all of the above are signs of possible bullying, they may also be signs that something else is happening with the child. Referral to the appropriate school personnel to determine the cause of the issues is recommended.

Prevention Strategies

Whole School prevention strategies include the following:

- Positive staff role modelling
- Inclusive, safe and welcoming learning environments
- Explicit teaching of social skills through cooperative learning focuses student leadership
- Provide professional learning and information to staff and parents
- Proactive modelling of pro-social behaviour to identify students
- Highly visible and active approach to playground supervision
- Record and manage playground bullying incidents – see Appendix
- Inform the class teacher and if needed Discipline Coordinators
- Communicate incidents and issues related to bullying to all staff at Monday meetings

during Health lessons including; **Procedures for Responding to Bullying**

Divine Mercy College is committed to responding promptly and effectively to reports of bullying.

Report:

- Any member of the Divine Mercy College community who witnesses or experiences bullying is encouraged to report the incident to their Coordinator/ Head/ or Principal.
- Reports can be made anonymously, and confidentiality will be maintained to the fullest extent possible during the investigation.

Investigation:

- Upon receiving a report, the school will conduct a thorough investigation..
- The investigation will be impartial and respectful of all parties involved, including the alleged perpetrator(s) and victim(s).
- Interviews will be conducted with witnesses and involved parties to gather relevant information.

Response and Support:

- Based on the findings of the investigation, appropriate actions will be taken to address the bullying behaviour.
- Support and assistance will be provided to the victim(s), witnesses, and alleged perpetrator(s) as needed, including access to counselling services.
- Restorative practices may be utilised to repair harm and promote understanding between the parties involved.

Communication:

- The Principal or designated school official will communicate with parents/guardians of all parties involved to provide information about the incident and the actions taken.
- Updates on the resolution of the incident will be provided as appropriate, while maintaining confidentiality and privacy.

Review and Follow-Up:

- The effectiveness of the school's response will be reviewed to determine if further actions or adjustments to policies and practices are necessary.
- Follow-up support and monitoring will be provided to ensure the well-being of all affected individuals.

At Divine Mercy College, all reports of bullying or harassment are treated with utmost seriousness and promptly investigated in a fair and unbiased manner. We prioritize maintaining confidentiality during investigations to protect the privacy of all involved parties. Comprehensive support is offered to victims, witnesses, and alleged perpetrators throughout the entire process to ensure their well-being and facilitate a thorough resolution of the issue.

Consequences

- Divine Mercy College supports positive encouragement over negative punishment. Positive reinforcement, counseling, and restorative practices are emphasized to foster growth and understanding.

- Corporal Punishment: Divine Mercy College strictly prohibits the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure.
- Degrading Punishment: Degrading or humiliating punishment, including verbal abuse or any form of punishment that undermines a person's dignity, is strictly prohibited.
- Consequences for engaging in bullying or harassment may include disciplinary action, counseling, and educational interventions.
- Repeated or serious incidents may result in suspension or expulsion for students, or termination for staff members.

Support Services

Divine Mercy College provides access to counselling and support services for victims and perpetrators of bullying and harassment.

Workplace Bullying

Bullying is also an issue in the workplace where repeated inappropriate behaviour by one of more persons undermine the individual's right to dignity at work.

The definition of bullying and the various forms it takes is discussed earlier in this document. Bullying occurs in the workplace if it harms, intimidates, threatens, victimises, undermines, offends, degrades or humiliates an employee, whether alone or in front of others.

The Department of Consumer and Employment Protection has information on workplace bullying available on their website www.safetyline.wa.gov.au. Typing 'bullying' in the search box will bring up all of the material available, including Codes of Practice, Guidance Notes and Frequently Asked Questions about Bullying.

Responsibilities

Principal and Coordinators	Responsible for promoting a culture of respect and ensuring compliance with this policy.
Staff	Expected to intervene and report incidents of bullying or harassment promptly.
Students	Required to treat others with respect and report any incidents of bullying or harassment to a staff member.
Parents/ Guardians	Encouraged to support the school's efforts to prevent bullying and harassment and to communicate concerns promptly.

Review History

Version	Date released	Next review	Summary of Changes	Author

1	2015	2019	Document Created	Jodi Hample
2	2019	2023	Annual review	Jodi Hample
3	2023	2025	Annual Review Applied to new template Legislation updates	Yan Lau