MELBOURNE GRAMMAR SCHOOL
AN ANGLICAN SCHOOL

Policy on Bullying

Introduction

Melbourne Grammar School supports a culture of respect and care for others. Bullying, abuse or any form of harassment (hereafter referred to as bullying) is unacceptable at Melbourne Grammar School and will not be tolerated. Bullying diminishes an individual's self-confidence and self-respect. People who are bullied struggle to reach their potential. This policy outlines important information about bullying including what it is and how to get support if you are experiencing bullying.

Rights and expectations

Students have the right to learn in a safe, enjoyable environment, clear in the knowledge that they are not going to be ridiculed, or put down, by their fellow students, by teachers or other adults. No student should feel at risk from any kind of physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse. Students also have the right to feel safe and happy while at school or travelling to and from school.

Teachers have the right to enjoy their teaching, and to be given every opportunity to teach in a calm, self-disciplined, motivated and generally positive learning environment. No teacher or other adult should feel at risk from any kind of physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse.

The School recognises that in any organisation there is the potential for bullying to occur. Any form of bullying is abhorrent and unacceptable, and the School is committed to minimising all bullying incidents. Every report of bullying will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.

Definition

Bullying is the deliberate and persistent physical or mental intimidation of a person by another person or group which causes discomfort or hurt.

Types of bullying

Physical

Physical bullying comprises harming a person by hitting, punching, pushing, tripping, throwing an object, or any other kind of physical attack on a person. Physical bullying also includes invading a person's personal space and hiding, damaging and destroying a person's property out of spite.

Verbal

Verbal bullying comprises name-calling, 'paying out', ridiculing someone's name, mocking or denigrating a person's abilities or talents, and making derogatory comments about a person's culture, background, customs, gender, sexuality or beliefs. Verbal bullying also includes spreading negative gossip or rumours about people or their families and friends.

Gesture

Bullying doesn't have to be physical or verbal. Sometimes bullying can occur through body language. This may be nasty, offensive or threatening facial expressions or body movements.

Extortion

Demanding money, possession or other goods and services also constitutes bullying.

Exclusion
Bullying can also be excluding a person repeatedly and purposely from a group or activity to make them feel isolated, unsupported, and friendless.

Cyber
Cyber bullying comprises the use of information and communication technologies such as email, social media, (mobile) phone and text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal websites or polling websites, to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that causes harm to others.

What to do

If you are bullying anyone STOP IMMEDIATELY. Seek help to find out why you have been acting in this way and how you can change.

If you are being bullied, REPORT IT IMMEDIATELY. Staff will work with you to prevent any further bullying incidents. Talking about bullying helps stops the behaviour. It allows the School to create a safe environment and to work with bullies to stop their behaviour.

If you know of anyone who bullies other people, or is a victim of bullying, REPORT THEM IMMEDIATELY. Both the bully and the victim need help. Your action of reporting will lead to a better outcomes for both parties.

Reporting is not 'dobbing on your mates'. It is essential for the complete harmony of the Melbourne Grammar Community. Stand up for what you know is right. Help minimise bullying!

Where to turn

You must not tolerate being bullied. If you are being bullied by a person or group, you should adopt the following procedure:

- Try not to react directly to the person or group. Show that the bullying does not really upset you, even though inwardly this is not the case. The person or group is not rewarded by your humiliation, obvious distress or anger, and the bullying may then stop.
- With as little emotion as possible, confront the person bullying you. Tell them their actions are unwanted, contrary to school policy and/or illegal. The person bullying is aware of the School policy and your reminder may be enough to stop them.
- Tell your Head of House, Tutor, a member of staff, the Counsellor or a School House Leader.

Every complaint will be taken seriously and will be investigated thoroughly. All incidents of bullying of a student by another student will be investigated by the Head of Campus or delegate. The School Counsellor will be informed. All relevant parties will be interviewed. A bullying report will be completed and filed. The Head of Campus or delegate will, in consultation with the Head of House and School Counsellor, decide upon appropriate sanctions if the case is judged to involve bullying. The Deputy Headmaster and Headmaster will be informed about all bullying cases.

If you have been bullying someone, the victim may ask you to stop. Do so immediately and ask yourself why you have been behaving in this way. You must change and you will ultimately feel a great deal better when you stop bullying. You should seek help. Contact your Tutor, Head of House or School Counsellor and discuss what you have been doing. All these people will be delighted to help you alter your behaviour.

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Consequences

Bullying is another manifestation of conflict and relationships in need of repair. All incidents of bullying will be thoroughly investigated, and written accounts sought from all affected parties. As with other instances of conflict in the School, the first response will be to attempt to repair the relationship through the Restorative Justice process. All affected parties will be brought together, and the issues addressed as part of a Restorative conversation.

In cases where the bullying continues after that process, other appropriate sanctions may be applied. These could include one or more of the following:

- Severe reprimand and warning regarding future misbehaviour
- Lunch time 'time out'
- Detention
- Suspension from School
- Probation for a minimum of one term
- Interview with the Head of Student Development and parents/guardians
- Interview with Deputy Headmaster or Headmaster
- Counselling and mediation
- Expulsion from School

Any student guilty of bullying may be required to undertake counselling. If the counselling requires an outside agency, then any expenses will be borne by the parents. Any victim or on-looker may be encouraged to undertake counselling.

In the most serious cases, bullying is treated as a crime in Victoria. In addition to any School sanctions, any person guilty of bullying may be subject to legal processes.