

## Bullying and Harassment Policy

### Definition

A person is bullied when one or more other people expose them regularly and over time to negative or harmful actions. Bullies are people who deliberately set out to intimidate, exclude, threaten and/or hurt others repeatedly. Bullying is a clear form of harassment.

### Rationale

The school will provide a positive culture where bullying is not accepted, and in so doing, all will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in their school environment.

### Aims

- To reinforce within the school community what bullying is, and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- Everyone within the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and to have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

### Definitions

- Bullying:** is repeated unreasonable behaviour which occurs on or off Advance College premises and is directed towards a member of staff or student, or group of staff or students, that creates a risk to health and safety, either physically or psychologically, or their property, reputation, or social acceptance. The following types of behaviour, where repeated or occurring as a pattern of behaviour, would be considered bullying:
- Verbal abuse including swearing or shouting
  - Abusive emails or other forms of electronic communication/media that includes comments on social media
  - Abusive letters, notes, or other written communications
  - Assigning impossible or meaningless tasks unrelated to the job or course of study
  - Any form of exclusion or isolation of employees or students
  - Psychological harassment
  - Deliberate changes to rosters or timetables to inconvenience individuals
  - Deliberately withholding information that is vital for effective work or study performance
  - Constant criticism or criticising people in front of others.
- Cyber-Bullying:** is any bullying behaviours using digital technologies that includes (but is not limited to):
- harassment via a mobile phone/SMS
  - setting up a defamatory website
  - comments made on social media
  - deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces
- Discrimination:** Unlawful workplace discrimination occurs when an employer takes adverse action against a person who is an employee or prospective employee because of

the following attributes of the person: race, colour, sex, sexual preference, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, family or carer's responsibilities, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin.

**Harassment:** is any unwelcome or unreciprocated behaviour that is reasonably likely in all circumstances to offend, insult, humiliate, or humiliate another person. Any behaviour that includes a sexual component is referred to as **sexual harassment**.

**Repeated:** refers to the persistent nature of the behaviour and is considered so if an established pattern can be identified.

**Unreasonable:** is behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine, threaten, degrade, offend, or intimidate another person.

**Risk** to health and safety includes the risk to the physical or mental health of a person.

### Implementation

Family, teachers, students and the community will be aware of the school's position on bullying through information in School Charter, Student Handbook, and Advance College's website.

Advance College will adopt a four-phase approach to bullying:

#### 1. Primary Prevention

- Professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and proven counter measures.
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the school's programs and response.
- To provide ideas to students on resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify at the start of each year the school policy on bullying.
- Visual reminders about how to deal with problems.

#### 2. Early Intervention

- Promote children and staff reporting bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- Classroom teachers and principal on a regular basis reminding students and staff to report incidents of bullying.
- Family encouraged to contact school if they become aware of a problem.
- Public recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems.
- School Council will be informed of all bullying incidents.

#### 3. Intervention

- Once identified each bully, victim and witnesses will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented.
- Students and staff identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations.
- Both bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support.
- If student bullying persists family will be contacted and consequences implemented.
- If staff bullying persists the principal will commence formal disciplinary action.

#### 4. Post Violation

- Consequences for students will be individually based and may involve:

- Exclusion from class
- Exclusion from yard
- School suspension
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Review and remind about how to deal with problems
- Reinforcement of positive behaviours
- Support Structures including Implementation of the Bully Stoppers Program (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers>)
- Ongoing monitoring of identified bullies
- Rewards for positive behaviour
- Consequences for staff will be individually based and may involve:
  - counselling
  - a period of monitoring
  - disciplinary actions

### **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed with whole staff, student, parent and community input as part of the school's review cycle.