



BULLYING POLICY

Last Review: December 2021	Constructed / Reviewed by: Russell Kennedy Lawyers
Next Review: December 2023	Approval Required: Executive Leadership Team
Policy Number: 2	
Document Date & Version: December 2021 v.6	

Purpose and Scope

The Knox School (the **School**) is committed to providing all students with a working and learning environment which is inclusive, values diversity and respects differences in our community. Specifically, we will endeavour to ensure that bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination are not accepted at the School.

This document details the School's response to bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination between students. Please refer to the Bullying and Violence Policy where the matter relates to staff of the School.

This policy applies to all students, parents and families, employees, volunteers, contractors and other authorised personnel required to perform functions on the School's premises.

Responsibilities

All members of the School community have a responsibility to respond to incidents of bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination, and take such incidences seriously.

Specifically, the School undertakes to:

- Provide a supportive environment which encourages positive relationships between students, staff and parents.
- Enable students to recognise behaviour that constitutes bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination.
- Empower students to deal with situations where they see or experience bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination to reduce severity or stop escalation to enable more respectful relationships.
- Encourage students to seek help if they see or experience bullying, sexual harassment or discrimination.

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- Provide curriculum material which will help students develop appropriate social skills, positive relationships and resilience.
- Provide counselling to students in dealing with conflict resolution; to those on both the giving and receiving ends of bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination.
- To manage any incidents of bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination that are ongoing or of a serious nature by using restorative practices or where appropriate, taking disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Discipline Policy.

Staff undertake to:

- Model appropriate behaviours at all times.
- Respond to all reported and observed incidences of bullying, sexual harassment or discrimination as set out in this policy.
- Ensure appropriate supervision of students at all times.
- Report incidences of bullying, sexual harassment or discrimination to the relevant Head of Year and where appropriate, the Executive Leadership Team.

Students undertake to:

- Inform the School if they are being bullied, sexually harassed, or discriminated against or if they see someone else being bullying, sexually harassed or discriminated against – regardless of whether this occurs at School, outside of School or otherwise in connection with the School.
- Help others if they are being bullied, sexually harassed or discriminated against. This includes acting as an upstander and reporting the incident to staff, parents or a trusted member of the School community.
- Not bully, sexually harass or discriminate against other members of the School community – regardless of whether this occurs at School, outside of School, or otherwise in connection with the School - and refuse to be involved in a circumstance where bullying, sexual harassment or discriminatory behaviours occur.
- To promote a positive and caring environment.

Parents undertake to:

- Watch for signs that their child may be being bullied, sexually harassed or discriminated against (whether in person, or via the use of digital technologies).
- Watch for signs that their child may be the perpetrator of the behaviours described above.
- If parents form such concerns about their child or another student, they are expected to contact their child's classroom teacher at first instance.

Definitions

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour that creates a risk to physical or mental health and safety. The behaviour is repeated over time. In this policy, bullying may occur in relation, but not

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limited, to culture; gender; race; ability or disability; physical appearance; beliefs; age; religion; or economic status. Types of bullying include direct physical bullying, direct verbal bullying, indirect bullying and cyberbullying.

Direct physical bullying includes punching, kicking, pushing and interfering with or damaging property.

Direct verbal bullying includes threatening, verbal abuse, aggressive or humiliating comments, belittling or humiliating comments, shouting, and teasing.

Indirect bullying includes:

- Spreading rude, inaccurate or malicious rumours.
- Deliberately excluding someone from activities or functions.
- Practical jokes or mimicking.

Cyberbullying includes behaviour that constitutes direct and indirect bullying, using digital technologies such as a mobile phone or over the internet on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter.

For conduct to constitute bullying, there does not have to be any intention to cause harm or discomfort. All staff, students and parents should therefore consider how their conduct could be perceived by others, even in circumstances where they think their behaviour is acceptable.

Discrimination means treating a person with an identified attribute (eg age, race, gender, physical features, gender identity, political opinion) or personal characteristic less favourably than a person who does not have the attribute or characteristic, who is otherwise in the same or similar circumstances.

Sexual Harassment includes sexually oriented jokes, sexual innuendo, teasing about sexual orientation unwelcome sexual approaches.

Policy

The School acknowledges the right of each member of the School community to enjoy school in a secure environment free from verbal, written, gestural, sexual or physical harassment and/or bullying, no matter the channel of communication.

The School has a clear commitment to promoting the positive uniqueness of each person. This will usually be done through modelling by adults, clear expectations set in student activities.

The School identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming student's attitudes and values. Explicit teaching and modelling to students is conducted by staff.

The School will harness the capacity of those not threatened by bullying to influence for good, the culture of the School. These people will assume a role of influence by:

- Listening for problems.
- Providing initial support by encouraging the bystanders to feel that they are implicated in the bullying.

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- Warning the perpetrators that they will feel obliged to report them if their behaviour does not cease.
- Reporting the bully/ies if the warning is not heeded. Once the report is made, action is taken.

The School will gather from time to time, via questionnaire, raw data on the extent of bullying occurring in the School.

The School recognises the need to work in partnership with parents and keep them informed on procedures to improve relationships within the School community.

The School recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying. The School promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and interdependence of people in groups and communities.

The School promotes values of respect, responsibility, resilience, achievement and care and empathy amongst all its members.

Staff members share a collegial responsibility, under the direction of the Executive Leadership Team, to act to prevent bullying and aggressive behaviour by any member of the School Community.

Reporting

Students, staff, parents / guardians or other community members who have concerns that bullying is occurring are asked in the first instance to contact one of the following staff members by calling 8805-3800 or via email:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| • Ms Nikki Kirkup, Principal | Nikki.Kirkup@knox.vic.edu.au |
| • Ms Suzanne Van Strien Head of Senior School | Suzanne.vanStrien@knox.vic.edu.au |
| • Mrs Toni-Ann Bright, Head of Middle School | Toni-Ann.Bright@knox.vic.edu.au |
| • Ms Catherine Samuel, Head of Junior School | Catherine.Samuel@knox.vic.edu.au |
| • Mr Alex Wilson, Head of Sport | Alex.Wilson@knox.vic.edu.au |
| • Dr Jingjing Wang, Director of International Programs | Jingjing.Wang@knox.vic.edu.au |

When reporting concerns, it is encouraged that all available details known are shared with the School, allowing the best possible outcome to be achieved in a timely manner.

Responding

When students are involved in behaviours that are, or may be perceived to be bullying, sexual harassment or discrimination, the School's position is that:

- Such behaviours are not tolerated at the School.
- The incident will be taken seriously and acted upon.
- The School has a clear strategy for dealing with these behaviours.

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- Where appropriate and possible, there will be an attempt to restore relationships.
- Victim blaming will not be tolerated.
- Confidentiality will be respected.
- The School keeps reports of all reported student behavioural concerns.
- The School will be sensitive to the way in which the victim wishes a problem to be handled.
- The highest priorities in considering the response will be the protection of the victim and the elimination of the inappropriate behaviour.
- Persistent or severe incidents of bullying, sexual harassment or discrimination will be escalated and dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary action scale outlined in the Student Discipline Policy.

Record Keeping

Staff are advised to keep written records of any student behaviour management concern (particularly those relating to bullying, sexual harassment or discrimination). In the event that incident is reported or observed, the written record should outline the name of the complainant, the basis of the concern (in chronological order where possible), relevant dates, and details of those involved. In capturing initial details, staff are to consider the “*who, what, when, where, why how?*”

Written records are also to be maintained if a student’s behavioural concern is investigated by the School. Records can include a range of documents, including records of interview, meetings with parents, internal correspondence with other staff and relevant images or documents that may be obtained during the course of the investigation.

The School’s preference is that all records are kept on SCHOOLBOX, the School’s electronic management system, and stored on the relevant student’s file. Where hard copy notes are kept, these are either to be scanned or transferred into Synergetic, or stored with the School’s paper based files.

Consequences for a breach of the School’s policies and procedures

Behaviours that are, or may constitute bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts.

The School reserves the right to consider the full range of responses available to those implicated or otherwise involved (including conferences, pastoral discussions, conflict resolution and other problem solving skills, report cards, warnings, detention, suspension and expulsion), depending on the seriousness of the behaviour and/or any insight, remorse and accountability shown. For more information refer to the Student Discipline Policy.

Repeated or serious incidents of bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination may lead to the need to implement strong consequences such as disciplinary action (which subject to the circumstances, is anticipated to be level 4 or higher), including the possibility of suspension or expulsion.

The School’s approach also involves the monitoring of victim wellbeing and encouraging affected students to consider the confidential wellbeing, counselling and support services available at the

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School.

Students also have access to the School's psychologists and counselling staff, who can provide advice regarding strategies to minimise ongoing impacts from the behaviour students have displayed or experienced.

Communication of this Policy

This policy is available to staff and students as part of the School's internal policies and procedures, and forms part of the School's induction program for incoming staff, the Student Record Book and annual School diary for students.

Aspects of (and updates to) this policy will be addressed in the School's professional development updates, training programs, bulletins and newsletters.

Associated documents:

- Staff and Student Appropriate Conduct Policy
- Bullying and Violence Policy
- Student Discipline Policy

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