

# Bullying & Harassment Prevention and Intervention Policy

## Endeavour College's Value Statement

All members of the Endeavour College community have a right to feel safe and protected, and free from bullying and harassment. We aim to develop a community culture where relationships are valued and members of the community feel connected, safe and respected. We believe this approach fosters an optimal learning environment to fulfil staff and students' God given abilities for life and community.

In our Christian community, we believe we are all equal in the eyes of God, and therefore, we are equal in the eyes of others. Jesus showed His love to all people regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, class or status. Our community is committed to encouraging others to recognise and embrace their own gifts, and cares for, values, accepts, supports and forgives each other in the way Jesus showed us.

Endeavour College adopts a Restorative Practices approach, which prioritises relationships and social connections. Restorative Practices focuses on building, maintaining and restoring relationships and fosters self-regulatory behaviours. In practice, this means living out The Endeavour Way through *Love, Courage, Forgiveness* and *Hope*. It calls community members to make a personal transformation from a focus on the self towards a focus on others and the common good, and as such it reflects the model of Christ in how we deal with others.

## Endeavour College's Policy

Endeavour College accepts it has a duty to provide students a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the College are respected and accepted.

Bullying and harassment are not tolerated at Endeavour College. It is our policy that:

- Bullying and harassment are managed through a restorative approach using The Endeavour Way, and involving students, staff and parents/caregivers.
- Bullying and harassment prevention strategies are implemented within the College on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age-appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/caregivers to recognise bullying and harassment and respond appropriately.
- Responses to bullying and harassment be sensitive to the circumstances of each incident, with a focus on Restorative Practices.
- Bullying and harassment prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on a regular basis against best practice.
- Staff present as positive role models emphasising our no bullying and harassment culture.

## The Behaviours – Bullying & Harassment

**Bullying** is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

**Harassment** is unwanted behaviour that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment (where that reaction is reasonable in the circumstances), and targets an individual or group on the basis of a characteristic such as gender, race, culture or ethnic origin, religion, physical characteristics, sexual orientation, age, ability or disability.

Bullying and harassing behaviours can include but are not limited to:

- **Physical:** which involves physical actions such as hitting, pushing, obstructing, unwanted and uninvited sexual contact, or physical contact which is used to hurt or intimidate someone. Damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying. Refer to our Assault (Student Against Student) Policy for more information.
- **Psychological:** which is when words or actions are used to cause psychological harm. Examples of psychological bullying and harassing behaviours include name-calling, offensive language, teasing or making fun of someone, offensive notes or materials (including via digital technology), intimidation, belittling, ridiculing, and the exclusion of individuals.
- **Indirect:** which is when deliberate acts of exclusion or spreading of personal information or lies that are used to embarrass, shame or intimidate someone.
- **Cyber:** which is using technology to, directly or indirectly, threaten or harm another person or persons. Cyber bullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails, on mobile devices, etc.

Single incidents, arguments or disputes between people where no-one has a significant power advantage, and both feel equally aggrieved are not defined as bullying but should be closely monitored as these behaviours may evolve into a bullying situation.

Behaviours would not be considered to be bullying if any one or more of the following features were present, but may still be considered harassment:

- It occurred only once and was not part of a repeated pattern
- It (genuinely) was not intended to offend, demean, annoy, alarm or abuse
- It was not directed towards the same person(s) each time

Bullying and harassment are unacceptable and need to be addressed as part of creating a safe school environment.

### **Bullying & Harassment Prevention Strategies**

Endeavour College recognises that the implementation of whole-College prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising incidents of bullying and harassment within our community.

Our prevention strategies to foster a 'no bullying or harassment' culture within the College include:

- A structured curriculum and peer group support system, that provide age-appropriate information and skills relating to bullying and harassment (including cyber) prevention to students over the course of the academic year.
- Education, training and professional development of staff in bullying and harassment prevention and response strategies.
- Regular provision of information to parents/caregivers, to raise awareness of bullying and harassment as a College community issue to equip them to recognise signs of bullying and harassment, as well as to provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns they may have relating to bullying and harassment directly with the College.
- Promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/caregivers using The Endeavour Way.
- Promotion of responsible behaviour and action amongst students, staff and parents/caregivers as modelled through The Endeavour Way.
- Regular risk assessments of bullying and harassment within the College through collection of information from the College community.
- Records of reported bullying and harassment incidents are maintained and analysed, in order to identify patterns of behaviours and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate.
- Statements supporting bullying and harassment prevention are included in students' College diaries, and in the Family A-Z Guide
- Anti-bullying and anti-harassment messages are displayed strategically within the College.
- Promotion of student awareness and a no bullying or harassment environment through participation in relevant events (e.g. National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence).

### **How to recognise signs of Bullying and/or Harassment**

When people are bullied or harassed, they may not want to talk about it for fear that it will make things worse. Behavioural changes in a student may be indicative of bullying or harassment. Some signs that a student is being bullied or harassed may include:

- An unwillingness or refusal to go to school.
- A decline in quality of school work and/or concentration.
- Headaches or stomach aches.
- Stolen or damaged possessions.
- Becoming withdrawn, lacking confidence and/or interest in usual activities.
- Acting unreasonably or out of character, including showing signs of anger
- Unwillingness to discuss their problems, or secrecy about their online communication.
- Unexplained bruises or scratches.
- Displaying feelings of embarrassment or humiliation.

While there can be other reasons for these signs to be present, parents/caregivers are encouraged to notify the College through a staff member (such as a Year Level Leader, Director of Middle or Senior Years or the College Counsellor) immediately if they suspect their child is experiencing bullying and/or harassment. It is also important for

parents/caregivers to support their child to communicate and be proactive in the resolution of bullying and/or harassment.

### Reporting Bullying & Harassment

Students and their parents/caregivers are sometimes reluctant to pursue incidents, for fear that it will only make matters worse. Students and parents/caregivers can be confident that reporting an incident of bullying or harassment provides powerful support at a time which can be emotionally challenging.

A key part of the College's bullying and harassment prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying and harassment incidents as well providing assurance to students who experience bullying and harassment (and their parents/caregivers) that:

- Bullying and harassment are not tolerated within the College.
- All reports will be taken seriously.
- The College has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying and harassment issues.
- Bullying and harassment incidents should be reported either verbally or in writing to a teacher or staff member, or to a Director, the Deputy Principal or the Principal.

### Responding to Bullying & Harassment

Bullying and harassment behaviours vary considerably in their extent and intent and, consequently, each situation needs to be dealt with individually and personally.

In all circumstances the College:

- Takes bullying and harassment incidents seriously.
- Provides assurance that confidentiality will be respected where appropriate.
- Takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with all involved persons.
- Takes time to understand any concerns of individuals involved.
- Responds based on all available information.
- Will implement effective follow up strategies utilising Restorative Practices.
- Maintains records of reported bullying and harassment incidents.

The following may occur as part of the restorative process:

- Notification of/consultation with parents/caregiver.
- Disciplinary action, at the Principal's discretion, including suspension or expulsion in persistent or severe incidents.

It is important to note that where an act of bullying is serious, it may also warrant police involvement and /or legal action.

### Implementation

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- Effective training for staff and students.
- Effective incident reporting procedures and record keeping.
- Effective management of reported bullying and harassment incidents.
- Initiation of restorative actions.
- LCA Standards of Ethical Behaviour, and the Prevention of Harassment and Abuse Policy.

### Staff Responsibilities

All staff are responsible to:

- Be positive role models emphasising our 'no-bullying and harassment culture'.
- Sustain and foster a 'no-bullying and harassment culture' within the College community.
- Complete relevant training, including Restorative Practices, The Endeavour Way, Valuing Safe Communities, and adhere to other legislative requirements.
- Ensure effective management of bullying and harassment incidents, including the initiation of restorative actions, incident reporting and record keeping.

## Student Responsibilities

All students are responsible to:

- Follow the College's student expectations as enacted through the Endeavour Way and as described in the Student Engagement Policy.
- Take action if they are experiencing, witnessing or are aware of bullying or harassment. Taking action can stop or diminish a specific bullying or harassment incident or support another student to manage it.
- Report, seek help and communicate with an adult on the occurrence of any bullying or harassment incident.
- Provide support to any person being bullied or harassed.

Actions students can take include:

- **Solve it themselves** – use positive and assertive language ask for the behaviour to stop.
- **Solve it with the support of friends** – talk to and listen to advice of their friends, and ask for the behaviour to stop with their friends' support.
- **Solve it with the support of an adult** – report the behaviour to an adult. Assistance may be in the form of coming up with appropriate actions, or where the adult is a staff member, approaching the individual(s) on the student's behalf.

Students should remember that:

- Any concerns about bullying or harassment should be reported to an adult immediately.
- If the bullying or harassment continues after it has been reported and actions taken, it should continue to be reported until it ceases.
- All members of the College community impacted by an incident of bullying or harassment will be supported in an appropriate way to resolve and repair relationships.
- Bullying or harassment can be stopped by discussing and resolving the matter in a positive way. This may involve a restorative chat or conference using the Endeavour Way as a basis for restoration.
- While students may request the matter to be treated in confidence when bullying and harassment is reported, it is important to know that in serious cases, staff members are required by law to report instances or suspected instances of children at risk of harm.

## Parent/Caregiver Responsibilities

All parents/caregivers are responsible to:

- Support their child to act in a safe and respectful way towards all others at the College and encourage students to resolve conflict in a respectful and restorative manner.
- Be aware of signs of distress in their child and keep the College informed of concerns about behaviour, their child's health, and other relevant matters.
- Communicate in a respectful manner with College staff about issues or concerns and assist their child (where necessary) to discuss the problem with a staff member.

If a parent/caregiver believes that their child is being bullied or harassed at the College, we recommend the following steps:

- Stay calm and listen to your child.
- Make notes of what your child tells you to help when you or your child shares the information with the College.
- Advise your child about potential actions and solutions.
- Assure your child that sharing information about being bullied or harassed is courageous and is the appropriate action to take.