

ALICE MILLER CLEARLY STATED POLICY AGAINST BULLYING

Upon enrolment, and at information sessions, students and their parents are to be made aware that the School will not tolerate bullying or harassment in any school-controlled situation. The School is committed to providing a safe environment, and will support and help any student and/or parent who are genuinely suffering as a result of bullying or harassment. Students, teachers and parents must feel confident that they can report incidents in confidence, that action will be taken, and that staff will act sensitively and discreetly. Confidentiality can be possible even if information is known by a group or the whole staff. The person who receives information may need to tell others, but in a way that, as far as possible, does not breach confidentiality.

Reminders of the School's philosophy in relation to bullying will be made through morning meetings, class discussions and in newsletters.

Harassment is behaviour (through words or actions) that are unwanted, unasked for, unreturned and likely to make school an unfriendly or uncomfortable place by:

- humiliating (putting someone down)
- seriously embarrassing
- offending (hurting someone's feelings) or
- intimidating (threatening someone so they behave in a certain way)
- physically interfering with someone
- exposing someone to crude behaviour or remarks
- using another person's identity, particularly in a way which denigrates them or leaves them exposed to ridicule or harm to their reputation.

Examples: name calling, stereotyping jokes and offensive comments.

Sexual harassment is an unwelcome sexual advance; request for sex or any other sexual behaviour that a reasonable person would know or expect would offend, humiliate, seriously embarrass or humiliate another.

Examples: unwanted touching, unwelcome sexual innuendo or jokes, displaying sexually explicit material (posters, emails, internet sites).

STAFF AWARENESS

Staff will be regularly reminded of the policy, with regular checks that the school continues to be a safe environment for all.

STUDENT AWARENESS

Awareness of bullying and harassment will be raised in morning meetings as appropriate. Students will be asked to discuss issues such as the need for immediate action when someone is in distress, the danger that non-intervention can imply support for bullying, the knowledge that social exclusion can bring about changes in bullies, the benefits of rewarding non-violent behaviour, the indicators of racial and sexual and a similar harassment, the importance of making newcomers feel welcome, the correct responses when bullying is seen.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTS OF BULLYING

For first and relatively minor incidents, students should be given an appropriate caution and a warning that formal action will be taken next time. Other staff should be notified that this warning has been given.

For a serious incident, or repeated incidents of bullying and/or harassment, the following procedure is one that may be followed.

- a) Have the bullied pupil record the events in writing
- b) Have the alleged bully also record the events in writing.
- c) Discussion/s with the relevant parties.
- d) Consequences in line with the discipline system should then be applied e.g. Suspension until the parents can be interviewed, or expulsion.

Any written reports are to be placed in the pupil's files.

STRATEGIES FOR THE BULLIED

Given that some victims of bullies are loners, students with low self-esteem, or students with poor social skills, plans are to be made where relevant with teachers of the bullied student to raise his/her self esteem through participation in school activities, and support and encouragement inside and outside the classroom. Long-term strategies to improve socialisation may need to be implemented.

STRATEGIES FOR THE BULLY

Students who bully are often well aware that their behaviour is unacceptable, and are often well aware why it is unacceptable. In such cases interviews with the students may be sufficient to put a stop to the behaviour and to achieve a different relationship with the person who has been the target of the bully. In other cases students who bully, and their families, may be asked to come to an interview where the school policy is outlined, and where the school's policies and strategies are outlined. Professional help will be sought if necessary. Under certain circumstances however the student will be asked to leave the school. These circumstances include the prolongation of the bullying behaviour **and/or** an apparent inability in the person responsible for the bullying to appreciate the nature of his or her behaviour or to respond adequately and appropriately **and/or** other poor behaviour indicating values that are at odds with those of the school **and/or** strong indications that the continued presence in the school of the person responsible for the bullying is likely to cause such discomfort to the victim of the bully as to markedly affect his or her welfare. One consideration in coming to such a conclusion in relation to this last point is evidence that the victim of the bully is contemplating leaving the school as a result of the bullying behaviour or a single act of bullying/harassment.

Who and what this policy covers

This policy covers the whole school community, including staff, students, parents, contractors and volunteers.

This policy applies to:

- education (e.g. teaching and learning, enrolment, student management, student services, curriculum development and delivery)
- the provision of goods and services (e.g. extracurricular activities, camps, sleepovers, excursions, parent–teacher interviews, access to facilities)
- school sport and recreation
- employment at the school (recruitment, allocation of duties, employment conditions, access to benefits such as training, promotion and leave).

CYBER BULLYING

Cyber bullying is defined as the causing of hurt via modern technologies such as the Internet and other forms of social media, and through the use of smart phones and other mobile devices.

Cyber bullying is a growing problem in society. Modern technologies empower the individual, even the most unlikely individuals, with an immense capacity to cause harm. It can be an attractive means of bullying for it can, under certain conditions, be carried out with relative anonymity.

Cyber bullying can be particularly damaging because of the capacity it has to humiliate, hurt and harm a person in front of a huge “audience” and the bully can often remain anonymous.

A dangerous feature of cyber bullying is that it can be done quickly and easily. On an impulse, a person can create emotional havoc for another and do so before the voice of reason hints at the inappropriateness of the action.

A further problem with cyber bullying is that the bully is often unaware of the extent of the harm he/she is causing because cyber bullying seldom occurs face-to-face. The feedback is muted by distance so that the bully is protected from an understanding of the awfulness of the behaviour.

The School’s anti-bullying Policy is equally applicable when using technology. Some examples of cyber-bullying, which are unacceptable at any time, whether at or away from school are listed below. In extreme cases, this kind of bullying may be referred to the Federal or Local Police.

- Sending a text message to another student containing threats or insults or inciting anti-social behaviour.
- Forwarding on an email containing a destructive rumour about another student
- Creating a social media profile impersonating another student
- Sending a picture or video of two people kissing through email or mobile phone
- Threatening or swearing at an opponent via online games
- Impersonating another person on social media
- Filming a teacher or another student and uploading the footage on YouTube

Sexting

Another expression of cyber bullying is sexting.

Sexting is taking sexually explicit photos and making them available for others to see via a carriage service such as mobile phone or computer.

Sending explicit images of anyone, including oneself, is a crime if the person doing so is under the age of 18. If the person in the picture is under 16 years old, it can be a very serious crime possibly resulting in charges being laid.

Mobile Phones and Cyber Bullying

Using mobile devices to bully (also known as cyber bullying) and threaten other students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In some cases it can constitute criminal behaviour.

Students are reminded that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.

Mobile phones or other mobile devices must not be used to take photos/video of any other student or teacher without their consent. It is also prohibited to upload photos/video of other students/teachers to social media websites or email photos/videos to others if doing so would embarrass, humiliate or cause discomfort to the subject of the photo/video.

Student Guidelines

Due to the wealth of new social media tools available to students, student products and documents have the potential to reach audiences far beyond the classroom. This translates into a greater level of responsibility and accountability for everyone.

Below are guidelines students should adhere to when using Internet tools in the classroom or in any way related to classroom or School activities. Students should follow these guidelines anytime they post material that could identify them or their relationship to the School.

1. Be aware of what you post online. Social media venues are very public. What you contribute leaves a digital footprint for potentially all to see. Do not post anything you wouldn't want friends, parents, other family members, teachers, or a future employer to see.
2. Follow the school's code of conduct when writing online. It is acceptable to disagree with someone else's opinions, however, it needs to be done in a respectful way. Make sure that criticism is constructive and not hurtful. What is inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate online.
3. Be safe online. Never give out personal information, including, but not limited to, last names, phone numbers, addresses, exact birthdates, and pictures. Do not share your password with anyone besides Alice Miller staff and your parents.
4. Be aware of user policies and how they can change over a period of time.
5. Linking to other websites to support your thoughts and ideas is recommended. However, be sure to read the entire article prior to linking to ensure that all information is appropriate for a school setting.
6. How you represent yourself online is an extension of yourself. Do not misrepresent yourself by using someone else's identity.
7. Know that a very frequent use of the Internet is for activities such as scams, pornography and gambling.
8. If you run across inappropriate material that makes you feel uncomfortable, or is not respectful, inform staff or parents right away.

Cyber anonymity

Students need to remember that something sent electronically can never be entirely removed even with a press of the "delete" button. The image may emerge at any stage in their future life and lead to serious consequences.

Using pseudonyms, passwords and avatars does not protect the identity of a cyber bully.

Technologies exist to identify those who miss-use modern technologies to harm others.

When using a social-networking site, the School recommends that you set your profile to private and only allow access to people you personally know and trust. Do not upload any personal details that could lead to your identification by strangers.

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