



ANTI-BULLYING & ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY (Including cyber-bullying)

Rationale

The Cranbourne East Secondary College community has the right to a safe and caring environment that enables positive relationships to be formed between all students and staff. It is through these relationships that self-esteem; cooperation, personal growth and a positive attitude to learning and teaching are promoted. Bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated and every employee (Principals, teachers, Education Support, ancillary staff and contract personnel), student, parent and visitor has a responsibility to comply with this policy.

Any form of repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear is considered bullying and is unacceptable. This includes instances of cyber-bullying.

Objectives:

- To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable.
- To ensure everyone within the school community is alerted to signs and evidence of bullying and are aware they have a responsibility to report it to Principal class staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to both victim and perpetrator.
- To ensure that bullying and harassment is referred to the appropriate staff member so a resolution process can be enacted.
- To ensure that all forms of bullying are dealt with in the same manner (Cyberbullying and physical bullying)

What is bullying and harassment?

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons.

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures), which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

Cyber-bullying is direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces.

Cranbourne East Secondary College actively promotes a positive and welcoming environment for all members of the school community. When people are bullied or harassed some effects might be anger, embarrassment, fear and humiliation, loss of self-confidence and reduced function and potential. Bullying and harassment will be addressed, individual differences will be respected and students and staff will be enabled and supported in their pursuit of learning and teaching.

Guidelines:

- A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying and harassment in a consistent and systematic way. All teaching staff will be responsible for ensuring that the College environment is safe and secure and that any bullying or harassment is acted upon. All students will be responsible for respecting their peers and their rights, and to take appropriate action if bullied or see someone else being bullied.
- All new students and staff will be informed of the anti-harassment policy and practices at the commencement of their time at the school.
- All complaints of harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously.
- Harassment that happens outside of school hours will be directed to the police. However, the school will still provide the relevant wellbeing services to any students in need.
- Cranbourne East Secondary College will make students aware of its online reporting infrastructure that creates a confidential space for students to report cyber-bullying or anti-social online behaviour
- Cranbourne East Secondary College will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Staff programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues.
- There will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of the Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy. Appropriate action will be taken in line with the Department of Education and Training expectations of schools.
- Constructive strategies to deal with harassment will include: education in coping strategies; assertiveness training; problem solving and social skills; counselling and behaviour modification. These strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences, however disciplinary consequences may also be taken.
- The Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy of the school will be widely promoted to students, staff, parents/carers and the local community.
- A student and parent agreement will be signed as part of the Student Enrolment Package, which covers acceptable code of conduct at school as well as a copy of this policy.
- The school leadership team and teachers will work together to ensure the safety of all school members in situations of bullying and harassment, by thoroughly investigating all complaints while respecting the need for confidentiality, notifying parents/carers and planning interventions.
- If a teacher feels a student is at serious and imminent risk from bullying and harassment then it is their professional duty to pass on the information to a member of the school leadership team and follow this up with an email of an account of the concerns raised to the member of the leadership team. It is important that teachers document fully their interaction with the student and verify the actions taken. The parent/guardian of the student at risk is to be advised on the day of the concern being raised to ensure the school works in partnership with home.

- Student programs will be organized to raise student awareness about bullying and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion of matters and to aid development of attitudes. Some matters will be dealt with formally in the curriculum and in peer support programs, leadership programs, extra-curricular programs and occasional activities run by outside experts and workers. The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with current DET materials e.g. 'The Friendly Schools' and 'No Blame Approach to Bullying' programs.
- Professional development will be provided for staff relating to bullying and harassment and proven strategies to address these issues in classrooms will be shared with all staff.
- The school will provide specialist resources such as books, videos, and kits and off site in-service activities to assist staff in responding appropriately to bullying and harassment issues.
- Disciplinary consequences for bullying and harassment will comply with the school's Student Engagement Policy. The principal or their nominee will provide disciplinary consequences including suspension in accordance with Department of Education (DET) guidelines.
- The school supports the rights of students with additional educational needs and holds a diversity policy.

References

Links that are connected with this policy are:

- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/bullying.aspx>

Evaluation: The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed as part of the College's four-year review cycle.