

Anti-Bullying Policy

Rationale

Manning Valley Anglican College does not tolerate bullying of any kind. Every person has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to enjoy positive relationships with all members of the College community.

All students of the College have the right to learn, and all teachers have the right to teach in a safe and caring environment that promotes self-worth and personal growth. It is the responsibility of all members of the College community to play an active part in ensuring that everyone is treated with respect.

The key aims of this Policy are:

1. To provide a safe, secure and supportive environment for all members of the College community by actively promoting positive peer relations.
2. To provide support for victims of bullying.
3. To ensure that the perpetrators of bullying behaviour understand and accept responsibility for their behaviour and receive appropriate rehabilitation.
4. To actively educate students of all ages about appropriate ways to treat others.
5. To ultimately produce students who are responsible and caring adult citizens in the community.

Definition

Bullying is the incidence of intimidation or aggression that causes discomfort, pain or embarrassment to another person. The intimidation may be physical, verbal, emotional or psychological and can include comments, gestures, extortion and exclusion. In essence, bullying involves abuse by individuals or groups exerting power over another person or group. It can be deliberate and planned or it may be unintentional. It is never fun; it is never “a joke”.

Some examples of bullying include:

- Any form of physical violence such as hitting, pinching, biting, pushing or spitting on others;
- Invasion of another’s personal space with the intent to intimidate;
- Using offensive names, teasing or spreading rumours about others or their families or friends;

- Using put downs such as negative nicknames or belittling others' abilities, achievements or efforts;
- Ridiculing others because of their race, gender, religion or social grouping;
- Ridiculing another's physical appearance or dress sense;
- Writing offensive notes, e-mail or graffiti about others;
- Using a third person or group to influence others against someone;
- Hurtfully excluding others from a group, conversation or event;
- Using stand-over tactics or threats to intimidate others;
- Interfering with another's property by stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying it;
- Making sexually suggestive comments or gestures or telling sexually oriented jokes that cause discomfort; that is sexual harassment.

The effect on victims of bullying:

- May lead to loss of self-esteem, confidence and self-worth;
- May feel frightened, embarrassed, angry, depressed or unsafe;
- May be unable to sleep, experience nightmares, loss of appetite or declining concentration on College work;
- May become more reserved and avoid participation in co-curricular activities or social events;
- May feel confused, alone and helpless to do anything about the problem;
- May experience a deterioration in their other relationships;
- May begin to manifest bullying behaviour themselves.

Strategies to Prevent Bullying

At MVAC, staff should:

- Increase the awareness of students about the appropriate ways to treat others;
- Actively display non-bullying behaviour in their treatment of both students and other staff;
- Listen to students and be sympathetic to reports of bullying behaviour even if they have retaliated under provocation;
- Be alert to the possible indicators prevalent in victims of bullying;

- Report possible concerns regarding treatment of individuals or actual incidents of bullying to the student's class teacher/Head of School (Junior College) and Year Coordinator/Head of School (Senior College);
- Investigate parent concerns that have been raised with them;
- Promote an atmosphere in class and co-curricular activities which allow for the full involvement of students without fear of ridicule;
- Be mindful of how students are allocated in group work activities or teams are selected on sporting occasions;
- Be vigilant on playground duty and in class change over times;
- Assist students to develop positive strategies to deal with bullying and to build self-esteem and resilience;
- Encourage students to talk about and report concerns regarding bullying – to actively educate against the 'dobber' mentality;
- Explain the key terms 'bullying', 'harassment' and 'teasing' at appropriate opportunities in tutor group and class;
- Be actively and enthusiastically involved in supporting and implementing the College's bullying and behaviour management policies;
- Be involved through interdisciplinary curriculum initiatives and pastoral care groups in education about bullying.

At MVAC, the victims of bullying behaviour will be urged to consider using some of the following strategies:

- Confront the offending student and make it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable.
- Speak with the relevant teacher, Year Coordinator, Head of School or Parent/guardian to work out strategies for dealing with the problem and follow the appropriate guidelines for the management of bullying.

At MVAC, other students should:

- Inform an appropriate member of staff immediately;
- Make it clear to others in the peer group that such behaviour is wrong;
- Understand that observing such behaviour without action can be seen as supporting the offending student.

At MVAC, we encourage parents to:

- Be supportive of the College's efforts to deal with incidences of bullying and willing to attend interviews or conferencing if required;
- Be aware of signs of distress or changed behaviour that may indicate their child is a victim of bullying, for example, reluctance to attend College, a pattern of headaches or stomach pains, frequently missing equipment that is out of character, requests for extra money, damaged clothing or bruising;
- Take an active interest in their child's social life and friendship groups;
- Communicate openly and regularly with their child so the child is more inclined to tell them of problems before they become major problems:
- Encourage their child to report the problem to a trusted teacher or do so themselves if the child is unable to do so;
- Refrain from encouraging the child to retaliate or involving themselves directly with the child or their parents;
- Trust the College's established procedures and desire to reach the best outcome for all parties concerned rather than seek revenge.

Management of a Bullying Incident

All reports of bullying are to be investigated by the relevant staff member in consultation with the Head of School (Junior College) and Year Coordinator/Head of School (Senior School) to determine the nature and extent of the bullying.

If the bullying is a less severe first offence, these staff will follow up the incident as appropriate. This should involve bringing the two parties together, perhaps with other relevant people, in student conferencing. This will allow both the offending party and the victim to talk through the situation and the offending student being given the opportunity to apologise and accordingly modify their behaviour. It is vital to realise that we are trying to improve social behaviour rather than find scapegoats for it, so discipline in many cases may not be necessary. Nevertheless, the offending student must be very clear on the fact that their behaviour is wrong and must not recur.

If the bullying is a serious first offence, the Head of School and Stage Coordinator will interview the offenders and the victim and the parents will be informed. The offending student will be punished in an appropriate manner and counselled to assist them from re-offending and the victim will be provided with appropriate support and protection according to their needs. Student conferencing will be an important part of the restorative justice process and a formal contract will be signed by the offending student to agree to refrain from such behaviour in the future.

In the event of further offences of bullying by the same student, the Principal/Deputy Principal will interview the offending student in the presence of their parents and Head of School. A more comprehensive 'conference' would be arranged to try to get to the very

heart of the ongoing problem. Direct consequences for repeated incidents of bullying behaviour may include some, or all of, the following:

- Detention;
- Separation from peers;
- College or community service;
- Professional assistance or counselling such as conflict resolution, anger management;
- Other creative ideas as determined in the conferencing process;
- A signed contract to agree to refrain from such behaviour in the future.
- Suspension or expulsion at the discretion of the Principal.

All bullying incidents are recorded on the files of both the victim(s) and the offending students, using the appropriate recording forms (Appendix 1 & 2). In addition, the agreed action plan to be followed or the agreed contract would be recorded on the offending student's file (Appendix 3).

In all cases, the relevant teacher or executive authority carries out a post bullying review with the victim and offending student to ensure that the situation has improved and that the agreements undertaken in any contract are being met. This review should be shortly after the original incident and in the following days and weeks.

Evaluation

The College undertakes to review the bullying policy annually in light of the fact that the College is ever changing and other approaches may be deemed appropriate. The evaluation should include an assessment of the degree of bullying in the College through such means as student surveys and interviews.

The evaluation would also include an assessment of the extent to which the strategies used and educational opportunities undertaken in various parts of the College had been effective. In the light of such an evaluation, the Head of School, in consultation with other relevant staff, will map-out the educational approaches, activities and special visitors employed to ensure that all students are aware of the issues involved in bullying.

Conclusion

Bullying exists at all levels of society. We understand that the effects of bullying on learning, self-esteem and general adjustment at College can be devastating and life changing for the students concerned. The implementation of this policy requires the whole College community to share in the responsibility of combating bullying whenever and wherever it occurs.

Bullying incident report following meeting with alleged victim

Date: _____ Staff Member: _____

Alleged Victim: _____ Class/ Year Group: _____

Outline of the nature of the problem:

Who was involved?

When did it happen?

Where did it happen?

What adult response has occurred so far?

Bullying incident report following meeting with the alleged offending student

Date: _____ Staff Member: _____

Alleged Offending Student: _____ Class/ Year: _____

Outline of the problem:

Who was involved?

When did it happen?

Where did it happen?

What adult response has occurred so far?

Bullying Action Plan

Student's Name: _____

Date: _____ Class/Year: _____

Student's involved:

Areas of concern:

Outline of strategies employed:

Outline of changed behaviours to be adopted:

Record of consequences/punishments issued:

Student's signature: _____

* Please attach any incident reports, letters to parents or other relevant documentation involved in this process.

1 Policy Governance

Tier	1
Process Owner	Manning Valley Anglican College
Policy Owner	Deputy Principal
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Policy Approver	
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