

Anti-Harassment Policy

FOR STAFF, STUDENTS AND PARENTS



Melbourne Girls Grammar
an Anglican school

Policy and procedure to promote a friendly, safe school environment

Guiding Principle

Through respect for ourselves and for others, we create a friendly, safe and welcoming school environment.

Melbourne Girls Grammar is committed to ensuring that the working and learning environment is positive, supportive and free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying.

Our Aims

- to foster an environment where all members of the School community are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect
- to create an atmosphere where students, teachers and others feel safe and are safe
- to promote appropriate standards of conduct at all times
- to encourage the reporting of inappropriate behaviour
- to provide an effective procedure for resolving complaints in a sensitive, fair and timely manner.

What is harassment and bullying?

Harassment and bullying are forms of abuse. Bullying occurs when a person is subjected to unwelcome and uninvited behaviour, which is offensive, humiliating, embarrassing or intimidating and occurs more than once. A single incident will be dealt with seriously but is not bullying. Harassment and bullying complaints rely on the perception of the complainant, rather than the respondent. This behaviour may be planned or spontaneous.

- Bullying or any form of harassment is unacceptable and will not be tolerated
- Bullying and harassment result in an unhappy, unsafe and unproductive working environment
- Bullying and harassment can affect students, staff and other members of the School community including parents, visitors and workplace participants at the School
- Harassment may occur between any member of the MGGS school community e.g. staff & parent, student & student etc.

“We need to be aware of all the ways in which we communicate; our words, our body language and how we appear to others.”

Our response

- to treat all reports of harassment and bullying seriously, promptly and discreetly
- to take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment and bullying from occurring in any context directly related to School, including behaviour that occurs while travelling to and from School, during co-curricular activities, camps and other School functions

- to ensure that complainants and those involved in the complaint processes do not suffer further disadvantage, retaliation or threats. The School will not tolerate victimisation.
- to offer support/counselling to complainant and respondent
- to raise awareness of the Anti-Harassment Policy and the effects of bullying via promotional material, curriculum and workshops or seminars for staff, parents and students.

“We encourage a supportive and nurturing environment where we look out for each other and look after each other”

Definitions

Forms of Bullying and Harassment include:

Verbal

- putting ‘people down’ through comments, jokes or mimicking
- name calling
- teasing about another’s appearance or beliefs
- derogatory comments made on the basis of race, culture, sexuality, socio-economic status or any other individual difference
- intimidation or verbal abuse directed towards a person with different abilities
- intimidating or harassing telephone calls
- practical jokes which may be hurtful.

Visual/Physical

- non-verbal gestures which are designed to intimidate e.g. negative body language

- displaying offensive materials, pictures or objects
- writing offensive notes, letters and graffiti
- cyber-bullying: offensive use of email, mobile phone, internet or other technology
- pushing, hitting, pinching, kicking and other unwelcome physical contact used intentionally to intimidate or hurt someone
- unwelcome touching or brushing against another
- damaging, stealing, hiding or destroying another's property or possessions
- disrespect for, or invasion of, personal space and property e.g. going through personal belongings, eating food purchased by an individual for their own consumption, borrowing without permission, listening in to phone conversations, etc.

Relational

- hurting others by damaging or manipulating relationships e.g. spreading rumours that cause individuals to be rejected by others
- social exclusion by deliberately excluding another from a group of friends
- writing, sending or delivering harassing notes
- telling others not to associate with or like someone.

Involving Extortion

- pressuring and intimidating others to act against their will e.g. giving up possessions, money, buying food and drink for bribery purposes, doing work for others or committing minor offences for them.

“We need to allow each individual to feel nurtured and comfortable.”

Options for dealing with harassment and bullying

Melbourne Girls Grammar is committed to ensuring that all staff, students and members of the School community are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect. We therefore request that any person with a concern or complaint provides the School with an opportunity to resolve the matter. You are encouraged to take one of the following approaches:

- speak directly to the person(s) causing the offence and inform them that it is unwelcome and that it should cease
- talk to a friend or family member who is understanding, for support or advice
- inform a staff member (class teacher or specialist teacher) or parent so that the unacceptable behaviour can be addressed
- talk to the Classroom teacher, House Tutor, Year level Co-ordinator or Directors of Students*
- talk to Boarding House staff or the Health Officer
- talk to the Chaplain or School Counsellor. Students can seek counselling without parental consent
- staff can speak to the any of the above staff members or Deputy Principal and can also access the employee assistance program
- staff should also refer to the Grievance Policy and Procedures located on the Staff Portal.

* Please note: Parents should contact the relevant Directors (Senior, Middle, Junior or Boarding) or the Early Learning Centre. The Principal and parents may need to be involved.

“Respect and understanding must be provided in all our relationships: at home, with friends and in the classroom.”

What then?

These support people, listed above, will take into consideration the nature of the situation and may respond as follows:

- listen and understand
- help you to see if there is anything you can do yourself to help the situation
- speak with people concerned and advise the offender/s that this behaviour is unacceptable (they may feel this is necessary, or you may want them to do this)
- offer counselling and support to those involved
- involve parents, students or other members of staff where appropriate
- advise the offender of likely consequences should the harassment continue
- take disciplinary action where it is deemed appropriate.

The School will deal with complaints confidentially and with discretion. The person you talk to may be able to help you resolve the situation confidentially; however, if someone is at risk of serious harm they may have a duty of care to act on the information. Reports of harassment and bullying will be investigated and documented. The School must properly investigate any allegation of discrimination or harassment, as it has a legal obligation to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to prevent harassment and discrimination occurring in the School community.

“We can all work together to provide an environment in which we can all feel comfortable.”

Current at May 2009. This document is subject to regular review.

Contact Details

Principal Mrs Catherine Misson

Confidential Counsellor's email bullying@mggs.vic.edu.au

For contact details of School Counsellors, Year Level Co-ordinators and for staff email addresses, please inquire at Reception

Telephone Numbers

Senior School Campus 03 9862 9200

Junior School Campus 03 9862 9283

Early Learning Centre 03 9862 9240

Boarding House 03 9862 9235



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