

## Creating a Culture of Safety: Student Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Title	Creating a Culture of Safety: Student Anti-Bullying Policy
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Avila College recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of young people.

We know that students achieve their best at school in safe and supportive environments, where they are free from bullying and disruptive behaviour.

At Avila, we aim to provide a safe environment for our students – one that promotes tolerance and is inclusive, harmonious and free from bullying. We therefore fully commit to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We will develop and uphold a positive school culture and climate which:

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
- encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community
- adopts a school-wide approach, coupled with effective leadership
- is based on a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- explicitly addresses the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying
- implements education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in students
- effectively monitors students and consistently records, investigates and follows up bullying behaviour (inclusive of established intervention strategies)
- provides education for staff and on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
- engages in restorative practices to support understanding and meaningful outcomes for students

Bullying is a serious issue for all of us. It can happen anywhere, anytime, and can have devastating consequences. We also know that with the rise of social media, cyber bullying is an issue in the wider community. Where bullying was once confined to the schoolyard, it can now occur online at any time of the day or night. Cyber bullying is just as harmful as face-to-face bullying, and online actions can have real life consequences. The best way to tackle bullying and cyber-bullying is for schools, students and parents to work in partnership.

We work towards this goal through education in the classroom, early intervention and a focus on promoting positive behaviour.

Everyone within the school community has a responsibility to report bullying to staff whether observer/bystander or victim so that appropriate action can be taken.

## **Definitions**

### **What is Bullying?**

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) which is **repeated over time**.

**The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying, this is not an exhaustive list:**

- Verbal or written abuse - such as targeted name-calling or jokes, or displaying offensive posters
- Violence - including threats of violence
- Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
- Discrimination, including racial discrimination - treating people differently because of their identity
- Discrimination of those with disabilities or special educational needs
- Cyber bullying - either online or via mobile phone.
- Sexual harassment - unwelcome or unreciprocated conduct of a sexual nature, which could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation
- Homophobia and other hostile behaviour towards students relating to gender and sexuality

### **What is not bullying?**

There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying:

- Mutual conflict - which involves a disagreement, argument or fight, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- Single-episode acts of: nastiness, malice or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people
- Social rejection or dislike unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

The two main research-based methods used for intervening in school bullying are the **no blame approach** and the method of **shared concern**.

'The no blame approach can be quickly used with groups of students and enlists them in helping students who are the victims of bullies to be empowered and to have a happier time at school.'

'The method of shared concern involves individual meetings with each student involved in the bullying with follow up until the issue has been resolved. Both methods have been used successfully in Australia and overseas to intervene in bullying incidents.'

Avila College adopts both the **no blame approach** and the **method of shared concern**.

When it is suspected that bullying has taken place, the **no blame** and **method of shared concern** approach will be adopted.

Avila supports restorative practices, to allow students an opportunity to be heard, and a voice in repairing the relationship.

Sourced from: Advice Sheets: Dealing with Bullying | © 2013 | Department of Education and Training | Andrew Fuller - Clinical Psychologist  
Sourced from: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>.

## Documentation

All confirmed cases of bullying are documented in writing and registered on SIMON. Key staff involved in this process include: Homeroom Teacher, Year Level Co-ordinator, Director of Pastoral Care, Deputy Principal – Students, Principal and College Counsellors. Other staff may be notified as the need arises.

## Resources

Office of the eSafety Commissioner Australian Government

<https://esafety.gov.au/education-resources/iparent>

<https://esafety.gov.au/complaints-and-reporting/cyberbullying-complaints/social-media-services-safety-centres>

## Support Agencies

<https://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/>

<https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>

<https://www.youthbeyondblue.com/>

<https://www.eheadspace.org.au/>

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/>

Next Review Date	March 2019
Person Responsible	Deputy Principal Students / Principal