



Avila College

Creating a Culture of Safety

STUDENT ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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Rationale

Avila College's (the College) vision is to aim to inspire our girls today to become successful women tomorrow. We believe that students learn best when they are valued and respected.

As a Catholic College underpinned by the Presentation values of respect, honesty, support, forgiveness, trust and justice, we endeavour to "protect personal and school community safety, heal destructive behaviours, restore relationships, encourage reconciliation, enhance wellbeing, foster responsibility, enable personal growth, and promote the common good. (1)

The College recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of young people. As a faith community that has at its centre, the dignity of each person, we aim to provide a safe environment for our students, one that promotes tolerance and is inclusive, harmonious and free from bullying.

Guiding Principles

We therefore commit to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour by upholding a positive school culture which:

- promotes respectful relationships across the school community
- 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
- adopts a whole-school 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 Student 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 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

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 happens when a problem occurs?

Restorative Practice

The College adopts a Restorative Practice framework when dealing with behaviour management. Restorative practices require a shift in philosophy from traditional punitive models to those relational models which are based on the principles of restorative justice and place the healing of people and relationships at its core. Restorative Practice is useful for managing conflict and is effective for bringing about long term behavioural change for the individual while keeping schools and communities safe.

The College endorses restorative practices because we value good relationships. We want our students to have the opportunity to be heard, have a voice in repairing the relationship and develop greater social and emotional competencies.

Where student behaviour does not reflect the College values and beliefs, the following restorative process will be facilitated by a College staff member:

- students will engage in a dialogue about the issue
- students are encouraged to reflect on the behaviour/s with thoughtfulness and empathy
- students are supported to understand the impact of their actions
- students acknowledge that harm has been done
- student agrees to make a plan of restitution
- students engage with a follow up session to make sure the plan is working
- if the plan is not working and the problem still exists, the matter is referred to a senior staff member who will enact any of the following:
 - student is placed on Avila Reconnect
 - meeting with parents/carers
 - temporary withdrawal from the school program
 - discussion regarding the most suitable placement for the particular student

The College reserves the right to change these steps depending on the severity of the behaviour and the availability of staff.

Essentially a commitment to Restorative Practices has as its aim the promotion of resilience in the one harmed and the one causing harm. Restorative measures help students learn from their mistakes, grow in self-discipline, take responsibility for their actions, recognise the impact of their actions on others, and reconcile and resolve conflict with others (1)

A community grounded in a restorative philosophy requires the commitment of all members of the community. It is through the challenging of mindsets where true culture change begins. We seek the support of parents/carers with this process and aim to work in partnership so that together we can achieve the best possible outcomes for our Avila students.

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 Coordinator, Director of Student Wellbeing, Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing, Principal and College Counsellors. Other staff may be notified as the need arises.

(3)

Resources

Office of the eSafety Commissioner Australian Government

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

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/report>

Support Agencies

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

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

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

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

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

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date Issued	(Minor, Major Change)
March 2018	March 2018	
June 2018	June 2018	Minor
July 2020	August 2020	Major

Document approved by Principal and ratified by the Avila College Advisory Board	
Next Review Date	July 2021
Person Responsible	Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing Principal
Related Documents	Avila Reconnect: internal guidelines document
References	(1) Policy 2.26 - Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools (CEM) (2) Procedures for Student Behaviour Management (CEM) (3) Sourced from: <i>Advice Sheets: Dealing with Bullying</i> © 2013 Department of Education and Training Andrew Fuller – Clinical Psychologist Sourced from: http://education.vic.gov.au