

Blackwood High School - Harassment & Bullying Policy & Procedures

Version November 2016.

INTRODUCTION & RATIONALE

At Blackwood High School we believe that everyone has the right to feel safe and comfortable at all times. One of the ways in which we ensure that the school is a safe, orderly, productive and successful learning community is by dealing with harassment and bullying quickly, consistently and fairly, working with the victim and perpetrator.

Staff work with the young person of concern to ensure they have the skills and abilities of resilience. Staff work with the perpetrator to ensure they understand the impact of their behaviour on others and to develop more socially appropriate ways to interact with others.

Sometimes we are hassled by others for no obvious reason. Sometimes we do not realise that our behaviour is inappropriate and hurtful to other people and therefore needs modifying. Bullying and harassment can take a number of forms including direct and indirect forms including the use of social networking and text messages.

The Blackwood High School Harassment and Bullying Policy is based on the belief that students & staff have the right to attend school feeling safe and to be treated fairly and with respect. For the school to achieve its purposes, it is vital that all individuals have the opportunity to work towards achieving their goals and be able to interact with others in an environment free from all forms of harassment. The policy stresses the responsibility of individuals for their own actions and reinforces the rights of all members of the school community.

The Blackwood High School Pastoral Care Program discusses forms of Harassment and Bullying, its impact on others, appropriate ways of building interacting with others, building positive working relationships and behaviour expectations in the Culture of Respect (COR).

Supporting information about the Blackwood High School Harassment and Bullying Policy in the Culture of Respect can be found in the student diary and the Blackwood High School Harassment & Bullying information Brochure for Families 2015.

DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT

Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; marital, parenting or economic status; age; ability or disability and that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment.

Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour, or it may be a single act. It may be directed randomly or towards the same person(s). It may be intentional or unintentional, i.e. words or actions that offend and distress one person may be genuinely regarded by the person doing them as minor or harmless.

Harassment is unacceptable and needs to be addressed as part of creating a safe school but it would not be considered bullying if any one or more of the following three features were present:

- it occurred only once and was not part of a repeated pattern
- it (genuinely) was not intended to offend, demean, annoy, alarm or abuse
- it was not directed towards the same person(s) each time.

DEFINITION OF Bullying

Bullying is a pattern of repeated physical, verbal, psychological or social aggression that is directed towards a specific student by someone with more power and is intended to cause harm, distress and/or create fear.

Bullying may be carried out overtly (e.g. face-to-face) or covertly (e.g. through repeated social exclusion or via technology). It is a sub-category of aggression and is different to, but also related to, harassment and violence. It is not the same as conflict or social dislike even though, in some cases, the outcome of both can be bullying.

The different types of bullying

- Face-to-face bullying (sometimes referred to as direct bullying) involves physical actions such as punching or kicking or overt verbal actions such as name-calling and insulting.
 - Covert bullying (sometimes referred to as indirect bullying) is a subtle type of non-physical bullying which isn't easily seen by others and is conducted out of sight, and often unacknowledged by adults.
 - Cyber bullying occurs through the use of information or communication technologies such as Instant Messaging, text messages, email and social networking sites. It has many similarities with offline bullying but it differs in that the student(s) who is/are bullying can be anonymous, it can reach a wide audience and the sent or uploaded material can be difficult to remove.
- It is now recognised that many forms of covert bullying appear to have significant potential for serious harm.

Bullying and harassment:

- may involve hitting, kicking, pinching (physical); name-calling, teasing, threats (verbal); notes, graffiti, text messages, sending filmed or photographed images, comments on social networking sites (visual/written); stand-over tactics, gestures (psychological); rumours, putdowns (social exclusion); physical, verbal or nonverbal sexual conduct (sexual).
- may be done directly (e.g. face to face) or indirectly (e.g. via the internet or mobile phones)
- involves the misuse of power and may be motivated by jealousy, distrust, fear, misunderstanding or lack of knowledge
- has an element of threat
- can continue over time
- is often hidden from adults
- will be sustained if adults or peers do not take action.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The S.A. Education Act requires that Principals and teachers are actively concerned with the welfare and development of children in their care. It is important, therefore, that all individuals within the system are aware of their own behaviour as well as their responsibilities regarding harassment and bullying within DECD and the school environment.

A commitment on the part of all in the education system is required to ensure that students are provided with a safe, ordered and supportive school that promotes self esteem and self respect and is free from harassment and bullying based on gender, sexual preference, socio-economic circumstances, race, culture, disability and personal appearance. This responsibility permeates all policies, principles and practices at Blackwood High School.

Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- ensuring that the school is a harassment and bullying free worksite.
- providing opportunities for the school community to be informed and skilled as to the nature of all forms of harassment and bullying.

This responsibility requires the establishment of grievance procedures, practices and an appropriate anti harassment program for the school. Specific details are outlined in the Department Policy Statements on Anti Racism and Sexual Harassment, and Students with Disabilities.

Teachers

Every member of staff has the professional responsibility to:

- uphold the principles of the Blackwood High School Harassment and Bullying Policy
- understand the legislative framework
- actively pursue the achievement of a safe and supportive working and learning environment for all students and staff
- recognise they have a moral and ethical obligation to colleagues and students to provide them with a positive role model as regards appropriate behaviour
- create and maintain a classroom environment free of harassment and bullying
- be actively involved in policy formation and subsequent training and development programs to ensure that curriculum content and teaching methods are congruent with and supportive of the anti-harassment and bullying policies and procedures
- monitor the learning environment in terms of activities and behaviours, intervene to prevent harassment and bullying from occurring and counteract its effects on occasions when preventive measures are ineffective
- seek assistance from other staff in dealing with harassment and bullying issues when appropriate.

Contact People

All staff are expected to be contact people for students. Students are encouraged to use the Progressive Intervention Procedure as published in the Student Diary each year. Contact people are able to help students move through the Progressive Intervention Procedure – a procedure for dealing with Harassment and Bullying.

Progressive Intervention – A procedure for dealing with Harassment and Bullying.

Introduction

In dealing with any form of harassment and bullying staff should be aware that there are specific guidelines laid down by DECD about harassment in accordance with Equal Opportunity and Human Rights legislation, and that Blackwood High School's policy is developed within these frameworks. While the policy deals with physical harassment and bullying, physical assault is dealt with directly through the Behaviour Management Policy.

Guiding Principles

When a person has been harassed or bullied the following principles should guide any responses:

- the interests of the person harassed or bullied should be paramount
- confidentiality of people, information and involvement.
- support, if required, should be sought.
- in the cases of sexual or racial harassment, ensure actions taken are in line with the DECD instructions and Guidelines

Initial Action

Initially, a student who has been harassed or bullied should endeavour to make it clear to the harasser that he/she doesn't like the behaviour and wants it to stop. If the harassment and /or bullying continues the student then should:

- discuss the situation informally with another person
- make a formal notification
- seek support from one or more of the following: trusted adult members of the school community - teachers, counsellors, contact people, Senior Leaders/Deputy Principal/Principal, other students - friends, Peer Support Leaders, S.R.C. members.

No matter who deals with the situation, the intention should only be to support the person being harassed/bullied. This would include emotional support as well as a discussion about strategies to cope with the problem. It is most important that he/she feels comfortable and secure in the knowledge that no one else will be told about the problem unless he/she allows it. Students who are asked for help by a harassed person should be encouraged to talk with a Counsellor or contact person about how he/she can best help. This may be done without any mention of names.

At this time although, no action may be taken, a confidential record of the incident will be recorded.

If someone asks for help without making a formal notification and the counselling person suspects repeated offences (either with this person or with others) he/she should check with the appropriate Year Level Leader but without involving the harassed person in any way. If the harasser has been reported at least twice before then action needs to be taken.

The first and most important step will be to inform the harassed person at a later meeting that the harasser has a record of repeated harassment. At that time it is reasonable to suggest that a formal complaint should be made but absolutely no pressure should be placed on the victim. If a notification is made, it should be dealt with as outlined above. Otherwise a Counsellor should speak to the harasser about the general concept and policy about harassment, and he/she should be provided with a copy of the school brochure on harassment and bullying. It is critical that there are no accusations or suggestions about who has been harassed. No further action should be taken at that time except to report to the Year Level Leader that the harasser has been counselled.

If the harassed person requests, or agrees, that intervention needs to take place, then a formal notification needs to be made. It is recommended that the notification should be made firstly to the school; following this the complaint may be presented to SAPOL, DECD, the Regional Director or to the Equal Opportunities Commissioner.

Any formal notification at the school could be made to a contact person (Teacher), Student Counsellor, Year Level Leader or Assistant Principal/Deputy Principal/Principal

Where the incident reported is one of physical assault it should be referred to Assistant Principal/Deputy Principal/Principal.

Levels of Intervention

Where a formal notification has been made, action must be taken. Such action must include:

- Documentation **on the Harassment Notification Form (see below) and in EDSAS (anecdotal comments)**. The code HI – Harassment Intervention will be used. Details of the intervention will be recorded in the comments section. Further **support** and/or counselling for the harassed student and harasser (victim and perpetrator)
- A **restorative conversation** is offered and conducted (if agreed to) with all parties and a **Restorative Agreement** written up
- **Notification** to all students' parents about the incident as well as any action to be taken.
- A **check** on the effectiveness of any action taken within the next 2 weeks.

Wherever possible, the focus of intervention against a harasser should be educative rather than punitive. Before any action is taken, the situation should be discussed with the appropriate Assistant Principal / Deputy Principal and/or a Counsellor who will ensure that the Restorative Agreement is made and all possible care is taken to protect the safety and well being of the harassed person from both the harasser as well as his/her friends.

Any action taken, including information and warning sessions, must be **documented on the EDSAS anecdotal comments and behaviour management records** as appropriate. The code HI – Harassment Intervention will be used. Details of the intervention will be recorded in the comments section. Copies of documentation of action taken must be sent to:

- The relevant Year Level Leader
- The appropriate Assistant Principal / Deputy Principal
- The student's file

Where this is the **first formal notification** against a student, a formal warning and an explanation of harassment and bullying and its effects must be given. Other action could include one or more of the following:

- Separate meetings with the parties to confirm the details.
- Meeting with both parties to resolve the situation.
- Counseling of the harasser/bully. Appropriate behaviour consequences applied.
- Contact / meeting with the parents of students involved.

Where there are **further formal notifications** about a harasser/bully, or the incident is serious enough that it threatens the safety or wellbeing of another person, it is likely that other formal disciplining of the harasser/bully in line with the 'Culture of Respect' - Behaviour Management Policy will occur. Information about harassment and bullying is available in the Student Diary and all students are expected to have read and signed the relevant sections from BHS's 'Culture of Respect' and Harassment and Bullying during the first week of the year. Before any disciplinary action can be taken against the harasser/bully, he/she should have received a formal verbal warning. Suspension may be considered if there is any further harassment. This may involve a meeting with parents. It is acceptable to take the complaint to DECD or the E.O. Commission.

Data collection as required by the Cossi review

Data will be extracted from EDSAS anecdotal comments by running the following report:

Reports : Students Reports : Personal Reports : General : Student Anecdotal Comments – Count of Occurrence by Year Level

Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Blackwood High School staff and Governing Council every year. The next review will be in 2017

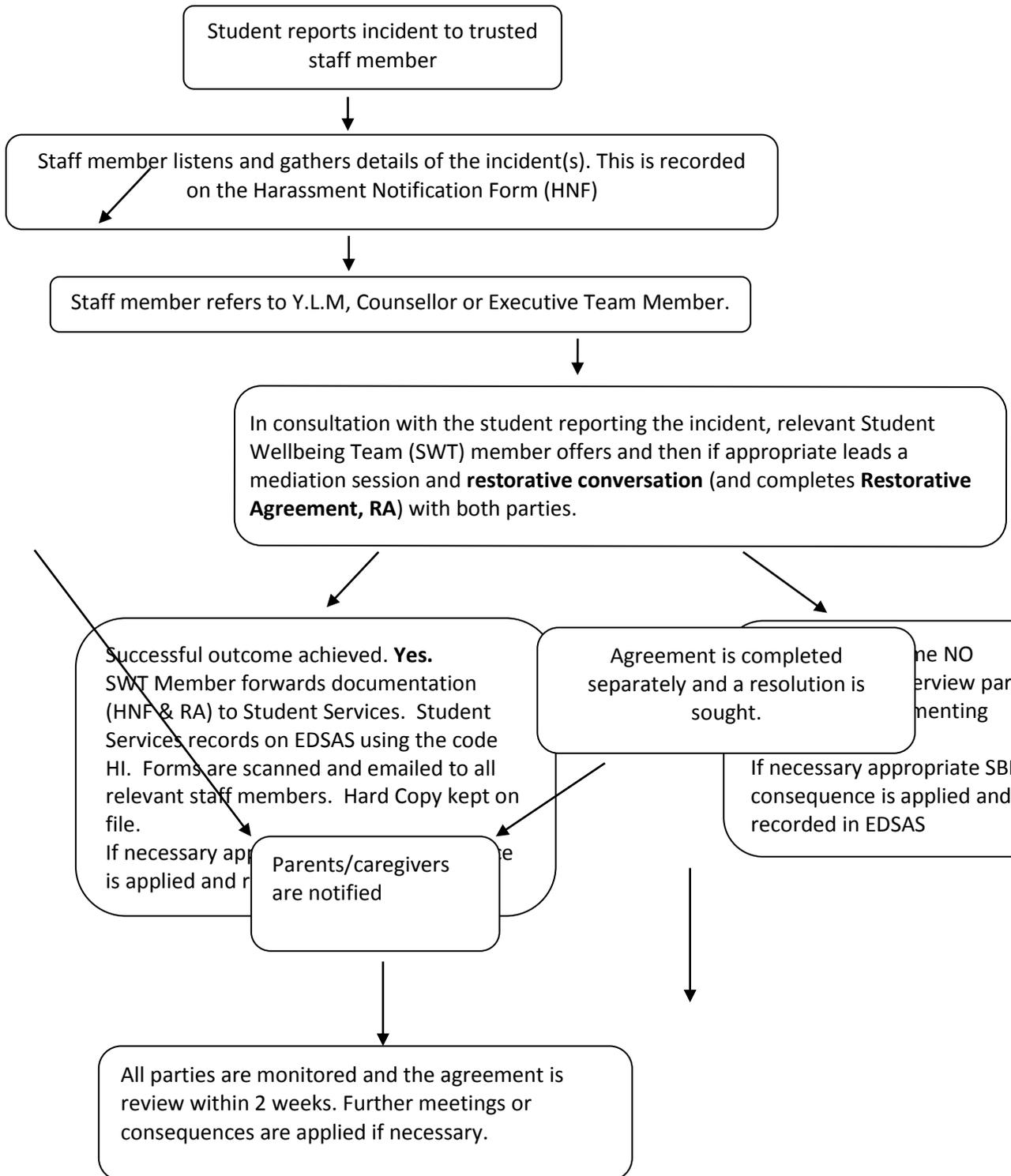
Policy to be reviewed and confirmed by Governing Council Term 4 2017

Progressive Intervention – Information for students

A procedure for dealing with Harassment and Bullying (from the student diary)

<p>Step 1</p>	<p>Think about what has happened. Did you have any part in it? Can a change in your behaviour stop it? Does it affect you? Do you need to take action?</p>
<p>Step 2</p>	<p>Do nothing. Ignore it. Show it doesn't bother you. Don't gossip about it with others. Make a change in your behaviour <i>As a result the harassment or bullying stops.</i> <i>If not, go to the next step.</i></p>
<p>Step 3</p>	<p>Tell the person who is harassing you to stop and that the behaviour is unwanted. You could do this alone or with a friend. You can also use an adult for support such as a parent. <i>As a result the harassment or bullying stops.</i> <i>If not, go to the next step.</i></p>
<p>Step 4</p>	<p>Talk it over with an adult whom you trust. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Counsellor. • Care Group teacher or another teacher. • Parents. <p>What will happen if I go to the counsellor?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Counsellor will listen to you sympathetically, and keep what you say private, unless you request they share it with others to help • together, you will work out the best way to handle the situation. <p>If you decide not to go any further, this is all right. No action will be taken without your permission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a formal complaint will be acted on. <p>Be honest and clear. Make a plan which you can carry out to stop the situation. <i>As a result the harassment or bullying stops.</i> <i>If not, go to the next step.</i></p>
<p>Step 5</p>	<p>See your Year Level Manager the Assistant Principal or Deputy Principal. Your parent/caregiver may also contact the school to ask for help. You may bring a friend or with you. The Year Level Manager, Assistant Principal or Deputy Principal will work with you on a plan to make the harassment or bullying stop. A formal notification will be acted on. <i>As a result the, harassment or bullying stops.</i> <i>If not, go to the next step.</i></p>
<p>Step 6</p>	<p>Go to the Principal or ask your parent/caregiver to contact the Principal. You may bring a friend or your parent/caregiver with you.</p>

Acting on reports of Bullying and Harassment



Action Taken:

- counselling
- consequences of repeated behaviour outlined
- student has reaffirmed they know the policy
- policy has been explained and documentation of it given if unknown to student
- other appropriate behaviour / strategies explained or modelled to student
- referred to Year Level Leader / Executive Team Member / Principal for disciplinary action
- interview with parents / caregivers
- parent / caregiver contacted

Other

.....

.....

.....

Follow up required (if any)

.....

.....

.....

Extra Space if needed for statement.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Year Level Leader / Executive Team Member

- parent / caregiver contacted
- recess / lunch detention
- after school detention
- lesson withdrawal
- internal suspension
- external suspension
- Anecdotal comment in EDSAS
- other

.....

.....

.....

.....

Please forward to student services for Scanning and emailing to all relevant parties, original to be filed.

BLACKWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

RESTORATIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN:

DATE:

What happened?

We agree that.....

How will we monitor this agreement?

If this agreement is broken.....

Signed:

(Please forward to Student services for scanning and emailing to all relevant parties – original to be filed)