

# PREVENTION OF BULLYING POLICY - STUDENTS



METHODIST  
LADIES'  
COLLEGE

## POLICY STATEMENT

At Methodist Ladies' College we foster a school culture which is characterised by respect, care and concern for others and is consistent with our MLC Values which are embedded in the curriculum.

We are committed to maintaining an environment in which all members can feel valued and safe and where inclusive behaviours are fostered. Bullying behaviour between students occurs in varying ways in all schools. The College does not tolerate bullying or harassment.

Learning to make appropriate and responsible choices about behaviour occurs in classrooms and tutorial groups and through students' relationships with others.

The establishment and maintenance of a safe and supportive working and learning environment is the shared responsibility of all staff members, students and parents.

## AIM

1. To ensure that it is a shared responsibility for preventing and managing of bullying.
2. To outline the process that will be following in the event of an allegation of bullying of a student by a **student, parent or teacher**.
3. To define behaviours that are consistent with bullying.

## DEFINITIONS

### **Bullying can be identified as:**

- repetitive behaviour - prolonged over time;
- the involves of an imbalance of power; and
- it may be verbal, physical, emotional or psychological.

Bullying takes many forms, but can be best categorised under the following headings.

### **Emotional bullying includes:**

- being excluded from group conversations and activities;
- making up or spreading rumours to facilitate dislike for someone;
- being ignored repeatedly;
- purposeful misleading or being lied to;
- making stories up to get others into trouble.

### **Physical bullying can be:**

- hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing, bumping, shoving, scratching, slapping, biting, punching or tripping someone repeatedly;
- unwanted physical or sexual touching;
- throwing objects with the intent to injure or annoy.

**Threatening/Psychological bullying includes:**

- stalking, threats or implied threats;
- dirty looks;
- manipulation - pressuring others to do things they don't want to do;
- intimidation - forcing students to do demeaning or embarrassing acts;
- extortion - forcing someone to give you money or material items.

**Verbal bullying could be:**

- constant teasing in a sarcastic and offensive manner;
- name-calling and offensive nicknames;
- swearing to unsettle or upset others;
- homophobic comments to cause distress;
- racist or sexist comments.

**Property abuse can be:**

- stealing money repeatedly;
- interfering with someone's belongings;
- damaging other personal items;
- repeatedly hiding someone's possessions.

**Cyber bullying includes:**

- spreading gossip and rumours through email, phone, social media and internet;
- sending offensive text/phone and email messages;
- abusive phone calls;
- posting personal information on internet sites without permission to cause distress and humiliate.

**Upstander behaviour is:**

- being clear about who you are and what you believe in;
- listening to and learning from others;
- considering what's best for others in deciding your actions;
- knowing that there are students who are isolated, marginalised and bullied - and trying to help them;
- having some responsibility to support and protect your peers;
- supporting those around you who are being bullied or victimized; and
- telling a friend, teacher or parent when you see someone being bullied.

An upstander is someone who recognises when something is wrong and acts to make it right. When an upstander sees or hears about someone being bullied, they speak up. Being an upstander demonstrates courage and should be seen as getting someone out of trouble rather than getting someone into trouble. It is standing up for what is right and doing your best to help support and protect someone who is being hurt. In many ways, this is another word for being socially responsible.

**Note:** Bullying does not include the following:

Other forms of conflict, including teasing and fighting amongst peers are not necessarily bullying. These may represent the normal dynamics of a particular friendship and children

need to have the skills to deal with these situations. Conflict between students of roughly equal physical strength and/or social status may require implementation of the school's behavioural policy.

## POLICY

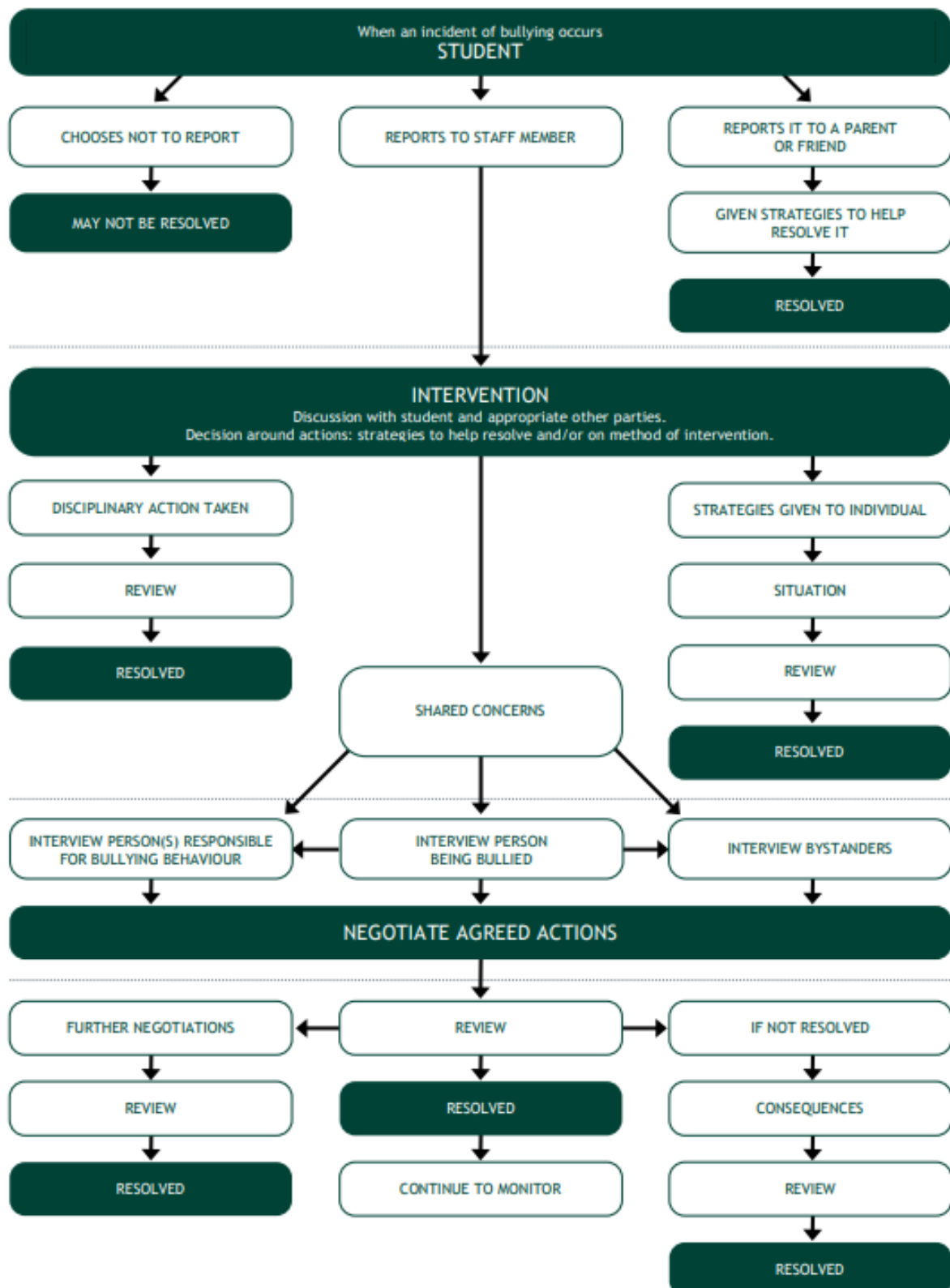
1. Students, teachers and parents are responsible for the displaying the actions and behaviours outlined below:
  - 1.1 To treat others and oneself with respect.
  - 1.2 To respect individual differences.
  - 1.3 To allow others to learn.
  - 1.4 To encourage cooperation and inclusive behaviours.
  - 1.5 To listen and consider others' opinions.
2. Students, teachers and parents have the rights outlined below:
  - 2.1 To be treated with respect.
  - 2.2 To be treated without discrimination.
  - 2.3 To learn and explore ideas.
  - 2.4 To be safe.
  - 2.5 To voice one's opinions appropriately.
3. Students, teachers and parents have a responsibility to report what they perceive as bullying behaviour, as outlined in the *Reporting of Bullying Incidents Process* (Appendix 1). Refer to Appendix 2 for *Indicators that a Child may be Bullied*.
  - 3.1 Students are encouraged to report to their Mentor, a Clinical Psychologist, Head of Year.
  - 3.2 Parents are encouraged to report to the Head of Year.
  - 3.3 Teachers are required to report to their line manager or to a Deputy Principal if the line manager is the person being reported.
4. MLC values and encourages upstander behaviour. When peers step in positively, bullying is stopped earlier and a more positive school environment is perceived. As a result, students feel safer at school and relationships are repaired more quickly. These factors can contribute to a decrease in social and mental health problems.
  - 4.1 Those impacted by bullying are encouraged to consider the appropriateness of taking action, as suggested in Appendix 3.
  - 4.2 MLC acknowledges that friendships cannot be forced to form or mend; but interactions with others must always be respectful.
5. The welfare of people involved with or impacted by reports of bullying is important. Students have access to their Mentor, a Clinical Psychologist or their Head of Year for support and staff have access to the employee assistance programme.
6. MLC assesses the report to ensure that the situation manifests the behaviours that define bullying, see Definitions within this document.
7. When the reported behaviour is deemed to be bullying, MLC will carefully assess and appropriately respond to each case on an individual basis.



- 7.1 MLC's goal is to help individuals to develop more positive and appropriate ways of interacting with others.
- 7.2 A shared concerns method can be a valuable means of reaching a solution.
- 7.3 Responses to bullying will, in most instances, focus on modifying the subject behaviour/s, rather than administering punishment.
- 7.4 Where bullying behaviour persists, more serious consequences, ranging from formal reprimands to expulsion, may be implemented.



## APPENDIX 1 - REPORTING OF BULLYING INCIDENTS PROCESS



## APPENDIX 2 - INDICATORS THAT A CHILD MAY BE BULLIED

### Emotional

- Mood swings, sleep disturbance, eating disorders, depression

### Physical

- Psychosomatic complaints, headaches, stomach aches, negative body language, tics

### Social

- Social withdrawal, increased sibling rivalry

### Behavioural

- Outbursts of temper, problematic behaviour

### School/academic

- Erratic/decline in school attendance, truancy, decline in work standards.

While all of the above are signs of possible bullying, they may also be signs that something else is happening with the child. Referral to the appropriate school personnel to determine the cause of the issues is recommended.

## APPENDIX 3 - A LIST OF ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

### What Students can do if they are being Bullied

- a) Be assertive as you have the right to be treated with respect, but avoid responding with physical and/or verbal aggression.
- b) Avoid reacting or showing that the other person's behaviour is upsetting you.
- c) Use humour and laugh it off to diffuse the situation.
- d) Talk to your parents; they need to be aware of how you are feeling.
- e) Talk to school staff; your tutor, teacher, a Clinical Psychologist or any staff member with whom you feel comfortable to begin the process of resolution.
- f) Establish a support network of friends you will be comfortable with.

### What Students can do if they are aware Bullying is taking place

- a) Be an 'upstander'! If you see bullying taking place you should report it. It is important for all members of the community to stand up for what they believe is right.
- b) If a friend is bullying, tell her it is not acceptable. If you find this difficult, seek help.
- c) Remember, by doing nothing you may become part of the problem and by association, also be seen as engaging in bullying behaviour.

### What Parents can do

- a) Listen sympathetically and without blame to what your daughter has to say. Tell your daughter she is understood and believed.
- b) Recognise that disagreement between people is a normal part of everyday interaction in a community and that learning how to manage disagreements constructively will promote resilience and build self-esteem.
- c) Encourage your daughter to address the situation in a confident and assertive manner.
- d) Involve your daughter in making decisions about what to do.
- e) Model appropriate behaviours yourself.
- f) If your daughter is being bullied, please alert the College so we can work together to support the students involved. Bullying thrives on secrecy and it is important for those being bullied and those witnessing that behaviour to come forward and be prepared to speak out.
- g) Be patient. Behaviour changes do not occur overnight.