



Author:	Name
Developed:	Date
Last Reviewed:	Date
Next Review:	On-going
Authorised by:	Geoff Newton

## POLICY STATEMENT HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

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At Hillbrook everyone has:

1. **The right to be happy at school and the responsibility to help others to be happy.**  
We should treat each other with kindness, good manners and consideration.
2. **The right to be treated fairly by fellow students and teachers, and the responsibility to treat them in the same way.**  
We should treat each other with respect, regardless of age, culture, sexuality or faith, or whether we are male or female.
3. **The right to a safe environment, and the responsibility to do all we can to make it so.**  
No one should physically threaten another, throw things, hit, bully, abuse, or cause harm. The advice of teachers in matters of safety must be accepted without question.
4. **The right to be respected and accepted, and the responsibility to respect and accept others.**  
No one should criticise, laugh at or exclude others for the way they look, walk, talk or act.
5. **The right to form our own friendships, and the responsibility to promote friendship with others.**
6. **The right to our name, and the responsibility to address each other in a way that does not offend.**

*(Hillbrook Declaration of Rights & Responsibilities, Items 4 to 9)*

As with all behaviour at Hillbrook, our guide is the Declaration of Rights & Responsibilities and the Rules of the Road.

### How Do I Know If I am Harassing or Bullying Someone?

If you are unsure, you can:

- Check Items 4 to 9 of the Hillbrook Declaration of Rights & Responsibilities.
- Check Item (v) of the Rules of the Road.
- Watch the effect of your actions and words on other people and consider whether they are really comfortable with your behaviour or just trying to cover their embarrassment.
- Check your behaviour and language by asking if it is offensive or inappropriate.
- Stop behaving in that way.
- Apologise if you are in doubt.
- Always treat other people as equals rather than as inferior due to sexual or other differences.
- Discuss your behaviour with someone who has an understanding of the issues.



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## 1.0 What is Harassment?

Harassment is any unwelcome attention that is offensive, humiliating, intimidating or physically hurtful.

Harassment can be:

- physically hurting someone.
- threatening behaviour.
- causing people to be excluded from groups.
- teasing, calling names or making rude signs.
- telling smutty jokes or making suggestive comments that offend others.
- displaying offensive pictures, posters or graffiti.
- staring or ogling.
- following someone home from school.
- patting, pinching or touching another person.
- pestering someone to go out or making other unwanted approaches.
- sending offensive messages in writing, by telephone or computer.
- ridiculing, leering or wolf-whistling at, or making unwanted sexual comments about a person or group of people.
- spreading rumours about someone's sex life or other activities.
- making belittling or ridiculing comments.

If someone's behaviour makes you feel:

- offended or humiliated,
- intimidated or frightened,
- uncomfortable in the class or playground,

then you have the right to object or make a complaint.

Harassment is not:

- paying genuine compliments.
- behaving with common courtesy.
- showing friendship.
- sharing humour.

Harassment can occur:

- between students.
- between staff and students - harassment of a student by a staff member or of a staff member by a student.
- between staff members.

Anyone can be harassed, female or male. Harassment can also be related to a person's negative feelings about members of minority groups, for example, people from other cultural groups and people with disabilities or illnesses, or people who are different.



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### Harassment can:

- cause distress.
- lower self-esteem.
- reduce self-confidence.
- affect study performance.
- lead to academic results that do not reflect ability or effort.
- cause absenteeism.
- result in withdrawal from school or from particular courses and hence reduced career prospects.
- discourage participation in school activities.

## 2.0 Some Common Myths

MYTH: *But it's all good fun.*

FACT: If everybody is enjoying it, then it is good fun. Harassment is not fun for the victim.

MYTH: *They ask for it*

FACT: There is no excuse for harassment. We are all responsible for our behaviour and cannot blame others for our offensive or unlawful actions.

MYTH: *Nice people don't get harassed*

FACT: Women and girls, men and boys of all types get harassed - young and old, married or single, of all body types and from all backgrounds (including all cultures and races).

MYTH: *Those who complain are wimps or prudes*

FACT: All students have the right to a safe educational environment free from harassment. To complain of bullying or harassing behaviour is not prudish - it is simply a matter of protecting your basic human rights.

MYTH: *I don't mind it - I wish someone would sexually harass me*

FACT: What you want is attention and respect, not harassment.

Harassment and bullying are unwanted actions. They are unacceptable, and against the law.

## 3.0 What to do if you are being harassed or bullied?

If you believe that you are being bullied or harassed, your options are to:

- Tell the person who is doing it you that you don't like it and that you want it to stop.
- Be absolutely clear in your response. Don't smile or give 'mixed messages'.



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- Talk it over with your parents.
- Speak with the School Counsellor.
- Talk with a member of the Hillbrook Student Management Team.
- Discuss what you should do with an adult at school you know you can trust.
- Talk to a teacher you feel comfortable with.
- Report it to a member of the school leadership team.
- Make a complaint to the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Commission.

## Action following a formal complaint

This action could be taken on your behalf:

- Arranging for support for you as the complainant.
- Arranging separate meetings with you and the harasser to hear both versions.
- Arranging a meeting with you and the harasser together to resolve the situation, if you desire it.
- Counselling the harasser.
- Disciplining the harasser.

## On Work Experience

Bullying and sexual harassment are unlawful. This principle applies equally to a student on work experience.

If you feel you are being bullied or harassed while on work experience, you can report it to the manager at your work experience site, the principal, your school's work experience co-ordinator, or a teacher. If you wish to make a formal complaint, however, you must lodge it through the manager at your work experience site or the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Commission.

The person you discuss it with can help you get in touch with the Anti-Discrimination Commission to discuss the matter and to lodge a formal complaint, if that is what you want to do. The decision on whether or not to lodge a formal complaint is left to you and your parent or legal guardian.

Whatever you choose to do, the school will take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the harassment stops or remove you and other students from any situation where it may occur.

Our thanks to the South Australian Education Department, whose brochure *Sexual Harassment: Your Rights and Responsibilities* informed this document.

## 4.0 Conclusion

Above all, remember you have a right to feel safe. If you believe you're being bullied or harassed, take action by following the advice in this document. If you feel that a concern you have raised has not been addressed satisfactorily, it is important for you to know that your view needs to be shared with a member of staff or with a member of the SLT.