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## HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

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

At Hillbrook everyone has:

**1. The right and responsibility to learn.**

Everyone has the right and responsibility to learn and help others to do the same.

**2. The right and responsibility to seek to understand ourselves, others and the world around us.**

We should encourage thinking and questioning in ways that are critical, compassionate and creative.

**3. The right to be heard, and the responsibility to listen.**

We have the responsibility to give our full attention by listening, and respectfully responding to the concerns, feelings and experiences of others.

**4. The right to belong and the responsibility to help others to experience the same.**

We should treat each other with kindness, good manners and consideration, and help others to be safe, and feel supported and valued.

**5. The right to be treated with respect, fairness and dignity, including the right to our name, and the responsibility to treat others in the same way.**

We should take responsibility for our actions, the language we use, and to treat each other with respect, fairness and dignity regardless of ability, gender, race, age, culture, sexuality or faith.

**6. The right to be accepted, and the responsibility to accept others.**

We give others the freedom to express themselves without fear of being judged. We believe that others have good intentions and act with integrity.

### What do these terms mean?

**Bullying** refers to an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that is intended to cause physical or psychological harm.

**Harassment** is any unwanted or unwelcome behaviour, which makes a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated.

## **How do I know if I am Harassing or Bullying someone?**

### **If you are unsure, you can:**

- Read the Hillbrook Declaration of Rights & Responsibilities.
- Check 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.
- Discuss your behaviour with someone who has an understanding of the issues.

### **Both of these behaviours 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 around at school.
- patting, pinching or touching another person.
- pestering someone to go out or making other unwanted approaches.
- sending offensive messages in writing, by mobile phone or computer.
- ridiculing, leering or wolf-whistling at, or making unwanted sexual comments about a person or group of people.
- spreading rumours about someone.
- 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 and/or Bullying is not:**

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

### **Harassment and/or Bullying can occur:**

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

Anyone can be harassed or bullied. 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.

### **Harassment and/or Bullying 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, but unacceptable excuses, used to defend these behaviours**

EXCUSE: *It's just a joke.*

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

EXCUSE: *They asked for it.*

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

EXCUSE: *'Snitches get stitches'*

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

EXCUSE: *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 – be it verbal, physical or sex-based – by anyone in the School community, your options are to:

- Don't retaliate.
- 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'.
- Talk it over with your parents.
- Speak with the School Counsellor.
- Talk with a Year Coordinator/or Home Teacher.
- 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.
- Discuss it with a Student Protection Officer at school if it is a serious issue involving potential harm.
- If the actions/behaviours occur online, on social media or a text message, take a screenshot, report it to an adult (parent or teacher) and BLOCK that person from all social media apps and devices.

### 4.0 Actions following a formal complaint

#### **These actions could be taken on your behalf:**

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

#### **First Occasion of Harassment/Bullying by Student**

1. The behaviour will be clearly identified with the student identified as the harasser/bully to ensure that the student has a clear understanding of the issue. The student will be given the opportunity to respond. If it is clear that harassment/bullying has occurred, then it is expected that the student will make a commitment to change to appropriate behaviour.
2. The rights and responsibilities of Hillbrook students will be discussed. The student will be asked to identify which rights and responsibilities relate to the incident.
3. The legal implications of harassment/bullying will be stated.
4. Mediation between the students concerned, under the supervision of the Year Coordinator, may be conducted depending on the situation.

5. The student will be required to inform his/her parents and this will be confirmed by the parents in writing or by phone.
6. The consequences for a further infringement will be clearly stated.

### **Second Occasion of Harassment/Bullying**

1. The behaviour will be clearly identified with the student to ensure that the student has a clear understanding of the issue. The student will be given the opportunity to respond. If it is clear that harassment/bullying has occurred, then it is expected that the student will make a commitment to change to appropriate behaviour.
2. The rights and responsibilities of Hillbrook students will again be discussed. The student will be asked to identify which rights and responsibilities relate to the incident.
3. The legal implications of harassment/bullying will be stated.
4. Parents of the student will be contacted.
5. The student will be withdrawn either internally or externally from school activities for up to one week. During this period the student will draw up a contract detailing how the student proposes to change their behaviour. If requested/recommended, counselling will be made available.
6. The student will re-negotiate their way back into school with the Year Coordinator and/or the School Leadership Team by means of an interview and discussion of the contract.
7. The consequences for a further infringement will be clearly stated.

### **Third Occasion of Harassment/Bullying**

1. The behaviour will be identified in detail with the student to ensure that the student has a clear understanding of the issue. The student will be given the opportunity to respond. If it is clear that harassment/bullying has occurred, then:
  - The rights and responsibilities of Hillbrook students will be discussed. The student will be asked to identify which rights and responsibilities relate to the incident.
  - The legal implications of harassment/bullying will be stated.
  - Parents of the student will be contacted.
  - The student will be withdrawn from school. It would be difficult to see how the student could continue at Hillbrook without undertaking a program of counselling outside the school.

Note: If the initial infringement is severe it may be appropriate to by-pass step one or two and go directly to the procedure for the second or third occasion.

Underlying these procedures is a humane, proactive educative approach.

## **Community Action Program (CAP)**

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

If you feel you are being bullied or harassed while on CAP, you can report it to the manager at your CAP site, the Principal, the School's CAP coordinator, 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.

## **5.0 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.