


**Mountain District Community College**
**Policy & Procedure Document**

Policy number	4.6	Version	1.0
Drafted by	J. Claringbold	Approved by Board on	11/05/2021
Responsible person	Principal	Scheduled review date	11/05/2024
Policy Area	Student Welfare		

**Title: Anti-Bullying and Harassment**

**Purpose:** To ensure that as far as practicable Mountain District Community College is free of bullying or harassment.

**Policy:** Mountain District Community College (MDCC) does not tolerate bullying or harassment.

MDCC is committed to providing all students, volunteers, teachers and staff with a healthy and safe environment free from bullying, harassment and intimidation.

All students, staff, volunteers and families will be:

- made aware of the stance taken on bullying and harassment behaviours,
- provided with opportunities to understand bullying and harassment behaviours,
- provided with strategies to address bullying and harassment behaviours,
- supported if they are involved in incidences of bullying and harassment.

**Guidelines:**

**Bullying** is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records, images etc).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Bullying has three main features:

- It involves a misuse of power in a relationship
- It is ongoing and repeated, and
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Bullying can be:

- direct physical bullying – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
- direct verbal bullying – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
- indirect bullying – e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.

**Harassment** consists of systematic and/or continued unwanted and annoying actions, including threats and demands. The purposes may vary, including racial prejudice, personal malice, an attempt to force someone to grant sexual favours, and application of pressure to carry out a specific task, or merely gaining pleasure from making someone fearful or anxious.

When a person is bullied or harassed, they can be negatively affected by:

- feelings of anger, embarrassment, loss of self-confidence or humiliation
- not wanting to attend or participate in school or usual activities
- becoming depressed
- experiencing thoughts of self-harm or suicide

Examples of behaviour that could constitute bullying and/or harassment include:

- Verbal abuse – including jokes, name-calling and put downs,
- Initiation pranks,
- Exclusion or Isolation,
- Humiliation through sarcasm, or belittling someone’s opinions,
- Constant criticism or insults,
- Spreading misinformation or malicious rumours,
- Manipulating the impression of others to split a group into taking sides,
- Displaying written or pictorial material which may degrade or offend certain people,
- Psychological harassment and intimidation,
- Cyberbullying either on-line or via mobile phone or device,
- Violence – including hitting, punching, pushing or employing other unwanted aggressive physical contact against another person
- Hiding or destroying a person’s property
- Racially offensive insults
- Threats of violence or other harm
- Homophobia and other hostile behaviour relating to gender and sexuality,
- Discrimination

### **Sexual Harassment**

Examples of what could constitute sexual harassment are:

- unwanted touching or brushing up against another person
- calling another person rude names or making sexually suggestive comments or gestures
- commenting on the size or shape of another’s body
- sexually oriented comments
- comments about another’s sexual preference or alleged sexual behaviours
- displaying or passing on sexually graphic material

### **Cyber bullying**

Consists of direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology which includes a mobile device, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal or written and may include images, video and/or audio.

Cyberbullying that involves or includes students enrolled at MDCC that takes place within or outside MDCC operating hours will be addressed.

### **Behaviour that is not considered to be bullying**

- Mutual conflict which involves a disagreement but not an imbalance of power however, mutual conflict may develop into bullying if it is unresolved and one of the parties repeatedly targets the other party in retaliation.

## Strategies for the prevention of bullying

### Education programs for staff

All MDCC staff members are required to undertake professional development training via the Beyond Blue Be You professional learning framework. The framework can be accessed via: <https://beyou.edu.au/>.

Training is to be undertaken each year during the pre-term planning period in late January. Teaching staff will be advised of the requirement to include bullying and harassment prevention content in their session plans during the planning period.

Bullying and harassment strategies and the obligations of teachers and staff members will be included on the agenda of team meetings held each term.

Qualified youth workers and student support workers in consultation with the Senior Youth Worker will provide teaching staff with ongoing strategies throughout each term.

### Education programs for students

Student education takes place in a variety of forms including:

- Creating an environment of positive classroom activities and interactions through team projects.
- Setting expectations of cooperation, mutual respect and support of fellow class members.
- Allowing students to problem solve independently.
- Modelling of respectful and positive behaviour and attitudes by all staff members
- Including learning about bullying and harassment within the curriculum and role play solutions including assertiveness and seeking help.
- Encouraging students to learn about and develop conflict resolution strategies.
- Holding Respectful Relationship training via Knox Youth Services Team during term 2.
- Foster positive attitudes amongst the student group by acknowledging acts of empathy, respect, acceptance and inclusion.
- Including strategies for managing bullying in the term newsletter, including advice as to where to find help outside MDCC.
- Participating in the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence via <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>

### **Record keeping**

Detailed notes will be taken of each step and added to the Student Behaviour Incident Report which and will be stored securely on student files.

The Incident Report will detail:

- the people involved,
- the exact observations of the incident or content of the complaint,

Added notes will detail:

- the investigation and findings,
- the response strategy to be employed,
- copies of any statements,
- copies of correspondence to parents/carers made within the bounds of privacy legislation and
- follow up actions and outcomes.

Incidents of bullying will be added to the Student Behaviour Incident Tracker as per the Student Behaviour Policy.

## Responding to bullying

When responding to bullying behaviour, MDCC aims to:

- be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- find a constructive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- restore the relationships between the parties involved.

Steps to be taken in response to bullying complaints:

- Teachers and staff members are reminded of their duty of care in responding to bullying behaviours.
- Bullying complaints must be taken seriously and must be responded to.
- Students will be encouraged to report incidences of bullying to any person they trust.
- Teachers and staff members must report any incidences of bullying and/or harassment that may be witnessed or verbally reported.
- Reported incidences will be investigated.
- A response to the behaviour will be developed and implemented.

Any report of bullying or witnessing of bullying behaviour must be recorded on a Student Behaviour Incident Report and submitted it to the Senior Youth Worker, Principal or Assistant Principal on the day or next day of the occurrence.

Upon receipt of a report of an incidence of bullying an investigation will be undertaken by the Senior Youth Worker, Assistant Principal or Principal. Details will be recorded and added to the submitted Student Behaviour Incident Report.

During the investigation all relevant parties will be interviewed, including staff, parents and witnesses.

A number of factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When making a decision about how to respond to bullying behaviour. Consideration will be given to:

- the age and maturity of the students involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the target student
- whether the student/s engaging in bullying behaviour have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the student engaging in bullying behaviour demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

A strategy in response will be developed and implemented in a timely manner and with sensitivity to the victim(s). The Student Behaviour Management policy will be followed as applicable.

The strategy in response may include:

- Counselling,
- Undertaking restorative practice exercises/training (covering rights, responsibilities, expectations and respect and empathy for others),
- Participation in mediation meetings,
- Providing an apology or apologies to victim(s) as way of reconciliation,
- Behaviour management including implementing a behaviour contract,
- Suspension.

### Support for victims of bullying

The person who has been the subject of the bullying behaviour and any person affected by the bullying behaviour will be provided with support including:

- Counselling (arranged by the Senior Youth Worker);
- Restorative meetings or mediation as deemed appropriate;
- Ongoing follow-up via wellbeing checks;
- Documenting measures of support on the Student Wellbeing Plan to ensure consistency across all staff members;
- Parents will be informed of bullying incidents and provided with relevant information within the bounds of privacy legislation.

### Repeated incidences of bullying

- Repeated incidences of bullying will be addressed via the Student Behaviour Management Policy.
- Behaviour Contracts will be implemented and further incidences will result in suspension and conditional return on completion of anti-bullying education training programs as arranged by the Principal, Assistant Principal or Senior Youth Worker.
- Serious incidents such as physical assault, threats of violence or other criminal behaviour will be referred to police by the Principal, Assistant Principal or Senior Youth Worker.

### **Associated documents include:**

- Student Behaviour Management Policy
- Formal Warning Notification
- Restorative Intervention – notes
- Student Behaviour Contract
- Student Behaviour Incident Report
- Student Wellbeing Plan
- Student Behaviour Incident Tracker
- Student Code of Conduct