Strategies and Procedures for Dealing with Bullying, Harassment and Conflict

Strategies and procedures for dealing with bullying, harassment and conflict are both proactive and reactive.

Proactive strategies and procedures

These send a strong message to the whole school community about the school's beliefs and actions to support a safe and supportive school environment. They include:

- A school leadership committed to reducing bullying and fully supportive of policies and strategies to accomplish this, for example:

  - Supporting staff Professional Learning in matters related to developing healthy relationships within the school
  - Providing funding for resourcing related programmes
  - Ensuring that actions to promote a safe and supportive school environment are part of the school's review mechanism and strategic planning

- The promotion of a positive school culture which provides safety, encourages open communication, and supports a sense of connectedness to the school
- The promotion of social values such as respect, trust, fairness and celebration of diversity
- Formal and informal modelling by staff of appropriate social behaviours
- Encouragement of prosocial, cooperative behaviour
- Specific student learning through the curriculum which includes social and emotional learning
- Specific student curricula explicitly includes:

  - What constitutes bullying
  - How to identify bullying (including overt, covert, cyber)
  - The effects of bullying on all students
  - Skills to build positive, healthy relationships both online and offline (including social problem solving)
  - Skills to effectively respond to bullying behaviour (including targets, bystanders) both online and offline
  - Skills to develop good citizenship and social responsibility, both online and offline
  - Opportunities for self-reflection

- Promotion of classroom practices that provide an opportunity for students to develop and display appropriate social behaviours, and to care and empathise with others
- Use of cooperative classroom practices
- Opportunities for students to experience working within a variety of different group arrangements and structures
- Provision of a protective physical school environment
- Adequate and visible staff supervision
- Building of strong school /family partnerships which encourage communication and provide families with opportunities to be involved in learning about parenting adolescents

Reactive strategies and procedures

When an incident occurs which involves possible harassment, conflict or bullying, it becomes the responsibility of the Head of Student Wellbeing to work with all relevant parties to manage the situation.

Management of these events involves:

- Investigating the reported issue/s
  Depending on the type of issue/s this could include:

  - Interviewing the student/s involved. This could include including targets, bystanders and instigator/s
  - Collecting other relevant information, e.g. written material, particularly text messages, Facebook conversations

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- Planning a response
  Depending on the nature of the information gathered during the investigation this could include:
    - Liaising with other Heads of Student Wellbeing of other students who may be involved
    - Liaising with the House Group Teachers of students involved
    - Working with appropriate personnel to plan the most appropriate approach to the situation (this could include other Heads of Student Wellbeing, College Counsellors, Deputy Principal Wellbeing)

- Instigating actions
  The appropriate personnel (most often the Heads of Student Wellbeing) will use one or a combination of one of the following approaches to manage the situation:
    - The Co-LATE Model
    - No blame strategy
    - The shared concern strategy (appropriate for those students who are able to empathise)
    - The Restorative Approach
    - Support Group Method (more appropriate for lower secondary students)
    - Motivational Interviewing (best used for students who bully but are not responding to shared concern approach)
    - Critical Thinking Line (is best used in conjunction with Method of Shared Concern or Motivational Interviewing as a means to establish some empathy for the student being bullied)

Following up

Subsequent actions will depend on the nature of the situation but could include:

- Restorative dialogue
- Parent involvement
- Involvement of the Deputy Principal Wellbeing or College Principal depending on the gravity of the incident/s
- Regular following up with targets, perpetrators and bystanders. A crucial element in any incident that involves harassment, bullying or conflict is regular 'checking in' with relevant students. This is a very powerful preventive strategy

Record keeping:

- Careful recording of all conversations with relevant parties and strategies initiated to manage the situation is a very important element in the process