



PURPOSE

Portland Secondary College (Must Street & Victoria Parade Campuses) is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying and harassment will not be tolerated.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- explain the definition of bullying and harassment
- make clear that all forms of bullying and harassment at Portland Secondary College (Must Street & Victoria Parade Campuses) will not be tolerated
- ask that everyone in our school community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and harassment behaviour, and accept responsibility to report this behaviour to school staff
- ensure that all reported incidents of bullying and harassment are appropriately investigated and addressed
- ensure that support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying or harassing behaviour (including victims, bystanders and perpetrators)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying and harassing behaviour at Portland Secondary College.

When responding to bullying or harassing behaviour, Portland Secondary College (Must Street & Victoria Parade Campuses) aims to:

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

Portland Secondary College (Must Street & Victoria Parade Campuses) acknowledges that school staff owe a duty of care to students to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our school's Digital Media Policy, Duty of Care Policy, and Inclusion and Diversity Policy.

POLICY

Definitions

Bullying Is the deliberate desire to hurt, threaten, intimidate or embarrass someone through either direct, indirect or verbal;

Bullying can be:

1. *direct physical bullying* – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. *direct verbal bullying* – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.



3. *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 is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated or offended. Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities.

Harassment can be:

1. *Subtle* – eg offensive staring and leering, unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preferences, racist or smutty comments or jokes, questions about another's sexual activity, persistent comments about a person's private life or family, physical contact eg. Purposely brushing up against another's body, offensive name calling.
2. *Explicit* – Gossiping, aggressive hitting, pinching, and shoving, unwelcome patting, touching, embracing, repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal, offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or email, sexually and/or racially provocative remarks, displays of sexually graphic material – pornography, request for sexual favours.

Mutual conflict involves an argument or disagreement between people with no imbalance of power. In incidents of mutual conflict, generally, both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the issue. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

Social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Single-episode acts of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, they are not being bullied. Harassment, nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school.

Many distressing behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing behaviours of concern are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff.

BULLYING PREVENTION

Portland Secondary College (Must Street & Victoria Parade Campuses) has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness, respect and resilience.

Bullying prevention at Portland Secondary College (Must Street & Victoria Parade Campuses) is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effective way to prevent and address bullying. At our school:



- We have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing.
- We strive to build strong partnerships between the school, families and the broader community that means all members work together to ensure the safety of students.
- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
- A range of year level incursions and programs are planned for each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts.
- In the classroom, our social and emotional learning curriculum teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- The Peer Support Program encourages positive relationships between students in different year levels. We seek to empower students to be confident communicators and to resolve conflict in a non-aggressive and constructive way.
- Students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to teachers and older peers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.
- The whole school Bullying Prevention Policy and the Digital Technologies Policy are regularly articulated to staff, students and parents.
- Students are encouraged to join Student Representative Council where they have an important voice through meetings to initiate change and improvements for all students.
- Staff model appropriate behaviour at all times.
- Student participation is encouraged in the development of classroom and whole school expectations and the establishment of predictable, fair and democratic classrooms and school environment.
- The College actively maintaining full eSmart status.
- Student Services provide resources and information re mental health and welfare and referral to appropriate agencies and external health professionals as well as counselling and on-going support as required.

INCIDENT RESPONSE

Reporting concerns to Portland Secondary College (Must Street & Victoria Parade Campuses)

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school.

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff as soon as possible.

In most circumstances, we encourage students to speak to their Mentor or Year Level Leader. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff.

Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Portland Secondary College (Must Street & Victoria Parade Campuses) should contact the



students relevant Mentor at Portland Secondary College (Must Street & Victoria Parade Campuses) on 03 5523 1344.

Investigations

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:

1. record the details of the allegations in Compass, and include any physical evidence in the student's file; and
2. inform the relevant Year Level Leader, Student Wellbeing Team an Assistant Principal, and in severe cases, the Principal.

The Mentor is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Mentor may:

- speak to the students involved in the allegations, including the victim/s, the alleged perpetrator/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- speak to the parents of the students involved
- speak to the teachers of the students involved
- take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference
- obtain written statements from all or any of the above.

All communications with the Mentor in the course of investigating an allegation of bullying will be managed sensitively. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for the behaviours to be addressed in a timely manner.

The objective of completing a thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged bullying behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the students involved. A thorough understanding of the alleged bullying will inform staff about how to most effectively implement an appropriate response to that behaviour.

Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: [Brodie's Law](#).

Responses to bullying behaviours

When the Mentor has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and the students involved, a number of strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation with Student Wellbeing Team, teachers, and Assistant Principal.

There are 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, Portland Secondary College (Must Street & Victoria Parade Campuses) will consider:

- the age and maturity of the students involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the victim student
- whether the perpetrator student or students have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the perpetrator demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour



- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

The Mentor may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Facilitate a restorative practice meeting with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the person who has bullied someone and forgiveness by the person who has been bullied.
- Facilitate a mediation between some or all of the students involved to help to encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance.
- Implement disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator students, which may include removal of privileges, detention, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant Department policy.
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare a Safety Plan or Individual Management Plan restricting contact between victim and perpetrator students.
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.

The Mentor is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour. These records will be kept by the Mentor throughout the investigation and then placed in the Student's file in the General Office.

Portland Secondary College (Must Street & Victoria Parade Campuses) understands the importance of monitoring the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour.

Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Portland Secondary College (Must Street & Victoria Parade Campuses) are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

EVALUATION

This will be reviewed on a 2 year basis following analysis of school data on reported incidents of, and responses to bullying to ensure that this policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Data will be collected through:

- discussion with students
- regular student bullying surveys
- regular staff surveys
- assessment of school based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented.

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with consultation i.e. Student Representative Council, parent forums, school council.



FURTHER RESOURCES

- [Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy](#)
- [Child Safe Policy](#)

REVIEW CYCLE

DATE	VERSION	RATIFIED BY	NEXT REVIEW
Oct 2018	2	Portland Secondary College School Council	Sept 2020