ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

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Rationale

The National Safe Schools Framework Students states that:
"Students have a fundamental right to learn in a safe, supportive environment and to be treated with respect."[1]

The South Australian Department for Education (DfE) also states that:
"*The department, school communities, services and agencies work together to create learning communities which are:*

- safe
- inclusive
- conducive to learning
- free from harassment and bullying. [2]

Objectives

Modbury High School supports these ideals on the understandings of:

- The rights of all people to be treated with respect and dignity
- The rights of all students to learn
- The rights of teachers to teach
- The rights of all to be safe

Modbury High School does not tolerate bullying or harassment in any form. All members of our community are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment that promotes personal growth and fosters positive self-esteem for all.

We aim to maintain a setting in which everyone feels valued and respected and where individual differences are appreciated, understood, and accepted.

All students at Modbury High School have the right to be safe and happy at school.
Bullying is not tolerated at Modbury High School because it takes away that right.

Procedure

1. Definitions

Harassment

Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome, or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated or offended. Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying. The terms are often used interchangeably.

Harassment is a form of discrimination and includes:

- sexual harassment
- racial harassment
- bullying
- libel/slander

What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual Harassment is the imposition of verbal or physical sexual behaviour which is unwanted, unwelcomed, unsolicited and which may be offensive e.g.

- Touching or brushing up against you when you've asked them to stop

- Ogling, whistling, gesturing or making comments about your body
- Making jokes about your sexuality
- Pestering you to go out with him or her or asking you for sex when you have said "no".

What is Racial Harassment?

Racial Harassment is when you are treated in a way that makes you feel embarrassed, offended, afraid or upset because of your cultural background or physical appearance e.g.

- Making degrading comments, jokes, gestures about your culture or your background or physical appearance
- Making fun of your accent
- Threatening you, using violence, taking or damaging your property because of your race or cultural background.

What is Bullying?

1. Bullying is a repeated, unjustifiable behaviour intended to cause fear, distress and/or harm to another.
2. Bullying is a form of habitual aggressive behaviour that is hurtful and deliberate.
3. Bullying is used by a more powerful person or group over a less powerful person who has difficulty stopping the situation.
4. Bullying incidents are unprovoked and can be physical, verbal, social or psychological in nature.

Types of Bullying:

1. Physical - being hit, kicked or pushed around, throwing objects, objects used as weapons e.g., pens.
2. Exclusion - being ignored, left out on purpose, or not allowed to join in.
3. Deliberately or unfairly excluding someone.
4. Removing or hiding someone's belongings.
5. Lies or rumours - lies or nasty stories are told about someone to make other students not like them.
6. Spreading gossip, lies or partaking in malicious rumours.
7. Threats - verbal abuse about oneself or family members.
8. Threats - being made afraid of getting hurt.
9. Making threatening motions - body gestures, staring at someone, head or arm/hand gestures.
10. Verbal abuse and teasing - being made fun of and teased in a mean and hurtful way. Insulting or abusive language, ridicule or name calling.
11. Standover tactics e.g.,
    - Pushing another student out of the canteen line
    - Taking away their space in the yard
    - Interfering with their activities
    - Encouraging them to break school rules for a dare
    - Asking for money at the canteen.
12. Cyberbullying - social media, message boards, web sites, video links, e-mails, SMS or any form of messaging.

Most bullying is covert, it takes place out of the sight of adults. It can include incidents away from the school premises, which are school related e.g., cyberbullying.

What are Slander and Libel?

Slander - the spreading of rumours about you or your family.
Libel - writing or graffiti about you or any groups that you belong to.

Is all childhood conflict bullying?

Some conflict between children is normal. Disagreements or misunderstandings are part of everyday life. Bullying differs from normal childhood conflict in three very important ways.

a. A power imbalance is present.
b. Bullying behaviour is repeated towards the same individual/s.
c. There is intent to harm which is unprovoked or unjustified.

What can Bullying and Harassment cause?

- Poor study skills
- Loss of concentration

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- Loss of confidence, self esteem
- Anger and frustration
- Absenteeism due to stress and unhappiness
- Poor grades that do not reflect actual ability.

Possible Signs of Bullying

Students may:

1. Be unwilling to go to school
2. Be frightened of walking to or from school
3. Beg a parent to drive them to school
4. Begin doing poorly in their schoolwork
5. Come home regularly with books or clothes damaged
6. Become withdrawn, start stammering
7. Become distressed, stop eating
8. Cry themselves to sleep
9. Have nightmares and even call out "Leave me alone!"
10. Have unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches
11. Have their possessions go missing
12. Refuse to say what's wrong
13. Constantly complain of headaches, stomach aches and other persistent stress related ailments

2. We use the following proactive strategies to prevent bullying at Modbury High School:

All students are informed/reminded of the Anti-Bullying and Harassment policy at the beginning of each year, and this is frequently revisited throughout the year.

Students are encouraged to report behaviour that makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Our Peer Support Students and School Captains are there to help support students who are finding it difficult to speak directly to staff to seek the help they need.

The counsellors or other professionals run sessions at the start of each year with each year level on positive behaviours which reduce the incidence of bullying and harassment. The following information is covered in these sessions:

1) Knowledge

What bullying and harassment are.
Why bullying must stop and the harm it can cause.
Understanding who to go to for help and support dealing with bullying and harassment.

2) Attitude

Being unprejudiced, being co-operative and empathic.
Resisting negative group pressure.
Self- acceptance as an antidote to discouragement.

3) Skills

Being assertive and not acting aggressively.
Resolving difficulties constructively.
Encouraging bystanders to be assertive and actively intervene in observed instances of bullying.

3. Consequences of Bullying or Harassment:

Modbury High School has an obligation to all students, and therefore staff *will* act on any harassment or bullying which affects the safety or well-being of students at this school, or the reputation of the school. *This includes both in and out of school incidents.*

Procedures to be followed if bullying is detected / suspected?

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In most cases the incident will be resolved through conciliation, i.e., through mediation, restorative justice practices, arbitration and discussing the situation so that the harasser is informed that the behaviour is inappropriate, why it is inappropriate and that there will be future consequences for continued harassment.

In severe situations the harasser will face suspension and/or exclusion.

Procedures will include the following steps:

1. Reporting.
2. Follow-up and investigation of allegations.
3. Assessment the severity of the situation, this can be judged based on a number of factors:
    - Duration of behaviour - how long has the situation been going on for?
    - Frequency of behaviour - is the student bullied every day or once every couple of weeks?
    - Type of bullying behaviour - is the child being physical assaulted, teasing?
4. Mediation and Restorative Practices where appropriate, in some instances these strategies will be combined with other consequences, or not used if the process puts an individual's wellbeing at risk.
5. Formal / Informal process followed.
6. Consequences for persistent bullies and severe examples of bullying and harassment.
7. Support provided for victim(s).
8. Support provided to bullies to help them modify their behaviours and attitudes in future.

All parties will be interviewed separately (this includes perpetrator and victim of bullying behaviour as well as bystanders) and the incidents recorded by the teacher, Year Level Leader (YLL) or Senior Leader for the Year Level.

Records of the interviews will be taken and held by the YLL, summaries of the information, actions and consequences will be recorded on Daymap. Parents or carers of all parties involved will be informed where consequences are applied, we cannot share the details of the consequences for another student, only that consequences have been given due to student confidentiality. Information we receive is treated with confidentiality and anonymity will be retained where requested or required to support the students involved.

Logical consequences will be imposed on those students who have been found to be bullying others which could include, but is not limited to:

- loss of recess or lunchtime
- after school detention
- behaviour refocus day
- suspension
- suspension pending exclusion (for extreme cases)

Victims are encouraged to seek support from staff if they are impacted by bullying and harassment and find it hard to deal with the impacts of it after the events. This support can be sought from a range of individuals such as their home group teacher, Student Counsellor, Year Level Leader and other students such as the Peer Support Students.

Any case of retaliation against a student for reporting bullying will be treated with the utmost severity e.g., suspension or exclusion from the school.

Guidelines for Staff when dealing with Bullying.

When dealing with the student who is a victim of bullying:

- Listen to and reassure the victim that the school will do everything to help them.
- Believe them and give them the confidence to tell you exactly what happened.
- Deal with the whole incident yourself where possible, if appropriate refer to the Year Level Leader in charge of that Year Level or Student Counsellor for help and support if required. It is essential that you pass on information about incidents you have dealt with to the Year Level Leader so that they can identify any trends in student behaviour and know what has occurred should parents contact them about it. Appropriate notes should also be recorded on Daymap.

- Inform the parents / care provider of the student.
- Give continued support to the victim and check at a later date that bullying is not recurring.
- Try to ensure that the victim does not feel it is their fault.
- Encourage the victim to talk to peers.
- Select an appropriate group of students to monitor the victim during recess/lunch breaks.
- Talk through the strategies that students can use to tackle bullying.
- This could be done as a class discussion during Home Group time.

When dealing with the student who is bullying:

- Make the student aware that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- Avoid disclosing the informants name to them or others.
- Explain clearly and precisely what behaviour is causing distress to the victim.
- Discuss ways in which the student can change their behaviour.
- Inform the parents of the student and the Senior Leader in charge of that Year Level.
- Monitor student's behaviour closely to ensure bullying does not reoccur.
- Use logical consequences and explain the increased severity of consequence if the bullying continues i.e. loss of privileges; loss of recess / lunch times etc.
- When bullying behaviours are judged by the teacher to be extreme, these cases need to be referred immediately to the Senior Leader person in charge of that Year Level, who will need to ensure the safety of all involved.
- Parents of the person bullying, and the person being bullied will be notified immediately. Interviews will then be conducted with all individuals involved including any bystanders.
- In some cases where perceived bullying is identified as being a misunderstanding, and clarified with the students involved to their satisfaction, the Year Level Leader or Senior Leader should make a balance decision on which individuals are contacted. All contact and records of the conversations with students regarding this should be recorded on Daymap.
- Extreme or repeated bullying or harassment may lead to suspension or exclusion from the school, as well as police involvement.

ALL harassment and bullying warnings will be recorded on Daymap.
Consequences will take into account all past warnings.

Policy review

The school council and staff will regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy (at least every three years) and revise the policy when required.

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Appendix 1 - References

References:

[1] SAFE SCHOOLS: Intro - Child Safety Hub

[2] Bullying prevention strategy (edi.sa.edu.au)

[3] Behaviour support policy (edi.sa.edu.au)

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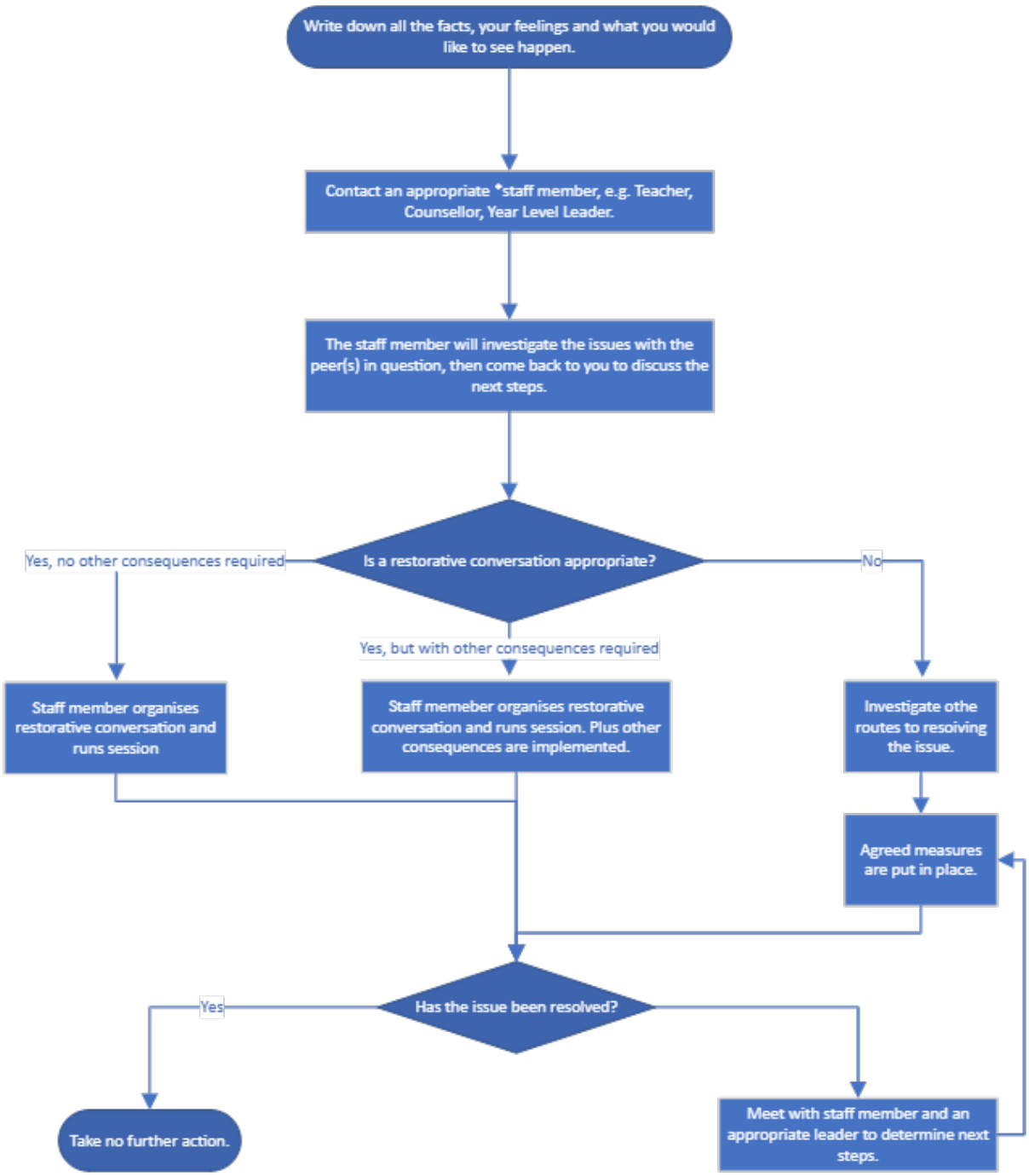
Appendix 2 – Flow Chart for students seeking support with peer-to-peer issues



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Senior Leaders

Principal
Deputy Principal (Years 9 and 10)
Assistant Principal (Years 7 and 8)
Assistant Principal (Years 11 and 12)
Assistant Principal (Inclusion and Wellbeing)

Year Level Leaders and Wellbeing Leaders

Years 7 and 8
Years 9 and 10
Years 11 and 12
Counsellor
Youth Worker

Learning Area Leaders

Arts
Cross Disciplinary Studies and VET
English
HASS
HPE
Languages
Mathematics
Science
Tech Studies