



Bullying and Harassment

All members of our school community are valued and have a right to learn and work in an environment which is safe, inclusive, conducive to learning and free from harassment, violence and bullying. Everyone has the right to come to school feeling happy, secure, comfortable and respected. Bullying and harassment is wrong, and must not be allowed to continue. Bullying and harassment in any form is not acceptable at Mount Gambier High School and will be dealt with seriously and expediently.

Definitions of Bullying and Harassment

Bullying

In 2018 the Education Council of the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the following definition of bullying for use by all Australian schools:

“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).”

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:

1. Direct physical bullying – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. Direct verbal bullying – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic, sexist 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.

Cyberbullying is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example via a mobile device, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal, written and include images, video and/or audio.

Harassment

Sexual harassment: unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature towards another person which could reasonably be expected to make that other person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. It may be physical, verbal, visual or written.

Disability harassment: humiliating comments or actions about a person’s disability.

Roles and Responsibilities

Members of the School Community

We expect members of our school community to observe the Bullying and Harassment Policy and:

- understand what constitutes bullying
- understand their rights and responsibilities in regard to bullying
- work together to seek solutions to bullying.

Staff

- Model and promote positive behaviour. Value diversity, demonstrate respect, and include all students and their families.
- Provide and take part in professional development to build skills, knowledge and confidence about preventing bullying. Including how to recognise, respond and manage it.
- Collect data on bullying regularly. Use the data to plan how you will prevent and respond to bullying.
- Explicitly teach students about respectful relationships, bullying and cyberbullying. Teach them how to recognise bullying, what to do and how to get help.
- Work with students to come up with solutions to bullying. Include them in decisions that affect their safety and wellbeing.
- Support all students to be included, in particular students at higher risk of being bullied.
- Take action when bullying and cyberbullying has been reported. This includes incidents that happen out of school hours or off school grounds when it relates to school relationships.
- Report criminal matters to the South Australian Police (SAPOL).
- Help parents and carers to recognise bullying. Include information about what to do when their child is engaging in or affected by bullying.
- Work with families, service providers and the community to support students affected by bullying.
- Support students to repair and restore relationships that have been harmed by bullying.
- Have planned responses to bullying. Make them visible and consistent. Responses should foster trust and confidence.
- Help students to be physically and psychologically safe from bullying.

Students

- Model behaviours that are safe, respectful and inclusive, both face-to-face and online.
- Build skills, knowledge and confidence to recognise, respond to and manage bullying.
- Be a part of decision making to improve student safety and wellbeing.
- Take a stand when bullying is observed. Step in, if it is safe. Seek help from adults.
- Support friends and peers get help from trusted adults if they experience bullying.
- Support friends to behave in safe, respectful and inclusive ways if their friends engage in bullying.

Parents/Caregivers

- Model and promote safe, respectful and inclusive behaviours.
- Help their children to be safe online at home. This includes checking their children's use of technology and social media.
- Make sure their children know how to identify and report bullying. Work with the school to help their children be safe from bullying.
- Talk to their children about safety issues. This includes bullying and cyber bullying. Help them understand what it is, why it is harmful and how to respond. Use the same messages the school uses.
- Report concerns about bullying to school staff.
- If a bullying incident happens which impacts schooling, work with the school.
- Support their children to go to school while a bullying issue is being worked on.
- Get external professional support for their child, if needed.

Supporting Information

- Department for Education – Behaviour Support Policy
- Mount Gambier High School – Bullying and Harassment Procedure
- Mount Gambier High School – Code of Conduct
- Mount Gambier High School – Student Behaviour Support Policy and Procedure

Review

This policy is to be reviewed by the Deputy Principal every two years.

Revision History

Version Number:	1.0	Approved By:	Governing Council
Approved Date:	TBA	Next Review Date:	June 2026
Amendment(s):	Bullying procedure and policy developed.		