Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy

Version 15, 2022 05 05

Background & Purpose

Feeling safe, supported and respected at school is both the fundamental right of all students and fundamental to effective learning. It is recognised that for many children and young people, schools are a safe place in the community. However, it is also true that some students are victims of bullying, harassment and racism at school, and that some students are subjected to abuse and neglect at home. All students have the right to live their lives free of the threat or the reality of abuse. The impact on children and young people of repeated victimisation affects their health, wellbeing, safety and security which can have lifelong consequences. Discrimination, bullying and harassment, in all its forms (including cyber- bullying, sexual harassment, homophobia, transphobia and biphobia), are unacceptable.

Schools have responsibilities in regard to these issues, because they impact negatively on students' capacity to learn. Teachers and school administrators stand in a special relationship (in loco parentis) to the children and young people in their care. For significant numbers of children and young people at risk, schools are a place for them to find responsible adults who will advocate for their wellbeing.

The school community has high expectations that Open Access College will continue to be both vigilant and proactive in ensuring that supportive learning environments are made available to all members of its community. The most effective way to build strong support for such initiatives in the college community is to ensure that the process of developing and implementing strategies to increase school safety engages as wide a cross section of stakeholders as possible. Bullying, harassment, discrimination, violence, child abuse and neglect are issues that are of great concern to the Open Access College community. The extent to which we protect the vulnerable transition from childhood to adulthood in a safe school environment is a critical measure of our caring community.

Policy statement

In reflecting the principles of social justice and equity, all students are entitled to have equal access to educational opportunities. To enable this to occur the college setting must not only work towards addressing ongoing bullying, harassment, discrimination and intimidation, but put in place positive acknowledgements and/or interventions which support all members of the college community in this area of racism, bullying and harassment prevention.

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure discrimination, harassment and bullying does not endure at Open Access College.

- Discrimination refers to the unfair treatment or harassment of another person or group of people on the basis of differences including race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; marital, parenting or economic status; age; ability or disability. Discrimination is often ongoing and commonly involves exclusion or rejection.

- Harassment is any deliberate, on-going and hurtful action that makes you feel uncomfortable. It can be physical, verbal or non-verbal, sexual or emotional and is unwanted, unwelcome and unsolicited, and may be offensive. It can happen anywhere – in the classroom or via the telephone or computer (cyber-bullying). It can occur among and between administrators, staff members, parents and students.

- Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. It is verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyber-bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies such as the internet and mobile phones.

The offence of racism, bullying or harassment does not necessarily lie in the behaviour itself, but on its impact on the other person and/or bystanders.

This is achieved through:

- clearly defining and identifying discrimination, bullying and harassment issues within the college setting

- moving beyond a reactive approach to discrimination, bullying and harassment to one that is integrated, proactive and sustainable where effective responses are situational, child specific and have a restorative focus

- ensuring that the issue of discrimination, bullying and harassment is the responsibility of the whole college community

- promoting care, respect, cooperation, and valuing diversity among all members of the college community

- proactive intervention in cases of discrimination, bullying and harassment

- positive action to protect students or young people from all forms of abuse and neglect

- creating a structure that enables ongoing dialogue between all members of the college community to ensure that interventions remain accurate, relevant and helpful to all.

Key Responsibilities

Principal

- Open Access College has a Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy which is reviewed.

- Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy has a locatable and well publicised link on the college website.

- Provide the Governing Council updates each term in relation to school bullying related data and trends and any bullying prevention programs/initiatives in place or being considered.

Assistant Principal - Wellbeing

- Planning, implementation and sustainability of a discrimination, bullying and harassment prevention strategy in conjunction with the Student Wellbeing Leaders.

- Transgender and gender diverse student's preferred name is recorded as part of the school management procedure and used by staff and students regardless of enrolment information.

- Identify and articulate to the school community the specific nature of discrimination, bullying, harassment and marginalisation that occurs within a school setting.

- Plan for professional learning opportunities for staff to develop personal and school based strategies for preventing discrimination, bullying and harassment issues.

- Harassment in the Workplace workshops/sessions are in place for all students prior to undertaking Work Experience.

- Cyber Safety information is disseminated with all Open Access College laptops/computers/iPads loaned to students.

Staff

- Participate in professional development, provide programs/information and maintain awareness around discrimination, bullying and harassment issues.

- Proactive and resourceful in supporting students to be safe including use of trauma aware strategies.

- Use transgender and gender diverse student's preferred name and pronoun regardless of enrolment information.

- Identify and address inappropriate behaviour in a proactive manner and document in Daymap/EDSAS.

- Support students seeking help or advice on issues considering their safety and wellbeing

- Provide transgender and gender diverse students the choice of accessing a toilet/change room that matches their gender identity. Discuss options available with the student in an open way that supports their decisions.

- Seek support if necessary for challenging situations to ensure prevention of student discrimination, bullying and harassment remains a priority.

- Conduct Harassment in the Workplace workshops for all students prior to undertaking unpaid Work Experience.

Students

- Respect rights and responsibilities of themselves and others by not bullying or harassing any member of the college community.

- Report any discrimination, bullying or harassment that occurs to them or others.

- Take action about discrimination, bullying or harassment – for example ask the perpetrator to stop, do not re-act or show emotion, ignore them and walk away, tell someone you trust.

- If the discrimination, bullying or harassment does not stop, speak to a staff member, Student Wellbeing Leader or parent to seek support. They will help you work out the best way to handle the situation.

- Provide feedback on the review of the Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy.

Parents

- Listen and support your child

- Be consulted and informed.

- review of the Bullying and Harassment Policy.

- Uphold Open Access College's Bullying and Harassment Prevention policy.

Procedures

You have the choice to have the matter dealt with by the college or an outside agency.

Dealt with by the college

A student who is harassed and chooses to have the matter dealt with by the college has the following options:

Discuss/report the matter with/to a

- Staff member

- Student Wellbeing Leader

- Principal/ Deputy Principal/Assistant Principal

- Parent

In all cases, other than Mandatory Reporting, the person dealing with the complaint will not take any action without the permission of the complainant.

The person receiving the complaint will, in consultation with the person making the complaint, determine whether the matter can be dealt with initially within the school, dependent on the gravity of the complaint.

Advice may be sought from the following, with permission of the complainant:

- Student Wellbeing Leaders (Counsellor)
- Principal / Deputy Principal / Assistant Principal

Procedures used by the person dealing with the complaint may include:

- supporting the complainant to deal directly with the harasser
- counselling the harasser
- other procedures aimed at resolving the matter through conciliation.

In cases where conciliation fails or complaints are repeated over a period of time or the complaint is serious enough, disciplinary action may be required.
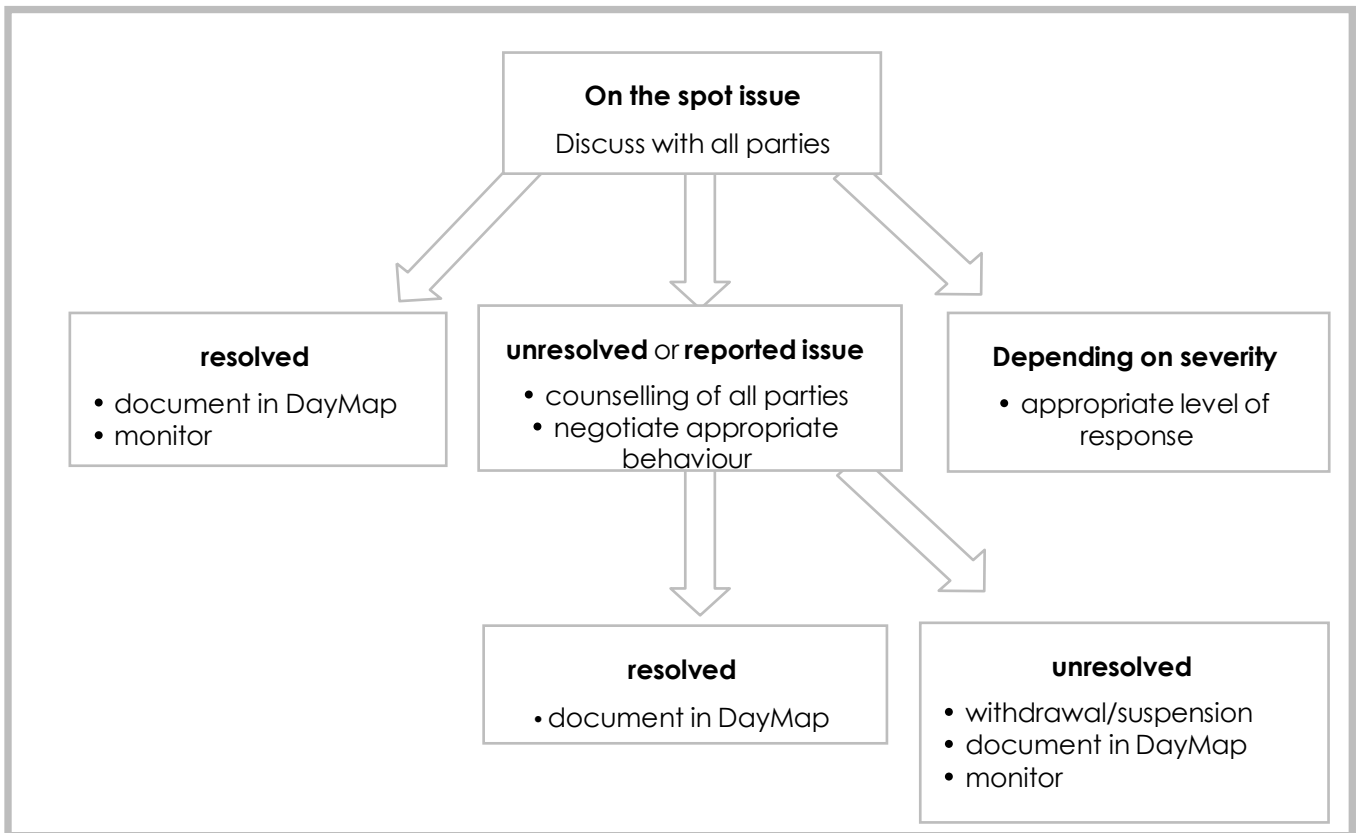
Dealt with out of the school

A person who is harassed and is **not prepared to have the matter dealt with** internally has the right to:

Report the matter directly to:

- the police
- Education Director
- Parental Complaint Unit

Consequences of Inappropriate behaviour

Refer to Open Access College Responsible Behaviour Support Policy

On the spot issue
Discuss with all parties

resolved
- document in DayMap
- monitor

unresolved or **reported issue**
- counselling of all parties
- negotiate appropriate behaviour

Depending on severity
- appropriate level of response

resolved
- document in DayMap

unresolved
- withdrawal/suspension
- document in DayMap
- monitor

This version created: 05/05/2022

To be reviewed: *2025*

Review to be managed by: Assistant Principal Wellbeing

Reference Document:

https://www.education.sa.gov.au/department/strategies-and-plans/bullying-prevention-strategy-community-approach