

HIGHVIEW COLLEGE

BULLYING AND VIOLENCE POLICY



Person Responsible – Principal

Statement of Context and Purpose

Highview College has legal obligations to provide employees with a safe and healthy working environment so far as is reasonably practicable and to take action to stop or prevent instances of bullying and violence. Highview College is committed to provide a workplace which is free from bullying and violence and where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Any acts of bullying or violence by employees in breach of this policy and procedure may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

Highview College supports a procedure whereby employees who believe they have been bullied or have been the recipient of violence, or have witnessed another employee being bullied or being the recipient of violence should report it immediately.

All complaints will be dealt with in a proper and timely manner. Highview College will intervene as soon as it becomes aware of any allegations of bullying or violence.

This policy and procedure is designed to ensure employees, contractors and other authorised personnel of Highview College work in an environment which is free from bullying and violence and to provide a process for resolving complaints relating to bullying or violence.

Application

This policy applies to all employees, contractors and other authorised personnel required to perform functions on Highview College's premises.

Reference Points / Background Papers

- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic);
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic);
- Social Media and Social Networking Policy;
- Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy;
- Performance Management, Misconduct and Disciplinary Action Policy;
- Termination Policy;
- Grievance Handling and Investigation Policy.

Definitions

Supervisor means an individual who has been delegated the authority to be responsible for another employee in respect of specified workplace matters and/or decisions.

Bullying Explained

Bullying is repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person or group that is intimidating, insulting, offensive, humiliating or abusive.

Bullying may occur in relation, but not limited, to:

- culture;
- gender;
- race;
- ability or disability;
- physical appearance;
- beliefs;
- age;
- religion; or
- economic status

Types of bullying include direct physical bullying, direct verbal bullying, indirect bullying and cyberbullying.

Direct physical bullying includes punching, kicking, pushing and interfering with or damaging property.

Direct verbal bullying includes threatening, verbal abuse, shouting, teasing;

Indirect bullying includes:

- spreading malicious rumours;
- deliberately excluding someone from relevant workplace activities or functions;
- victimising someone because that person has made a complaint, is proposing to make a complaint, has helped someone else make a complaint and / or is acting or acted as a witness to a complaint;
- mimicking.

Cyberbullying includes behavior that constitutes direct and indirect bullying, using digital technologies such as a mobile phone or over the internet on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter.

For conduct to constitute bullying, there does not have to be any intention to cause harm or discomfort. All employees should therefore consider how their conduct could be perceived by others, even in circumstances where they think their behaviour is acceptable.

Bullying is not:

- setting performance standards and deadlines;
- allocating work;
- informing a worker about inappropriate behaviour;
- performance management; and/or
- requiring compliance with Highview College's policies.

Violence Explained

Violence is force directed towards a person or group that is damaging, destructive, injurious, harmful or hurtful. Violence can be a one-off incident or repeated force that can be physical, verbal or sexual. Verbal force may be threatening to use physical force.

Responsibilities

Highview College

Highview College is responsible for providing employees with advice and guidance on the application of this policy and use of the reporting procedure. Highview College will ensure that employees are trained appropriately and procedures are implemented to reasonably monitor employee behaviour. Highview College will refer to the Grievance Handling and Investigation Policy to deal with reports of bullying and violence.

Employees

All employees are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and maintaining acceptable standards of conduct at all times. All employees must abide by this policy and take steps to prevent instances of bullying and violence occurring.

Employees must not, in any circumstances, bully or be violent towards colleagues, visitors, students or any other person dealt with in the course of their employment at Highview College.

An employee who believes that they are being bullied or are the victim of violence or have witnessed another individual being bullied or be the victim of violence, are encouraged to report the bullying or violence to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

An employee should feel confident that all reports of bullying will be taken seriously and will be dealt with thoroughly and professionally as is outlined in the Grievance Handling and Investigation Policy.

Employees also have a responsibility in the event that a student reports an incident of bullying or violence. Employees will assess the situation and implement a process which is appropriate in the circumstances. This may involve:

- interviewing all the parties involved either separately or together;
- discussing an appropriate cause of action with each student;
- encouraging the recipient and the offender to meet together to resolve the issue;
- documenting the incident and the interview;
- discussing the incident with the parents;
- informing the offender that further action will be taken if it continues;
- reporting the incident to a supervisor or the Principal if it is appropriate.

Consequences of a Breach of this Policy

Highview College emphasises the need to comply with the requirements of this policy. Any employee found to be in breach of the requirements of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Employees should refer to the Performance Management, Misconduct and Disciplinary Action Policy.

Implications for Practice

At Board / Principal Level

To properly implement this policy, Highview College, the Board and/or the Principal must ensure:

- that this policy is endorsed on an annual basis;
- that copies of this policy are made available to employees, for example on the Highview College intranet, in physical form in the staff room and on employee bulletin notice boards;
- that this policy is incorporated into the Board's / Principal's record of current policies;
- that this policy is incorporated into Highview College's induction program, to ensure that all employees are aware of the Policy, have read and understood the policy, and acknowledge their commitment to comply with the policy;
- that mechanisms necessary to establish the complaints and grievance process are put in place.

At Other Levels

To properly implement this Policy, all Highview College's employees, contractors and other authorised personnel must ensure:

- that they will abide by this Policy and assist Highview College in the implementation of this Policy.

Policy designed by Clayton Utz – 2013
Policy updated by Melinda Scash - 2016