Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

Statement of Intent

Bullying (including cyber bullying), harassment and violence are not acceptable in this school and will be dealt with seriously and promptly.

Bullying, harassment and violence are hurtful and destructive. Physical bullying can be seen whereas cyber bullying happens behind screens. Bullying, harassment and violence continue to be issues of concern for students and their parents/guardians. Students have a right to be safe and can help themselves and others to be safe by talking to people they trust.

The school will work with the community, and other services and agencies as required, to support students to be responsible, safe and productive members of society.

Definition

Bullying. Bullying is an **ongoing** misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying is not the same as incidents of rude or mean behaviour. It is important to acknowledge these differences so students, staff and family members don't mis-label incidents.

Cyber Bullying. Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation.
Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior.

The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are:
- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter
- SMS (Short Message Service) also known as Text Message sent through devices
- Instant Message (via devices, email provider services, apps, and social media messaging features)
- Email

Harassment. Harassment is behaviour that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment by targeting an individual or group due to their:

- identity
- race
- culture or ethnic origin
- religion
- physical characteristics
- gender
- sexual orientation
- marital, parenting or economic status
- age
- ability or disability

Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour or a single act, directed towards an individual or group. Harassment may be intentional or unintentional and use specific words or actions that offend and

distress another person. Harassment may be regarded as minor or harmless by some but has the potential to cause significant harm to individuals or groups effected or targeted.

Sexual Harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Violence. Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person that results in psychological harm or physical injury. Violence may involve provoked or unprovoked acts and can be a single incident, a random act or can occur over time. Violence and harassment can occur as part of bullying, but can also occur in one-off conflicts or between strangers.

Discrimination. Discrimination is defined as treating an individual or a group as inferior based on their race, sex, national origin, age or other characteristics. Discrimination is against the law.

Reporting and Responsibilities

School leadership and staff are expected to:
- Develop prevention, intervention and ongoing strategies to deal with bullying
- Provide and promote positive role models
- Build student self-esteem and resilience
- Use restorative justice wherever possible to resolve conflicts or problems
- Keep lines of communication open between all parties and share information
- Follow the school's agreed procedure
- Maintain confidentiality at all times (for victims and offenders)
- Maintain records of bullying incidents and follow-up actions in EDSAS
- Respond to incidents reported in *StopIT* both swiftly and effectively

Students as victims are encouraged to:
- Ask the bully to stop, and walk away
- Where possible, use restorative practices to resolve explain
- Find a friend or group for support and reassurance
- Ignore the bully, walk away and report their actions to a trusted adult at school
- Where safe to do so, collect evidence of incidents (eg. Screen shots, notes) and share it with school staff
- Tell someone else outside of school who is able to help you.
- Report incidents of bullying via the school's *StopIT* app

Students as bystanders are encouraged to:
- Ask the bully to stop
- Be a friend and support the person being bullied
- Encourage the person bullying and the person effected by it to use restorative practices
- Seek help for the person effected by the bullying from a trusted adult
- Where safe to do so, collect evidence of incidents (eg. Screen shots, notes) and share with school staff
- Report incidents of bullying via the school's *StopIT* app

Students engaged in bullying behaviours are expected to:
- Take responsibility for their decisions
- Make genuine effort to 'fix' the harm caused using restorative practices
- Take part in a behaviour skills development program and/or community service, if required
- Attend 1:1 counselling sessions with appropriate professionals, if negotiated with parents/caregivers
- Accept and follow-through with any consequences given as a result of their bullying behaviours

School Strategies

- Prevention**:**
  - o Promote the Mannum Way (including the RIVER values and *Play is the Way* key concepts)
  - o Deliver social skills and pastoral care programs
  - o Provide staff professional learning (eg. restorative justice).
  - o Monitor situations to ensure safety and wellbeing are maintained
  - o Review yard procedures to ensure their effectiveness
  - o Recognise and deal with "hotspots" in the school grounds
  - o Provide 'safe play' options for students in all sub-schools
  - o Review and evaluate wellbeing and behaviour education strategies and policies

- Intervention:
  - o Provide support for students involved in bullying to address their weak decision and to work towards more positive, socially acceptable behaviours.
  - o Talk with parents and caregivers about bullying situations and discussing possible strategies to enhance student coping skills and diminish bullying behaviours
  - o Use restorative justice and community service wherever possible
  - o Follow-through with relevant consequences for students who do not cease bullying behaviours

Possible consequences for bullying behaviours (depending on the severity of the behaviour)

- Reminder or warning
- Time in a buddy class to reflect on behaviour
- Time with a staff member to reflect on behaviour
- Time with a senior leader to reflect on behaviour
- Focus Room if behaviour occurs in the yard
- Parent note sent home

- Parent meeting
- Internal/External suspension including a letter sent to parents/caregivers
- Re-entry meeting including commitment to a Behaviour Support Plan
- In serious cases, bullying may be reported to the police
- Notes recorded in EDSAS

Note that behaviour skills education is ongoing throughout the process.

Factors considered when deciding on a consequence

- Severity of behaviour**.** This may include legal implications and the impact of behaviour on the safety and wellbeing of self and others, the learning program and the wider community.
- Frequency of the behaviour or similar previous behaviour. Students understand that frequent lower level behaviour can also leads to the possibility of suspension.
- Age**.** A student's age and stage of development is taken into account when assessing their behaviour and any consequences.
- Disability, trauma, and mental health. Risk factors may be enhanced for Indigenous students, students in care (guardianship) and for students with a disability. Accommodations will be made based on each student's ability to understand, their experience of trauma and their cultural, economic and educational context.
- Repeated behaviour patterns. Possible triggers or trends will be reviewed to improve prevention/early intervention and support opportunities for students.
- Consistency of approach**.** Suspension, if used, is just one part of a wider behaviour education strategy. Consequences should be consistent with the MCC's Wellbeing and Self-Management Agreement which reinforces responsible behaviour.
- Remorse. Level of remorse shown by the student for their behaviour, their willingness to repair any harm caused and readiness to cease similar behaviours in the future.