



## **BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY**

### **Rationale:**

Ararat College staff, students and parents/carers will work together to create and sustain safe, supported learning environments where all students experience success through active participation and engagement in purposeful learning. The schools will build strong relationships to nurture resilience and positive self-image.

### **Vision:**

At Ararat College, we believe that all members of the college community have the right to work in a supportive environment where they feel safe and comfortable free from all forms of harassment and bullying.

Our college is committed to ensuring a caring learning environment which promotes personal growth and positive self esteem for all.

### **Beliefs:**

1. This policy is based upon the principle of respect for each other. People have the right to feel safe and no person has the right to bully or harass others.
2. To address bullying, and harassment, we need the support of students, staff and parents. Ararat Community College encourages the development of a college ethos which discourages bullying behaviour.
3. Identified incidents of bullying or harassment will be dealt with promptly, seriously and with appropriate discretion.
4. It is vital that the college provides for the welfare and guard against further harassment or bullying. Persons who have been bullied shall be given support and protection from further harassment or bullying.
5. Assistance will given to those identified as being involved in harassment and/or bullying, to recognise and change their behaviour.
6. We believe harassment is defined as:

Harassment is an abuse of power. It is an act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another.

- It can be physical, verbal, gesture, exclusion or isolation.
- It can be planned or it may be unintentional.
- It may involve groups or individuals.

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, upset or create a risk to another person' health and safety – psychologically or physically – or their property, reputation, or social acceptance on more than one occasion, which may include but is not restricted to the following:

- Name calling.
- Pushing.
- Stealing, hitting or spitting.
- Hurtful exclusion from groups or activities.
- Ridicule.
- Threatening behaviours.
- Offensive written comments or graffiti
- Offensive or threatening text messages, emails or online posts.
- Sexual remarks, gestures, jokes (Refer to Sexual Bullying and Harassment Policy for detailed definition and procedures)

### **Implementation:**

1. The college policy on Bullying and Harassment is provided to all students, staff, parents and guardians in the following forums:
  - The student diary
  - Guide for New Students
  - Parent Newsletter
  - Staff Handout
  - The School Website
2. The Bullying and Harassment policy is to be presented at a staff meeting for explanation at the beginning of each year. This will be organised by the Principal.
3. Promotion of the harassment policy is incorporated into the curriculum. Coordinators of groups of study will be responsible for this.
4. Forums are provided for parents, staff and students to be informed about current understandings of bullying, harassment, and resilience-building.

### **Strategies:**

- The Principal and Assistant Principal are responsible for distribution of this policy.
- ALL staff are responsible for the implementation of the policy.

- This policy supports and complements the Student Code of Conduct and is subject to review and amendment.
- Teachers should ensure that their class rules explicitly deal with harassment and bullying and ensure that their rules are consistent with this policy.
- Students need to be encouraged to speak up about bullying. A climate of personal **resilience needs to be promoted in curricula and extra-curricula forums.**
- The college encourages parents to make contact with the school if they have a concern about bullying, and urges that parents talk to their students about this issue.
- Staff and students should be aware of the need to conduct themselves in such a manner so as to present a positive role model to the school community at all times.
- The college will include content pertaining specifically to bullying and harassment in the curriculum.

### **Implementation**

All staff should be prepared to deal with incidents of bullying - whether it be in their classroom, in the yard or on other school activities. It is important in the development of the college ethos that all staff members have a role in the prevention of bullying. Students should be referred on to the Chaplain, Level Coordinators or the Assistant Principal only when there have been repeated offences or when the incident is extremely serious.

- Students must be aware that it is possible to “do something about” bullying/harassment. This can be made more believable and achievable for students by
  - being listened to regarding each complaint.
  - being taken seriously.
  - being treated with respect.
- That the grievance procedure must ensure confidentiality for ALL parties.
- That the grievance procedure must support all parties so a resolution will have the greatest chance of success.
- That all complaints must be acted upon within reasonable time.
- That the target should receive counselling.
- The perpetrator must be given the opportunity to alter his/her behaviour patterns.
- If, after investigation, the charge of bullying/harassment proves to be over-exaggerated then appropriate counselling will be given.