

Muhammadiyah Australia College

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY



Endorsed on:	April 2026
Endorsed by:	Board of Directors
Next Review:	April 2028



MUHAMMADIYAH AUSTRALIA COLLEGE

ABN 67 626 804 877

1-3 Killarney Drive Melton VIC 3337

www.macollege.com.au info@macollege.com.au

Purpose

Muhammadiyah Australia College is committed to providing a safe, supportive, inclusive and peaceful environment which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff. This is also to reflect that the College is committed to creating a culture of child safety in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

The College takes active measures to minimise and eliminate bullying and harassment among the students and to minimise the physical and psychological harm caused by them. The College will not tolerate any forms of bullying and harassment.

Definitions

- **Harassment** is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.
- **Bullying** is the ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated physical or social behaviours intended to cause physical, social, or psychological harm. Bullying can happen in person or online, and can have immediate, medium-term and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Bullying may involve:
 - direct physical bullying
 - hitting
 - kicking
 - tripping
 - pinching
 - pushing
 - damaging property
 - direct verbal bullying
 - name calling
 - insults
 - teasing
 - intimidation
 - homophobic or racist remarks
 - verbal abuse
 - indirect bullying
 - action designed to harm someone's reputation
 - lying and spreading rumours
 - nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
 - mimicking
 - encouraging others to socially exclude someone
 - damaging someone's reputation or social acceptance
 - cyberbullying
 - direct verbal or indirect bullying using digital technologies via mobile



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phones, defamatory websites, social media, twitter, Facebook etc

- excluding someone from social networking spaces.

The College addresses other behaviours that are not bullying but which can cause discomfort to students. This includes conflicts or disagreements where there is power imbalance. Social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate attempts to cause distress or exclusion. Many single-episode acts are not bullying.

Bullying and harassment prevention

The College addresses bullying and harassing behaviour by ensuring that:

- there is a shared understanding across the College Community of what constitutes bullying and harassing behaviour.
- students, parents, guardians, carers and staff have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities to prevent bullying and harassing behaviour.

Students

Students who are the victims of bullying and harassment, who witness them, or who become aware of them, are required to report such behaviour to staff as soon as possible.

College Staff

Whenever staff become aware of bullying and harassment among students, they will:

- address the perpetrator with appropriate disciplinary procedures and with appropriate concern for the perpetrator's welfare and mental health. The College will provide counseling by internal or external resources to help the students to deal with the behaviours when appropriate.
- address the victim or victims of the bullying and harassment behaviour and take required action to ensure their safety and wellbeing, which may include
 - counselling by teacher, staff or Principal
 - psychological counselling
 - other medical intervention
- engage in processes of restorative justice between perpetrator and victim where appropriate
- determine the extent of the bullying behaviour and take further action if necessary, including:
 - further investigation, including into the welfare of the perpetrator
 - initiate further support for the victim or victims
 - raising the matter with other College Staff and the College Principal
 - initiating further disciplinary action against the perpetrator
 - involving parents, guardians and carers
- record the incident of bullying in the Accident and Incidents Register.



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Parents, Guardians and Carers

Parents, guardians and carers may become aware of their child's involvement in bullying and harassment as either a perpetrator or victim. Where their child is a perpetrator, parents, guardians and carers are expected to take active steps to prevent their child from bullying and harassing others, and to cooperate with efforts made by staff to prevent them.

Where their child is a victim, parents, guardians and carers are expected to support their child through counselling, providing access to support services including medical services if required, and to contact the Principal if the perpetrator of the bullying is a student at the College.

Parents, guardians and carers may also contact the College in cases where a perpetrator of bullying or harassment is not a member of the College Community and where the College may be able to provide psychological support to the victim.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying using digital technologies including mobile phones, email and social media. Cyberbullying includes:

- pranking – repeated hang ups, anonymous mocking or threatening phone calls
- image sharing, including unflattering private images
- sexually explicit image sharing
- direct or indirect verbal assault
- identity theft, or assuming someone's identity online and negatively representing them
- hate sites, the creation of website for excluding individuals or groups

While cyberbullying among students can happen outside of the scope of the College's discipline policy, the College has an ongoing role and responsibility to prevent cyberbullying during and outside school hours.

The expectation of staff, students and their parents, guardians and carers towards cyberbullying are similar for bullying. Students who are victims of, witness to, or become aware of, cyberbullying of other College students should inform staff. Staff will then follow up with students and parents.

Procedures for responding to a student who bullies or harasses others

Stage 1

If the bullying or harassment incident is minor or first time occurrence, teachers may elect to use one or more anti-bullying practices:

- stopping the bullying/re-statement of rules and consequences
- restorative questioning
- think time detention
- private conference
- shared control discussion



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If the student does not take control over his/her behaviour, an Incident Report Form should be completed and submitted to the student welfare coordinator or principal.

Stage 2

If the bullying or harassment continues, or in instances of severe bullying or harassing, a referral should be made to the Student Welfare Coordinator or Principal.

Here, the Student Welfare Coordinator (or Principal) may:

- meet with the student to develop a behaviour contract
- provide discussion/mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies including structured learning activities
- conduct a restorative conference separately with the perpetrator and “target”
- investigate the matter taking into account compliance with procedural fairness principles.

Stage 3

For students who have been identified with severe/repeated bullying or harassing behaviour that is resistant to change, an individual ‘strength building’ plan should be developed by the Student Welfare Coordinator in consultation with students, parents/carers and teachers. Individual strength-building plans and associated interventions help connect the student to positive people, programs and actions in the community, school and home as well as develop the student’s inner social and emotional strengths.

Stage 4

Students whose severe/repeated bullying or harassing behaviour resists school efforts and represent a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing of others, should be referred to outside agencies for evaluation. Student Welfare Coordinators will need to be familiar with those community agencies and organisations that can offer more intensive services to the student and student’s family.

The college may choose, if bullying or harassment persists or the initial incident is of such magnitude, that parents/carers will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the College’s Student Behaviour Management Policy . Furthermore, the Principal may commence formal disciplinary action in line with the Suspension and Expulsion Policy at any stage in the process depending on contextual information relating to the severity of the bullying (including-cyber bullying) and harassment.

Relevant Policies

Duty of Care Policy

Yard Duty and Supervision Policy

Child Safety Policy

Complaints Management Policy



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Student Behavior Management Policy

First Aid Policy

Restraint and Seclusion Policy

Communication

This policy will be communicated to our College community in either the following ways:

- Provided to staff at induction and included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff meetings/briefings as required
- Made available publicly on our College website
- Made available in hard copy from College administration upon request