Avalon College Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

1. Purpose

Avalon College is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment, free from bullying and harassment. This policy defines unacceptable behaviours, outlines preventive measures, and establishes clear procedures for responding to incidents of bullying and harassment. The policy complies with **Ministerial Order No. 1359, VRQA Minimum Standards, Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic), Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic),** and **Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)**.

2. Definitions

- **Bullying**: Repeated verbal, physical, social, or psychological aggression intended to cause harm, distress, or fear. Bullying can occur in person, online (cyberbullying), or indirectly through exclusion or spreading rumours.
- **Harassment**: Behaviour targeting an individual or group based on race, gender, sexuality, disability, religion, or other protected attributes, creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment.
- **Cyberbullying**: Using digital technologies (social media, messaging platforms, emails) to bully, harass, threaten, or humiliate.

3. Policy Statement

Avalon College maintains a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment. All members of the school community—students, staff, volunteers, and parents—have a shared responsibility to foster a respectful, supportive, and safe environment.

4. Responsibilities

Managing Director:

- Final authority on policy implementation and disciplinary measures

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Child Safety Officer:

- Oversees investigations, reporting, and student wellbeing support

Boarding and Teaching Staff:

- Actively monitor student behaviour and interactions.
- Immediately intervene in and report incidents of bullying or harassment.
- Provide support to affected students and manage incidents according to established procedures.
- Model respectful, inclusive behaviour.

Student Responsibilities:

- Respect others, report bullying, and follow behavioural expectations as outlined in the **Student Code of Conduct (AC-WEL-001)**
- Refrain from engaging in bullying or harassment.
- Report witnessed or experienced bullying promptly to staff.
- Participate in school initiatives promoting positive relationships and anti-bullying awareness.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:

- Encourage their child to uphold respectful behaviours and school rules.
- Cooperate with the school in addressing bullying or harassment incidents involving their child.
- Notify the school immediately if they become aware of bullying or harassment incidents.

5. Prevention Strategies

Avalon College actively promotes bullying prevention through:

- Orientation sessions on bullying awareness and respectful relationships.

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- Regular Regular wellbeing education embedded in class programs.
- Visual reminders and posters across classrooms and boarding areas
- Clear communication of behavioural expectations and consequences.
- Mandatory annual training for staff and regular sessions for students delivered by internal and external specialists.
- Peer-support initiatives and inclusive practices across the school community.

6. Reporting Procedures

Students, staff or parents should report incidents of bullying or harassment as follows:

- Reports can be made verbally or in writing to the Child Safety Officer, boarding staff, classroom teachers, or any trusted staff member.
- Detailed records of incidents are documented promptly on Orah.
- Confidentiality is maintained throughout the investigation process.

7. Responding to Bullying and Harassment

Avalon College follows a structured approach to incidents:

- Prompt reporting and documentation of incidents by staff.
- Investigation of reported incidents, ensuring confidentiality and procedural fairness.
- Appropriate intervention measures, including restorative practices, counselling support, disciplinary action, or external referral if necessary.
- Communication with parents/guardians involved, outlining actions taken and providing ongoing support.
- Regular follow-up to monitor student wellbeing and prevent recurrence.

8. Student Support and Follow-up

Avalon College provides ongoing support for students affected by bullying or harassment through:

- Counselling services and wellbeing checks.
- Academic assistance and pastoral care.

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- Regular monitoring to ensure bullying behaviour ceases and to support student reintegration and recovery.

9. Consequences of Breaches

Consequences for bullying and harassment depend on severity and frequency and may include:

- Counselling or mediation.
- Temporary loss of privileges.
- Detentions or behaviour contracts.
- Removal from social activities or excursions.
- Suspension from school or boarding placement.
- Expulsion in cases of severe or repeated misconduct.

10. Record-Keeping

Avalon College maintains confidential records of bullying and harassment incidents on Orah, including reports, investigations, and actions taken, consistent with privacy requirements and legislative standards. All reports, investigations, and outcomes are recorded by the **Child Safety Officer**.

11. Communication and Accessibility

This policy is communicated through:

- Student and parent handbooks.
- Avalon College website.
- Orientation sessions for new students and parents.
- Annual information sessions and regular staff training events.

12. Review and Approval

This policy will be reviewed annually or as necessitated by legislative or regulatory updates. Amendments are approved by the Avalon College Managing Director.

Approved by: Avalon College Managing Director

Signature:

Date: 27 March 2025

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