



Lakeview Senior College

Bullying Prevention Policy

Rationale

Lakeview Senior College (LSC) adopts a 'zero-tolerance policy' towards all forms of bullying. All members of Lakeview Senior College have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to be taught, and a right to feel safe and secure in their school environment.

This policy is part of and to be read in conjunction with the *Student Engagement Policy* and the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.

Guiding principles

1. Bullying behaviour at Lakeview Senior College will be addressed as part of our school's duty of care to provide a safe and supportive school environment.
2. Students must be empowered to talk about what is happening to them if bullying is to stop.
3. We promote a school community in which everybody feels valued, respected and safe, and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted.
4. Our school values and behaviours will be central to the bullying prevention policy.

Definition

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time.

Types of bullying

- verbal or written abuse - such as targeted name-calling or jokes, or displaying offensive posters
- violence - including threats of violence
- sexual harassment - unwelcome or unreciprocated conduct of a sexual nature, which could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation
- homophobia and other hostile behaviour towards students relating to gender and sexuality
- discrimination including racial discrimination - treating people differently because of their identity
- cyberbullying - either online or via mobile phone
- indirect - it is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation.

What is not bullying?

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and may require teacher intervention and management.

- mutual conflict - which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying
- social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others

Indicators of bullying

Changes in mood, behaviour and physical appearance can all be warning signs of being bullied; however, some students may not display any warning signs at all.

Warning signs at school

If a student is being bullied at school they may:

- become aggressive and unreasonable
- start to get into fights
- refuse to talk about what is wrong
- have unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches, particularly those appearing after recess or lunch
- have missing or damaged belongings or clothes
- have falling school grades
- be alone often or excluded from friendship groups at school
- show a change in their ability or willingness to speak up in class
- appear insecure or frightened
- be a frequent target for teasing, mimicking or ridicule.

Warning signs at home

A parent may observe changes in their child's behaviour at home which they can report to the school. Their child may:

- have trouble getting out of bed
- not want to go to school
- change their method or route to school or become frightened of walking to school
- change their sleeping or eating patterns
- have frequent tears, anger, mood swings and anxiety
- have unexplained bruises, cuts and scratches
- have stomach aches or unexplained pain
- have missing or damaged belongings or clothes
- ask for extra pocket money or food
- arrive home hungry
- show an unwillingness to discuss, or secrecy about, their online communication.

It might not be bullying

Some changes in behaviour may also be a result of other student issues such as depression or substance abuse, which may require a different response. Whether it involves bullying or other student issues, schools can help out, for example, by involving student wellbeing staff.

Roles and responsibilities – students and parents/guardians

Students – what can you do?

If you experience bullying, you could:

- tell the student/s who are bullying to stop, making sure that you state clearly that the behaviour is unwelcome and offensive (this might be hard to do)
- ignore them and walk away
- seek help, and talk about it with someone you trust
- report it to a member of staff or a trustworthy friend. You should feel confident that the incident can be solved.
- write a description of the event and give it to your Year Level Coordinator
- talk it over openly with your parents, as they can help you make a decision
- make sure that you **do not** retaliate with physical or verbal abuse
- walk home with a friend if you are experiencing bullying on the way to or from school
- report it to the Wellbeing staff at school or to your Year Level Coordinator.

If you experience **cyber-bullying**, you should:

- **not** respond to any electronic bullying
- save the evidence if possible so you can show it someone who can help
- block access for the person trying to contact you
- change your email address
- never give anyone your password/login details
- never include your surname, home address, phone, school or email address on personal websites
- tell a trusted adult at school or at home.

If you **see someone else being bullied**, you could:

- make sure you are not a by-stander by demonstrating the following behaviours
- tell the person or people to stop bullying (this might be hard to do)
- offer comfort to the person being bullied
- encourage the person being bullied to inform someone
- decide to protect others by seeking help such as talking it over with a teacher, Year Level Coordinator or Wellbeing staff member.

Parents and guardians – what can you do?

Take the bullying incident seriously and know that Lakeview Senior College will too.

Stay calm and positive

It can be upsetting when your child is being bullied. Focus on identifying a solution with your child. A confident, positive and resilient appearance can stop bullying from continuing. It might be helpful to draw on your own networks to get support for yourself while you are helping your child.

Talk to us

You do not need to ask your child's permission to talk to the school. Understandably, children who are being bullied are often fearful and worry that any action will worsen the problem. The solution is to make a parental decision to talk to the school. A consistent and co-operative approach by both the home and school is important. You can

always let your child know later what actions you have taken. Let the school take responsibility for helping students who are bullying to change their ways.

We can help

A safe and supportive school environment can help prevent bullying. Students should feel and be safe everywhere at Lakeview Senior College: in the classrooms, the library, the toilets, the bus, and the playground. Everyone at school can work together to create an environment where bullying is not acceptable. The best outcomes for your child will be achieved by you and the school working together.

Bullying outside the school

If bullying happens online or via text messages outside school report it to the school, especially if other children from the school are involved or it is making your child uncomfortable at school.

Lakeview Senior College is aware of the potential harmful effects of bullying, including cyberbullying, on young people and take reports of bullying seriously.

Talk to us immediately

The sooner the school receives information about a bullying issue the quicker we can respond. School staff understand that it can be distressing to report that your child is being bullied. We will try to support you and your child as much as possible and include you in discussions about strategies that could be used.

What should I do?

- contact Lakeview Senior College and make an appointment to discuss the issue with the relevant Year Level Coordinator or Wellbeing Coordinator (9219 3100).
- do not directly approach any other student or their family.
- read this policy for further information.
- work with your child's school to solve the problem by establishing a plan for dealing with the current situation and future bullying incidents.

Lakeview Senior College must follow privacy laws and may not be able to tell you everything that has taken place, especially about any other children involved. These laws also keep you and your child's information private too.

Keep your child safe

You should contact the school immediately if your child's safety is at risk.

Talk with your child

Encourage your child to talk about what happened. If they want to try to deal with the bullying themselves, discuss these strategies and set a short period of time to see if they can resolve the situation. Tell your child that reporting the bullying is okay. Assure your child that it is not their fault.

Encourage your child to:

- try to act unimpressed or unaffected
- use other strategies to diffuse the situation (e.g. agreeing in an offhand way with the bullying when they say offensive or negative things - this is known as fogging)
- say 'No!' firmly
- talk to the teacher or another staff member, e.g. school guidance officer
- act confidently even when they don't feel it.

Practise some strategies at home with your child to help them to:

- stand and walk in a way that appears more confident
- give a quick reply to surprise or disarm the other child
- use a routine response (e.g. okay, whatever) that implies that the child is not bothered.

Talk about what we know doesn't work with bullying:

- fighting back
- bullying the bully
- ignoring it
- playing with a different group of friends
- remaining silent about the problem.

Management of bullying incidents

Prevention

The school is proactive in preventing bullying and harassment by actively working with the school community to promote a culture that has a zero tolerance of bullying and harassment. Students and staff are empowered to talk about their needs, and their rights to learn and to feel safe and comfortable are strongly supported through policy and actions.

The school implements a number of programs and activities that promote the development of social skills and community responsibilities.

Strategies	Actions
Parent, teachers, students and the community are made aware of the College's stance on bullying, its characteristics and the College programs and response.	Bullying prevention policy on College website. Documentation in the student diary.
Professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and the strategies that counteract them are facilitated.	Staff meeting workshops and presentations, including: * Safe Schools Coalition * Bullying prevention and incident response
Student workshops, productions and programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving are further developed.	Delivery through Pathways curriculum. Delivery through Wellbeing programs (see overview below).
Students are encouraged to develop a range of strategies for dealing with bullying incidents.	Delivery through Pathways curriculum. Delivery through Wellbeing programs (see overview below).
The Bullying Prevention Policy and procedures are included in induction packages for new staff.	Staff induction packs contain documentation of the LSC Bullying Prevention Policy.
The LSC staff and student leaders model respectful behaviour.	Staff professional development programs in relation to wellbeing of students will continue. Student Leaders undertake specific training in modelling respectful behaviour.
Students are made aware of the support people available to assist with bullying issues, and the steps involved in reporting and dealing with harassment issues.	Student version of Bullying Prevention Policy included in student diary. Delivery through Pathways curriculum. Delivery through Wellbeing programs (see overview below)

Wellbeing programs to prevent bullying

Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
The following College-wide wellbeing programs run across all year levels and are tailored for the particular year level.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive friends training • Cyber bullying/bullying prevention workshop • Wear It Purple Day Program (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender) • Gay, Straight, Lesbian Alliance • R U Ok Day? • Sexual health workshops 		

Intervention

	Teacher action	Year Level Coordinator (YLC) action
First stage If bullying is a first incident and minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reiterate the College values and behaviours and positively reinforce these Have a discussion with the bully & victim. Use Restorative Practices to address the issue Provide personal support and offer Wellbeing referral Determine if a consequence is appropriate Record incident for reference and monitor the situation Report the incident to Year Level Coordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the incident with the reporting teacher Record the incident in the student file If the file indicates prior incidents of bullying, all students involved should be interviewed Inform both the bully and victim's parents of the incident and the involvement of their child Decide if any further follow up is needed with parents or wellbeing team. Convene a Student Support Group (SSG) if needed. Discuss the incident with the Year Level Leading Teacher Impose sanctions for the bully and any by-standers as appropriate Provide feedback on action taken to the teacher, and to other staff
Second stage If bullying behaviour is repeated, or it is initially more serious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report the incident to the Year Level Coordinator Establish that the victim is safe from the bully's behaviour. Isolate the bully from the victim using either a seating plan or removal from class Address the victim's needs: support can be provided from the wellbeing team and/or YLC. Document the incident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the incident with the reporting teacher Interview all students involved in the incident. Record all details of the incident Inform both the bully and the victim's parents of the incident and the involvement of their child. Arrange a parent interview for the bully and for the victim if necessary Determine if suspension or more serious action is most appropriate. Convene a SSG Offer ongoing support via the wellbeing team Record the incident in the student file and advise the Year Level Leading Teacher of incident Determine if consequences are appropriate for any by-standers Provide feedback on action taken to the teacher, and to other staff as required Follow up with the bully & and victim within two weeks to assess if further action is needed.
Third stage If the bullying is severe or repeated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report the incident to the Year Level Coordinator immediately. Send a student to get the Year Level Leading Teacher or Assistant Principal if necessary Establish that the victim is safe from the bully's behaviour. Isolate the bully from the victim. The bully should remain under supervision Address the victim's needs: support can be provided from the wellbeing team and/or YLC. Document the incident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isolate students as required Discuss the incident with the reporting teacher Interview all students involved in the incident. Record all details of the incident Contact an Assistant Principal to determine which of the following are appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Suspension (i) Police contact and Department of Education and Early Childhood Emergency Management (iii) Other necessary actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact the parent/guardian of the bully and inform them of the incident. Organise a SSG meeting and arrange for the bully to be sent home Contact the parent/guardian of the victim and inform them of the incident. Arrange an interview Organise appropriate internal and/or external support Record incident in students' files and advise the Year Level Leading Teacher of incident Determine if consequences are appropriate for any by-standers Provide feedback on action taken to the teacher, and to other staff as required Follow up with the bully & and victim within two weeks to assess if further action is needed.

Consequences may include

- student mediation
- parent conference
- withdrawal from class
- withdrawal of privileges
- required to attend behavioural sessions or counselling
- online bullying modules
- detention
- internal suspension
- external suspension
- referral to law enforcement
- referral to Children, Youth and Families
- repeated offences may result in a recommendation for expulsion
- other measures deemed appropriate

False claim

If it is found that any student has deliberately falsely accused another student of bullying, then the accusing student will be dealt with as would an offending student.

Critical incidents

Critical incidents will be referred to Department of Education and Early Childhood Student Critical Incident Unit.

Parent complaints

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complainschool.aspx>

Support services

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/parents.aspx>

Kids Help Line

<http://www.kidshelp.com.au/>

1800 55 1800

Communications plan

The Bullying Prevention Policy will be communicated in three main methods:

- Online copy via the College website <http://www.lakeviewcollege.vic.edu.au/>
- Student version included in the student diary
- Via College wellbeing programs and Pathways curriculum

Policy review

The Bullying Prevention Policy will be reviewed annually in line with the Annual Implementation Plan and make adjustments when needed, if required prior to the 12 month period review.