

Bullying & Harassment Policy

Purpose:	To provide staff, students, parents and guardians with definitions of bullying (including cyber-bullying) and harassment. To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying or harassment is acceptable in-line with Child Safe Standards in Ministerial Order 870 To outline the school's response if bullying or harassment occurs.
Scope:	All students, staff, parents and guardians
Implemented by:	School Principal, Mentors employed in their capacity as VIT Registered Teachers
Approved by:	KVS Board
Reviewed:	Every two years or as regulatory changes arise or improvements are identified
Communicated via:	KVS Website, Staff Induction, Meetings and Handbook, Parent Handbook, Policies and Procedures Manual

Overview

KVS is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff which encourages self-esteem, cooperation, personal growth and a positive attitude to learning and teaching. Our Bullying and Harassment Policy exists alongside the School's Behaviour Management Policy. When necessary, this policy is discussed with children as are the rights and responsibilities of each child, the meaning of bullying (including cyber-bullying) and harassment and what to do if they or someone they know experiences them.

What are bullying, cyber-bullying and harassment?

Bullying can be done in various ways including physically, verbally, socially and psychologically. It is behavior directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear.

A student is experiencing bullying when they experience any of the following behaviours in an ongoing way:

- Hitting, pushing, kicking, punching etc.
- Humiliation, put-downs, name calling
- Rumors, ignoring, exclusion
- Staring, dirty looks, notes, spreading rumours

Cyber-bullying consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through an electronic medium such as mobile phone, blog or social media. It can be verbal (over the phone), or written (threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment).

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

When people are bullied or harassed some effects might be anger, embarrassment, fear and humiliation, loss of self-confidence and reduced function and potential.

How does cyber-bullying differ to traditional bullying?

1. **Availability** – It can occur anywhere and at any time. Misperception that there are no real-world consequences for online actions.
2. **Anonymity** – The impression of anonymity in the 'online world' leads young people to feel less accountable for their actions and provides a false bravado to would-be bullies.
3. **Geography** – Rather than being limited to the schoolyard, cyber-bullying can operate wherever a young person uses the internet or a mobile phone, which occurs in most areas of a young person's life.
4. **Impact** – The internet provides the means for 'bullying' comments to be available to a wider audience. Through social networking sites, these comments can be viewed by potentially an unlimited number of people. The impact of and embarrassment caused by these statements is increased many times over.
5. **Intent** – A private message or joke that is forwarded on may become offensive or harassing even though that was not the intention of the original sender.
6. **Permanence** – Verbal comments are fleeting. Online content is tracked and stored and can potentially resurface at any time.
7. **Democracy** – Anyone can be a victim – students, teachers, parents.

Bullying – What should you do if it's happening to you?

If any of the above behaviours are happening to you or someone you know, you / they should:

- Tell the person to STOP (or you can just ignore it) and walk away

- Tell a Mentor, the School Principal, your parents or another person you trust about it as soon as possible;
- If you cannot talk to anyone you know about it, phone the Kids Help Line on: 1800 55 1800

Procedure Following a Report of Bullying

1. The Mentor who has been designated to investigate the report of bullying or the School Principal asks the student to describe what happened
2. The other student(s) will be asked to describe what happened
3. The Designated Mentor, or School Principal will determine if what has occurred is bullying (including cyber-bullying), harassment or another type of behavior.
4. If it is not bullying, the behavior will be identified as Level 1, 2 or 3 in the Behaviour Management Policy and the equivalent level response will be put into place.
5. If the behavior falls within the definition of bullying (or cyber-bullying) the offending student(s) will be instructed to stop the behavior and his/her parents will be notified.
6. The Designated Mentor or School Principal may decide that a Restorative Practices meeting should occur between the students involved.
7. The parents of the student(s) involved will be informed of this process and the outcomes.
8. If the bullying behavior continues, a meeting will be held with the offending student, his/her parents, the Designated Mentor and School Principal. A Personal Management Plan will be developed at this meeting.
9. The behavior of all students involved will be monitored by all school staff.
10. If the Personal Management Plan is not followed, the question of the offending student's enrolment will be referred to the school board for consideration as per the Behaviour Management Policy.
11. The KVS Board will either cancel the student's enrolment or place other conditions on his / her enrolment which will be closely monitored.
12. Ongoing support will be offered to the student who has experienced the bullying behavior and group dynamics will be closely monitored by all staff throughout the day.
13. Student programs will be organized to raise student's awareness about bullying (including cyber-bullying) and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion of matters and to aid development of

attitudes and school culture. Some matters will be dealt with formally in the curriculum and in peer support programs, leadership programs, extra-curricular programs and occasional activities run by outside experts and workers.

Addressing the risk of Bullying & Cyber-bullying at KVS

KVS will address the risk of bullying and cyber-bully in the school community by;

- Promoting and supporting the development of respectful and meaningful relationships between students, staff, families and members of the community.
- Training staff to recognise bullying and cyber-bullying, respond confidently and appropriately to bullying, and to understand that bullying behaviour should not be ignored.
- Encourage staff to share their concerns with other school personnel to raise awareness of suspected instances of bullying to ensure that further incidents are quickly recognised and can be dealt with promptly.
- Ensure that all members of the school community understand their obligation to report accounts of suspected bullying or cyber-bullying to Mentors or the School Principal, in accordance with KVS policies for reporting concerns and complaints.

Documentation

KVS understands that documentation of known or suspected bullying incidents is a critical component of an effective bullying prevention effort.

The form of records relating to suspected or confirmed instances of bullying will be determined by the nature of the offence but may be in the form of an incident report, documented concern or complaint, behavioural management record, or individual student file.

Related Resources

Behaviour Management Pathway

Personal Management Plan

Child Safe Standards Statement

Related Policies

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Concerns & Complaints Policy
- Student Welfare Policy
- Digital Technologies Policy