Helena College
Bullying Prevention and Management Policy

This policy is applicable to:	Staff, Students & Parents	
Managed by:	CompliSpace	Current as at August 2019
Contact position:	Risk and Compliance Officer	
Contact number:	9298 9100	

Bullying Prevention and Management Policy

The Hazard – Bullying

Helena College has adopted the national definition of bullying for Australian schools so that our College community has a shared understanding of what is bullying.

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

What is not Bullying

- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)
- not liking someone or a single act of social rejection
- one-off acts of meanness or spite
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

However, these conflicts still need to be addressed and resolved.

Signs of Bullying

Signs a teacher may notice include if a student:

- becomes aggressive or unreasonable
- refuses to talk about what is wrong
- starts to do less well in academic work
- is often alone or excluded from friendship groups
- becomes less willing to speak up in class
- withdraws from friends and activities they previously enjoyed.

Signs a parent or carer might notice include if their child:

- does not want to attend school or participate in school activities
- is becoming withdrawn and lacking in confidence
- is acting unreasonably
- drops in their academic performance
- changes in their eating or sleep patterns

The signs of possible bullying online can be the same as above but may include other behaviours involving electronic devices, for example a child may:

- be hesitant about going online
- be nervous when a message appears
- be visibly upset after using a device
- hide or close the device when others enter the room
- spend unusually long hours online and appear tense

Parents and carers are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the College through a class teacher, Deputy/Head of Junior School, or a member of the Student Services team.

Helena College's Policy

Helena College recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the College are respected and accepted.
Bullying is not tolerated at Helena College.

It is our policy that:
- bullying be managed through a 'whole of College community approach' involving students, staff and parents/carers
- bullying prevention strategies be implemented within the College on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age-appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/carers to recognise bullying and respond appropriately
- bullying response strategies be tailored to the circumstances of each incident
- staff maintain a positive culture of respectful relationships where bullying is less likely to occur
- bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed against best practice

Bullying Prevention Strategies

Helena College recognises that the implementation of whole-College prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising, incidents of bullying within our community.

The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a 'no-bullying' culture within the College.
- a structured curriculum and peer group support system, that provides age-appropriate information and skills to support bullying prevention (including cyber bullying);
- education and training of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies;
- regular provision of information to parents/carers to raise awareness in the College community to equip them to recognise signs of bullying and know how to raise their concerns with the College;
- promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/carers;
- promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/carers;
- reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/carers and staff;
- regular risk assessments of bullying within the College are undertaken;
- records of reported bullying incidents are maintained and analysed in order to identify persistent bullies and/or victims and to implement effective strategies;
- statements supporting bullying prevention such as the Student Code of Conduct are included in the Parent Handbook and via SEQTA;
- a Child Friendly Complaints policy is in place and age appropriate explanatory posters are displayed around the College and students are aware how they can make their concerns known;
- education of the College community on health conditions to promote understanding and to reduce stigma and fear;
- promotion of student awareness and a 'no-bullying' culture through assemblies, posters and participation in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

Reporting Bullying

Students and their parents/guardians are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying incidents, for fear that it will only make matters worse. A key part of the College's bullying prevention and management strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well as providing assurance to students who experience bullying that:
- bullying is not tolerated within the College;
- their concerns will be taken seriously;
- the College has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.

Bullying incidences can be advised to the College verbally (or in writing) through any of the following avenues:
- informing a trusted teacher/staff member;
- informing a member of the Student Services Team (GFC), Deputy/Head of Junior School or College Counsellor.

Responding to Bullying

Bullying behaviours vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts.

In all circumstances the College:
- takes bullying incidents seriously;
- provides assurance to the victim that they are not at fault and confidentiality will be respected;
- takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the victim, the wrongdoer and any bystanders;
- takes time to understand any concerns of individuals involved;
- maintains records of reported bullying incidents;
- will escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents.

Actions that may be taken when responding to bullying include:
- the *Method of Shared Concern* Approach (Pikas) (in initial stages for low level bullying);
- the *No Blame* Approach (Maines & Robinson) (in initial stages for low level bullying);
- notification of/consultation with parents/carers;
- offering counselling to students who persistently bully as well as victims;
- implementing effective follow up strategies;
- disciplinary action, at the Principal's discretion, including suspension and expulsion of students who persistently bully or in the case of severe incidents.

Staff Responsibilities
All staff are responsible to:
- model appropriate behaviour at all times;
- deal with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy;
- ensure that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them is recorded appropriately;
- be vigilant in monitoring students that have been identified as victims or students who persistently bully;
- acknowledge the right of parents/carers to speak to the College if they believe their child has been bullied.

Parent Responsibilities
Parents have a responsibility to:
- support their children to become responsible online and offline citizens;
- be aware of the College's Bullying Prevention and Management Policy;
- follow the Parents/Guardians' Code of Conduct and support their children in following the Student Code of Conduct;
- report incidents of school related bullying to the College;
- work collaboratively with the College to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

Student Responsibilities
Students have a responsibility to:
- enable others to learn in a safe and supportive environment;
- treat others with respect, courtesy and kindness;
- behave as responsible citizens in their offline and online behaviour;
- behave as responsible bystanders reporting incidents of bullying.

Implementation
This policy is implemented through a combination of:
- staff training;
- student and parent/carer education and information;
- effective incident reporting strategies;
- effective management of bullying incidents when reported or observed;
- the creation of a 'no bullying' culture within the College community;
- effective record keeping procedures;
- initiation of corrective actions when necessary.

Discipline for Breach of Policy

Where a staff member breaches this Policy, Helena College will take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

Review:

Authors	Date	Comments
S Boyett	1/8/2019	Revised to incorporate Bullying Prevention and Management: Responsibilities and Delegations Policy and updated definition of Bullying.