

Policy: SCS13 Bullying and Harassment Policy	Issued: May 2019
REVIEW: May 2020	Approved: Sue Holmes (Principal)

# Bullying and Harassment Policy

## Purpose of this policy

To support schools to create safe and respectful school environments and prevent bullying, cyberbullying and other unacceptable behaviours.

## Policy

Schools must include a statement about bullying and cyberbullying behaviours in the Rights and Responsibilities section of their Student Engagement Policy.

## Definition

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. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

This table describes the categories of bullying.

Category	Includes
Direct physical bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property</li> </ul>
Direct verbal bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.</li> </ul>
Indirect bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>action designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lying and spreading rumours</li> <li>playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate</li> <li>mimicking</li> <li>encouraging others to socially exclude someone</li> <li>damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Cyberbullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This</li> </ul>

Category	Includes
	includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces.

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

Mutual conflict: involves an argument or disagreement between people but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

Social rejection or dislike: is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Single-episode acts: of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours.

### **Definition of Harassment**

A person is subject to harassment if the person is subjected to repeated behaviour which is unwelcome or unsolicited or that the person considers to be offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening or that a reasonable person would consider to be offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening.

Harassment can include

Detailed below are examples of behaviours that may be regarded as harassment if the behaviour is repeated or occurs as part of a pattern of behaviour. This is not an exhaustive list. However, it does outline some of the more common types of harassing behaviours, including:

- abusing a person loudly, usually when others are present
- repeated threats of severe punishment for no reason
- constant ridicule and being put down
- leaving offensive messages on email or the telephone
- sabotaging a person's work, for example, by deliberately withholding or supplying incorrect information, hiding documents or equipment, not passing on messages and getting a person into trouble in other ways
- maliciously excluding and isolating a person from activities
- persistent and unjustified criticisms, often about petty, irrelevant or insignificant matters
- humiliating a person through gestures, sarcasm, criticism and insults, often in front of others.
- spreading gossip or false, malicious rumours about a person with an intent to cause the person harm.

Being bullied or harassed can have different effects on different people. Some feelings can include:

- Feeling unhappy or left out
- Wanting to stay away or not join in
- Feeling frightened, embarrassed, angry or unsafe
- Finding it difficult to concentrate or sleep
- Being confused about how to deal with the situation

### **Role of students who witness bullying or harassment- 'There are no innocent bystanders'**

- Don't join in – being part of the group where someone is being bullied is still being a bully.

- Report bullying, so both the target and the bully are able to get help.
- When possible tell the bully to stop, sometimes peer group advice is stronger than messages coming from an adult.
- Reporting bullying is a mature and responsible act. It is not “dobbing”.

## Approaches

Sherbrooke Community school:

- promotes and supports safe and respectful learning environments where bullying is not tolerated
- has whole-school strategies and initiatives as outlined in the Department’s anti-bullying policy
- has developed a Student Engagement Policy that includes processes and strategies to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying and other forms of unacceptable behaviour.
- works in partnership with parents to reduce and manage bullying.
- take a whole-school approach focusing on safety and wellbeing.
- Uses and explicitly teacher school wide positive behavior strategies.

## Related legislation

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006

## Other resources

- [Bullying. NoWay!](#) – the joint Australian Education Authorities website
- [National Safe Schools Framework](#) providing a set of nationally agreed principles for safe and supportive school environments and includes appropriate responses that schools can use to address the issues of bullying, harassment, violence, and child abuse and neglect

### A. Primary Prevention:

- Professional development for staff relating to bullying, cyber-bullying and harassment and proven counter-measures.
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying, cyber-bullying and harassment, their characteristics, effects on victims and the school’s programs and response.
- Programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem-solving.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify with students at the start of each year the school policy on bullying, cyber-bullying and harassment.
- All students to be provided with individual and confidential computer and network logins and passwords. Processes will be put in place to ensure tracking of student activity on the school’s computer equipment and network, including the use of memory sticks. Firewalls will be installed to eliminate outside traffic into the school’s network and intranet.
- The health curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies.
- Staff, students and parents will promote the philosophy of ‘No Put Downs’.
- The use of mobile phones by students at school is prohibited.

### B. Early Intervention:

- Promote students and staff reporting of bullying, cyber-bullying and harassment incidents involving themselves or others.
- Reminders by the principal and teachers for students and staff to report incidents.
- Regular monitoring of student traffic on school’s computer networks to identify potential problems.

- Parents encouraged to contact the school if they become aware of a problem.
- Recognition for positive behaviour and resolution of problems.
- Parents to be contacted if staff become aware of a problem.

**C. Intervention:**

- Once identified, each bully, cyber-bully or harasser, victim and witnesses will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented.
- Students and staff identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations.
- Both bullies and victims will be offered counselling, mediation and support.
- Removal of cyber-bullies from access to the school's network and computers for a period of time. Mobile phone confiscation if sighted by teacher.
- If student bullying, cyber-bullying or harassment persists, parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the staged response for unacceptable behaviour.

**D. Post Violation:**

Refer to the bullying staged response.

## STAGED RESPONSE - BULLYING

**Bullying (non-verbal, verbal, physical, cyber-bullying)**

- I. Bullying can be identified by a staff member who has recognised a pattern of incidences or a complaint made by a student or community member that will be investigated and substantiated.
- II. Once bullying has been confirmed, an interview process will be undertaken between students, parents and teachers to obtain the details of the incidences to determine the course of action.
- III. Bullying is considered a major behaviour at Sherbrooke and will be documented and treated as such.
- IV. **If bullying is identified and substantiated, then one or more of the following consequences may apply:**
  - **Exclusion from class**
  - **Exclusion from other school activities**
  - **Suspension**
  - **Expulsion**
  - **Individual behaviour plan**
- V. Restorative practice
- VI. Counselling if deemed necessary.

**Evaluation:**

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and endorsed by School Council.

**EVALUATION:**

This policy was last ratified by School Council in ..... and should be reviewed by .....

Signed:

..... School Council President

..... Principal