Preventing & Managing Bullying Information for Parents

Eastern Hills Senior High School commits to ensuring a safe and supportive environment where all members of the school community have the right to be respected and have a responsibility to respect each other. We aim to provide an environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe for all members of our school community. We aim to do this by:

- preventing occurrence of bullying by educating students on establishing positive relationships
- reinforcing rights and responsibilities in a safe and supportive learning environment
- developing individual self-esteem and respect for others through informative lesson and activities
- combating bullying by processes of reconciliation, support or sanction

Procedures for preventing and managing bullying are incorporated within the **Preventing Bullying in School Policy Guidelines** and directly linked to the Department of Education's S*tudent Behaviour Management Policy Guidelines* and the *Guidelines for Preventing and Managing Bullying in Schools*.

What is Bullying and Harassment?

At Eastern Hills Senior High School harassment is defined as unwanted and one sided words or actions towards another that demean, annoy, alarm or abuse. Bullying is a specific form of harassment that is **deliberate and repeated**, causing distress, affecting wellbeing and reducing the capacity to learn.

Bullying may involve:

- verbal bullying – repeated use of words to humiliate another individual or group including put-downs, name-calling, insulting language, nasty notes, racist or sexist comments
- emotional/psychological bullying – repeated stalking, threats or implied threats, unwanted email or text messaging, abusive websites, threatening gestures , emotional blackmail and threats to an individual's reputation and sense of safety
- relational bullying – repeatedly ostracising others by leaving them out or convincing others to exclude or reject them, making up or spreading rumours and sharing or threatening to share another's personal information
- physical bullying – repetitive low level hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing, tripping, *ganging up*, unwanted physical or sexual touching and damage to personal property.
- cyber bullying – use of information and communication technologies such as email, text messaging, instant messaging and websites to engage in the bullying of other individuals or groups

What is not Bullying?

One-off acts of aggression or meanness including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do **not** constitute bullying. There is a difference between conflict between peers and bullying. Conflict situations arise when there is a disagreement between students and poor behaviour may result. There is, however, generally no imbalance of power in mutual conflict even do conflict situations need to be monitored as they may evolve into bullying situations.

Teasing and fighting between peers is also **not** necessarily bullying. While fighting is a serious concern as it involves violence, it is not bullying unless it is recurring and a deliberate abuse of power over a period of time. While teasing, done in fun, where all individuals are capable of responding is not bullying, continual teasing that is done in a mean and hurtful way, is bullying.

Advice for Parents Involving Bullying Behaviour

Bullying is a behaviour that can be very distressing for young people. It can have immediate and long-term effects on their wellbeing. Fortunately, there are ways to stop this behaviour. If your child is being bullied at school, the best way to deal with it is by working with the school. School staff can help resolve the issue and enable your child to have a safe and supportive learning environment.

Sometimes children who are bullied are reluctant to discuss this issue with parents, carers or teachers. They are concerned that 'telling' will make matters worse. However, generally the bullying behaviour does not go away and schools can only provide support if they are aware of the behaviour.

Signs of bullying

You might notice your child:
- does not want to go to school or participate in school activities
- changes their method or route to school or is frightened of walking to school
- does not do as well in assignments or tests
- changes their eating patterns or sleep patterns
- has frequent tears, anger and/or mood swings
- has unexplained bruises, cuts and/or scratches
- loses or brings home damaged belongings or clothes

Signs pf cyber bullying

If your child is being bullied online, they may also exhibit other signs. These may include:
- being hesitant about going online or spending unusually long hours online
- seeming nervous when an instant message, text message or email appears
- being visibly upset after using the computer or mobile phone
- suddenly avoiding their phone
- closing the screen, or hiding the mobile phone when others enter the room

Supporting your child

There are ways you can support your child if they are being bullied.
- listen calmly and get the full story
- let them know it is not their fault
- ask them how they want to deal with the bullying
- encourage them to seek help from their teacher
- talk about strategies for dealing with the bullying - practising at home can be useful
- tell them you will report the bullying if it does not stop after they have tried to deal with it

Strategies to Prevent and Manage Bullying at Eastern Senior High School

Whole School Prevention Strategies
- shared understanding of the guidelines for preventing and managing bullying
- school ethos and culture that seeks to be proactive and restore relationships affected by persistent or unresolved conflict
- collaborative relationships between the school, parents and the wider community in implementing school-based strategies and programs with students
- highly skilled and resourced Student Services Team providing student support
- professional learning for staff and parents to identify, prevent and address bullying

- interagency relationships with groups such as *Head Space* and *Youth Focus*
- classroom materials to enhance social and emotional learning a - *Friendly Schools Plus*
- resources from the *Bullying No Way* website www.bullyingnoway.gov.au
- supporting the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence
- guest speakers or groups

School Classroom Prevention Strategies
- supportive and inclusive classroom environments
- classroom management approaches that teach and encourage positive behaviours and address negative behaviours
- help-seeking and effective bystander behaviour education
- social problem-solving approaches to resolve peer-based conflicts
- social/emotional learning curriculum relating to bullying and cyber bullying:
    - understanding bullying and cyber bullying
    - understanding the impact on student health and wellbeing
    - understanding preventative bystander behaviour

Outside of Classroom Prevention Strategies
- reinforcement of a positive school yard and pro-social behaviour
- whole-school approach to responding to school yard behaviour problems
- highly visible and active schoolyard supervision
- supervision adjustment for high-risk situations and settings
- organised activities during break times that encourage positive peer relations

Early Intervention Strategies to Prevent Bullying
- awareness and planning around bullying and harassment
- targeting early signs of problematic peer relationship issues
- identifying individuals and groups at risk that require targeted programs
- teaching effective bystander behaviour
- high supervision areas for students with higher support needs
- access to student services support and case management processes for targeted students
- inclusion of parents of students to identify and addressing bullying behaviours

Monitoring and Review
- existing data used to monitor changes over time
- input from all sectors of the school community
- adjustments to the selected strategies and programs based on the data
- appropriate assessment tools to measure bullying issues and progress towards achievement targets
- ongoing review of available resources (including human resources) to ensure accessibility and suitability to the strategies and programs being implemented
- communicating any changes to the whole-school community

Note

Bullying is a very complex issue and no two circumstances are alike. All allegations of bullying are treated seriously and an appropriate level of **confidentiality** is maintained at all times. All members of the school community are responsible for reporting bullying behaviour, including the perceived *victim of bullying* - the school can take **no action if the behaviour is not reported.**

Managing Incidents of Bullying at Eastern Hills Senior High School

The following stages are employed to manage bullying incidents at Eastern Hills Senior High School. The actions listed at each stage are strategies and not necessarily listed in order of response.

Stage 1: Positive Classroom/School Yard Strategies	
Caring and respectful relationships	Implement pro-social learning curriculum
Safe and inclusive classroom environment	Staff don't turn a blind eye
Effective classroom management strategies	Staff don't presume what looks like bullying
Student safety areas identified in school yard	behaviour is just *play*
Positive school yard and pro-social behaviour Teachers	Able to identify discrimination and inclusion
on time for class and duty	problems
Staff vigilant at all times	Staff take action early when they observe
Able to recognise indicators of bullying behaviour	bullying behaviour
Model, promote and expect respectful behaviour	Be awareness that inaction is a form of bullying
Promoting Cybersafety and mobile phone policy	

Stage 2: Bullying Incident Observed by Teacher or Reported to Teacher
Be aware of what can be interpreted as harassing or bullying comments and behaviours
Ensure the safety of the bullied student
Notify parent/carer
Defuse the situation using *non-punitive* response style
Discuss situation with both students and reinforce each student's rights and responsibilities
Document reported incidents using *Incident Behaviour Report* and distribute as required
Monitor and follow-up – do not assume the problem is resolved because the student says so

Stage 3: Bullying Persists
Behaviour referred directly to the Year Coordinator
Action taken to ensure the safety of the student being bullied
Conflict Resolution/Mediation where a student does not want to make a **formal** complaint
Case conference with student and parent/care for a **formal** complaint
Written Agreement or *Safety Plan*
Document using Incident Behaviour Report
Support provided for all student involved in the bullying behaviour
Apply consequences i.e. warning/suspension/loss of good standing
Document actions and distribute *Pastoral Care Memo* as required
Monitor, review and follow-up – do not assume the problem is resolved because the students says so

Stage 4: Severe Bullying – Duration or Intensity
Seek support from Program Coordinator/Deputy Principal
Involve Student Services support staff and liaise with outside agencies as required
Ensure safety of the student being bullied
Case conference with student and parent/carer
Support for all student involved
In-school withdrawal depending or out-of-school suspension depending on severity of bullying behaviour
District Office Support/Alternate Education Plans if required
Written Agreements documented and distributed to all parties where required
Monitor, review and follow-up – do not assume the problem is resolved because the student says so