

Julia Gillard Community College

Policy and Procedure

Policy name	School Bullying Prevention Policy & Procedure
Responsible person	School Principal
Staff involved	School staff, volunteers, students, parents/guardians
Review dates	Accepted: 10 October 2025 Review date: 2026

Introduction

Julia Gillard Community College (the **School**) is an independent specialist senior secondary school based in Werribee delivering the Victorian Pathway Certificate (VPC) and VCE Vocational Major Certificate (VCE VM) for students aged 15-19 years.

The School regards the health and safety of its staff, students and families as a serious responsibility. Harassment, discrimination, victimisation, and bullying can have an adverse effect on health and wellbeing.

The School provides a safe and inclusive learning environment for young people who may have disengaged, and are experiencing complex personal and educational barriers that impact their secondary schooling. The School is committed to supporting students to reach their individual personal, social and educational potential. The School is committed to ensuring that all students, staff and school community are treated with respect and that the learning environment at the School is free from bullying, harassment or discrimination of any kind.

Purpose

Julia Gillard Community College is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment. Bullying in any form is unlawful and will not be tolerated at the School.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- explain the definition of bullying so that there is shared understanding amongst all members of the school community;
- make clear that no form of bullying at the school will be tolerated;
- ask that everyone in our school community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying behaviour, and accept responsibility to report bullying behaviour to school staff;
- ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated and addressed;

Julia Gillard Community College

Policy and Procedure

- ensure that support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying behaviour (including targets, bystanders and students engaging in bullying behaviour); and,
- seek parental/carer and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at the school. The School acknowledges that school staff owe a duty of care to students to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

Definitions

Bullying: 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

Cyber-Bullying: direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example via a mobile device, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal, written and include images, video and/or audio.

Policy

The School will:

- create and promote a healthy and safe environment which is free from bullying, including cyber bullying, and other inappropriate behaviours where all students, staff and stakeholders are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect;
- expect staff to record all incidents of bullying, harassment and cyber bullying;
- provide an effective procedure for complaints based on the principles of natural justice contextualised to the age and characteristics of the students; and,
- promote appropriate and high standards of conduct at all times.

Bullying

In 2018, the Education Council of the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the following definition of bullying for use by all Australian schools: 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.

Julia Gillard Community College Policy and Procedure

Bullying has three main features:

- It involves a misuse of power in a relationship;
- It is ongoing and repeated; and,
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Bullying can be:

1. Direct physical bullying – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. Direct verbal bullying – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. Indirect bullying – e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.

Cyberbullying is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example, via a mobile device, computers, chat rooms, email or social media. It can be verbal, written and include images, video and/or audio.

Other distressing and inappropriate behaviours

Many distressing and inappropriate behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing and inappropriate behaviours should report their concerns to School staff.

Mutual conflict involves an argument or disagreement between people with no imbalance of power. In incidents of mutual conflict, generally, both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the issue. 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. However, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at the School and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Julia Gillard Community College will use its *School Discipline Policy & Procedure* to guide a response to single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression.

Harassment is language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. It can take many forms, including sexual harassment and disability harassment. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. The School will use its *School Discipline Policy & Procedure* to guide a response to students demonstrating harassing behaviour, unless the behaviour also constitutes bullying, in which case the behaviour will be managed in

Julia Gillard Community College

Policy and Procedure

accordance with this Policy & Procedure and/or the *School Student Online Safety Policy & Procedure*.

Procedures

Bullying Prevention

Julia Gillard Community College has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance and respect.

Bullying prevention at Julia Gillard Community College is proactive and is supported by a multifaceted approach.

The School:

- has a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing;
- strives to build strong partnerships between the school, families and the broader community that means all members work together to ensure the safety of students;
- encourages Teachers to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour;
- plans a range of programs each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts;
- teaches students through the learning curriculum what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour; whilst promoting resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving;
- encourages positive relationships between students by empowering them to be confident communicators and to resolve conflict in a non-aggressive and constructive way. Access to a Youth Lawyer reinforces this through Community Legal Education sessions;
- encourages students to look out for each other and to talk to teachers about any bullying they experience or witness;
- requires staff to document incidents of bullying, harassment and/ or cyberbullying.

Incident Response

When responding to bullying behaviour, Julia Gillard Community College aims to:

- be proportionate, consistent, and responsive;
- contextualise the response to the ages and characteristics of the students;
- find a constructive solution for everyone;
- stop the bullying from happening again; and,

Julia Gillard Community College Policy and Procedure

- restore the relationships between the students involved.

Reporting concerns

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at the school.

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff as soon as possible.

Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students and/or parents and carers reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by the School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to a trusted member of staff including teachers, Education Support Staff, or the Student Wellbeing Officer.

All staff have a responsibility to report incidences of bullying, harassment and cyberbullying and ensure they are recorded using the Complaint Form and Complaint Action Record attached to the *School Complaints Policy and Procedure*.

All reports will be investigated promptly as outlined in the above policy and procedure.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at the School, should contact the Principal immediately.

Communication

This Policy is available on the School website, SharePoint and hard copies can be obtained from the School Reception.

Related documents

Legislation: Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic), Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth), The Racial Hatred Act 1995 (Cth), The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth), The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth), Disability Act 2006 (Vic), Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic), Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic), Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic), Disability Act 2006 (Vic), Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic), Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic).

Policies: School Student Duty of Care Policy & Procedure, School Complaints Policy & Procedure, School Discipline Policy & Procedure, School Student Online Safety Policy & Procedure, Privacy Policy & Procedure.

Other related documents: Student Code of Conduct, Parent Code of Conduct, VRQA: Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration, Ministerial Order 870.

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Page 5 of 5

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