POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Bullying and Violence

Statement of Context
Yarra Valley Grammar School has legal obligations to provide staff and students with a safe and healthy working and studying environment so far as is reasonably practicable and to take action to stop or prevent instances of bullying and violence. Yarra Valley Grammar School is committed to providing students and staff with a safe and caring environment for work and study which promotes learning, personal growth and positive self-esteem.

To achieve this, each student and staff member has a responsibility to foster a school culture where bullying and violence is unacceptable. Every person at the School should be valued as an individual.

Bullying (including cyberbullying) and violence will not be tolerated at Yarra Valley Grammar.

Application
This policy applies to all staff and students at the School. The School also expects contractors, visitors and volunteers to display the standards of conduct demonstrated in this policy.

For the purposes of this policy, the workplace includes not only the School premises but any school-related premises or location attended by staff and students and also includes all work-related and student-related functions and events.

Reference Points / Background Papers
Relevant legislative Acts including:
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

YVG Bullying – Teacher Guidelines
YVG Social Media and Networking Policy
YVG AUP Staff
YVG AUP Students

Aim
To provide guidelines to promote a safe and caring environment for staff and students at the School, that is free from bullying and violence and to provide a process for resolving complaints relating to bullying and violence.
**Policy Details**

**What is bullying?**

Bullying occurs when an individual or group of individuals repeatedly behaves unreasonably towards a person or a group of persons of which the person is a member at the School and that behaviour creates a risk to health and safety.

Unreasonable behaviour is behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard to the circumstances, may see as unreasonable. This could include (but not be limited to) repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group directed towards another person or group (including a less powerful person or group) that is intended to, or does, cause harm, offence, distress or fear.

Bullying behaviour creates a risk to health and safety.

Bullying behaviour can be complex but does not include reasonable management action carried out in a reasonable manner, such as any legitimate or reasonable use of performance management processes, disciplinary action or allocation of work in compliance with systems.

Bullying may occur in relation to:

- Intellectual ability
- Race / culture
- Social skills
- Emotional development
- Physical appearance
- Behaviour
- Sex
- Religion
- Beliefs/values/morals

Bullying can take the following forms:

- Physical – includes fighting, pushing, pinching, tripping, shoving, kicking, spitting, punching, hitting, gestures or invasion of personal space and damaging property
- Sexual – includes touching, suggestive behaviour, offensive comments, and display of offensive pictures or written material
- Verbal – includes threats, insults, name calling, teasing, offensive language, putting people down, and rumour spreading
- Visual – including offensive notes or material, or damaging other people's possessions.
- Victimization – includes intimidation, teasing and deliberate exclusion, practical jokes or pressuring someone to behave inappropriately

For conduct to constitute 'bullying', there does not need to be any intention to cause harm or discomfort. All staff and students should therefore consider how their conduct could be perceived by others, even in circumstances where they think their behaviour is acceptable.

Bullying can be indirect and designed to harm someone's reputation or cause humiliation.

Indirect bullying might include (but is not limited to):

- lying and spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- mimicking
- encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: BULLYING AND VIOLENCE

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying and includes behaviour that constitutes bullying using digital technologies such as a mobile phone (by SMS or MMS), over the internet on social networking sites (such as Facebook or Twitter), in instant messaging and chat room sites, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces (refer to School’s Social Media and Networking Policy).

Cyberbullying may include posting and sharing nasty, angry or rude messages, or repeated threatening messages (whether or not this is done with the aim to intimidate and create fear).

What is violence?

Violence is force directed towards a person or group that is damaging, destructive, injurious, harmful or hurtful. Violence can be a one-off incident or repeated force that can be physical, verbal or sexual. Verbal force may be threatening to use physical force.

Prohibition on bullying and violence

All staff members and students are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and maintaining acceptable standards of conduct at all times. All staff members and students must abide by this policy and take steps to prevent instances of bullying and violence occurring.

Staff members and students must not, in any circumstances, bully or be violent towards colleagues, visitors, students or any other person dealt with in the course of their conduct with the School. Bullying is considered by the School to be a serious offence, and is specifically mentioned in the School Rules. All reports of bullying (including cyberbullying) will be treated seriously and addressed promptly and confidentially.

No staff member or student has the right to bully, harass or be violent towards another person, and no staff member or student has to put up with being bullied, harassed or subject to violence.

Watching another staff member or student being bullied, harassed or subject to violence is as bad as bullying, harassing or being violence towards the staff member or student yourself.

Reporting instances of or complaints in relation to bullying or violence

If you are being harassed or bullied or subject to violence, or you have seen a staff member, student, contractor or visitor being harassed or bullied or subject to violence, the School encourages you to report this immediately to a colleague or teacher with whom you feel comfortable so that it can be addressed by the School in accordance with the Bullying & Violence Policy - Teacher Guidelines. The colleague or teacher could assist you with what is going on and help you to sort it out. You may want advice. The colleague or teacher may help you to think of something to do or suggest coping strategies. You may be asked to write down what has happened, and the individual involved may have to write down his/her side of the story. The individual must be given a strong message that his/her behaviour is wrong, and if the behaviour continues very serious consequences will follow.

Consequences of breaching this policy

If an allegation of bullying (including cyberbullying) or violence is proven, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken.

What action is taken will depend on the circumstances and could include:

1. for staff in breach of this policy: disciplinary action up to and including potential termination of employment;
2. for students in breach of this policy: isolation, major detention, interview with parents, suspension, on contract to the principal, expulsion.

With respect to a contractor, visitor or volunteer, possible consequences of a breach of this policy could include removal from the School and/or termination of the contract or engagement.

**Implications for practice**

The School, the Board and/or the Principal must properly implement this policy, including by ensuring that:

1. this policy is endorsed on an annual basis;

2. that copies of this policy are made available to staff members and students/parents, for example, on the School intranet, in physical form in the staff room or bulletin boards;

3. this policy is incorporated into the Board's / Principal's record of current policies;

4. this policy is incorporated into the School's induction program to ensure that all employees are aware of it, have read and understood it and acknowledge their commitment to comply with it;

5. periodic training and refresher sessions are administered to all staff in relation to this policy; and

6. employees, contractors, visitors and volunteers ensure they will abide by this policy and assist the School in the implementation of this policy.