

Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

Purpose

To ensure that as far as practicable Urban College is free of bullying or harassment.

Policy

Urban College (UC) does not tolerate bullying or harassment.

UC is committed to providing all students, volunteers, teachers and staff with a healthy and safe environment free from bullying, harassment and intimidation.

All students, staff, volunteers and families will be:

- made aware of the stance taken on bullying and harassment behaviours,
- provided with opportunities to understand bullying and harassment behaviours,
- provided with strategies to address bullying and harassment behaviours,
- supported if they are involved in incidences of bullying and harassment.

Definitions

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, images etc).

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.

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:

- direct physical bullying – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
- direct verbal bullying – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
- 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.

Harassment

consists of systematic and/or continued unwanted and annoying actions, including threats and demands. The purposes may vary, including racial prejudice, personal malice, an attempt to force someone to grant sexual favours, and application of pressure to carry out a specific task, or merely gaining pleasure from making someone fearful or anxious.

When a person is bullied or harassed, they can be negatively affected by:

- feelings of anger, embarrassment, loss of self-confidence or humiliation
- not wanting to attend or participate in school or usual activities
- becoming depressed
- experiencing thoughts of self-harm or suicide

Examples of behaviour that could constitute bullying and/or harassment include:

- Verbal abuse – including jokes, name-calling and put downs,
- Initiation pranks,
- Exclusion or Isolation,
- Humiliation through sarcasm, or belittling someone’s opinions,
- Constant criticism or insults,
- Spreading misinformation or malicious rumours,
- Manipulating the impression of others to split a group into taking sides,
- Displaying written or pictorial material which may degrade or offend certain people,
- Psychological harassment and intimidation,
- Cyberbullying either on-line or via mobile phone or device,
- Violence – including hitting, punching, pushing or employing other unwanted aggressive physical contact against another person
- Hiding or destroying a person’s property
- Racially offensive insults
- Threats of violence or other harm
- Homophobia and other hostile behaviour relating to gender and sexuality,
- Discrimination

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature towards another person which could reasonably be expected to make that other person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. A single incident is enough to be considered sexual harassment — it does not have to be repeated behaviour.

Examples of what could constitute sexual harassment are:

- unwanted touching or brushing up against another person
- calling another person rude names or making sexually suggestive comments or gestures
- commenting on the size or shape of another’s body
- sexually oriented comments
- comments about another’s sexual preference or alleged sexual behaviours
- displaying or passing on sexually graphic material

Cyber Bullying

Consists of direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology which includes a mobile device, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal or written and may include images, video and/or audio.

Cyberbullying that involves or includes students enrolled at UC that takes place within or outside UC operating hours will be addressed.

Behaviour that is not considered to be bullying

Mutual conflict which involves a disagreement but not an imbalance of power however, mutual conflict may develop into bullying if it is unresolved and one of the parties repeatedly targets the other party in retaliation.

Strategies for the prevention of bullying within the classroom

Restorative practices are used at UC to respond to incidents of bullying and unacceptable behaviour in order to repair harm to relationships. This refers to a range of processes that are underpinned by the following concepts:

- misconduct is a violation of people and relationships
- these violations create obligations and liabilities
- problem-solving focuses on healing and making things right

Restorative practices involve the development and enhancement of relationships in schools and teaching conflict resolution and other problem-solving skills.

Specific restorative practices include small group conferences, classroom conferences and community conferences. Teachers and other staff in a school have a responsibility to ensure students are safe within the school and broader online learning environments. They should make certain there is every opportunity for students to alert teachers and other staff to any concerns they have about safety or wellbeing. The Leadership team have a vital role in shaping the culture of the learning environment, the vision for student wellbeing and ensuring that effective policies, procedures and strategies are in place to respond to bullying and unacceptable behaviour

Education programs for students

Student education takes place in a variety of forms including:

- Creating an environment of positive classroom activities and interactions through team projects.
- Setting expectations of cooperation, mutual respect and support of fellow class members.
- Allowing students to problem solve independently.
- Modelling of respectful and positive behaviour and attitudes by all staff members.
- Learning about bullying and harassment within the curriculum and role play solutions including assertiveness and seeking help.
- Encouraging students to learn about and develop conflict resolution strategies.
- Holding Respectful Relationship training annually.
- Foster positive attitudes amongst the student group by acknowledging acts of empathy, respect, acceptance and inclusion.
- Including strategies for managing bullying in the UC Bulletin, including advice as to where to find help outside UC.
- Participating in the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence via <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/> 11 to 15 August 2025

Record keeping

Detailed notes will be taken of each step and chronicled securely in student profiles.

The Incident Report will detail:

- the people involved,
- the exact observations of the incident or content of the complaint,

Added notes will detail:

- the investigation and findings,
- the response strategy to be employed,
- copies of any statements,
- copies of correspondence to parents/carers made within the bounds of privacy legislation and
- follow up actions and outcomes.

Incidents of bullying will be added to the Student profiles and be chronicled for staff awareness. This helps support an optimal learning environment for all students involved.

Responding to bullying

When responding to bullying behaviour, UC aims to:

- be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- find a constructive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from reoccurring
- restore the relationships between the parties involved.

Steps to be taken in response to bullying complaints:

- Teachers and staff members are reminded of their duty of care in responding to bullying behaviours.
- Bullying complaints must be taken seriously and must be responded to.
- Students will be encouraged to report incidences of bullying to any person they trust.
- Teachers and staff members must report any incidences of bullying and/or harassment that may be witnessed or verbally reported.
- Reported incidences will be investigated.
- A response to the behaviour will be developed and implemented.

Any report of bullying or witnessing of bullying behaviour must be recorded.

The Leadership Team (Head of Campus, Leading Teacher or Head of Wellbeing) must be notified on the day or as soon as possible.

Upon receipt of a report of an incidence of bullying an investigation will be undertaken by the Wellbeing Team, Teacher, Leading Teacher or Head of Campus.

During the investigation all relevant parties will be interviewed, including staff, parents and witnesses if required.

Several factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When deciding about how to respond to bullying behaviour consideration will be given to:

- the age and maturity of the students involved.
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the target student.
- whether the student/s engaging in bullying behaviour have displayed similar behaviour before.
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context.
- whether the student engaging in bullying behaviour demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour.
- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

A strategy in response will be developed and implemented in a timely manner and with sensitivity to the victim(s). The Student Behaviour Management policy will be followed as applicable.

The strategy in response may include:

- Counselling,
- Undertaking restorative practice exercises/training (covering rights, responsibilities, expectations and respect and empathy for others),
- Participation in mediation meetings,
- Providing an apology or apologies to victim(s) as way of reconciliation,
- Behaviour management including implementing a behaviour contract,
- Suspension or termination.

Support for victims of bullying

The person who has been the subject of the bullying behaviour and any person affected by the bullying behaviour will be provided with support including:

- Counselling (arranged by the Wellbeing Team).
- Restorative meetings or mediation as deemed appropriate.
- Ongoing follow-up via wellbeing checks.
- Documenting measures of support on the students Individual Education Plan (IEP) to ensure consistency across all staff members.
- Parents will be informed of bullying incidents and provided with relevant information within the bounds of privacy legislation.

Repeated incidences of bullying

Repeated incidences of bullying will be addressed via the Student Behaviour Management Policy.

Behaviour Contracts will be implemented, and further incidences may result in suspension and/or educational training as arranged by the Head of Campus, Leading Teacher, Teacher or Wellbeing Team.

Serious incidents such as physical assault, threats of violence or other criminal behaviour will be referred to police by the Head of Campus, Leading Teacher or Wellbeing Team.

Associated documents include:

- Student Behaviour Management Policy
- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safety- Responding and Reporting Obligations
- Child Safety- Code of Conduct
- Child Safety and Wellbeing
- Formal Warning Notification
- Restorative Intervention – notes
- Student Behaviour Contract
- Student Behaviour Incident Report
- Student Wellbeing Plan
- Student Code of Conduct

Anti-Bullying and Harassment			
Policy Update:	13/6/2025		
Consultation with Board:	13/06/2025		
Endorsed by:	UC Board	Endorsed on:	13/06/2025
Scheduled Review Date:	June, 2027		