Ringwood Secondary College
Anti-Bullying Policy

Version No: 4   **Date:** March 2015

Committee: Policy and Education

Rationale:

Bullying is an unacceptable behaviour that will not be tolerated at Ringwood Secondary College. A whole school approach with specific integrated strategies across each year level minimises the effects of this damaging behaviour. As a College community, staff, parents and students all play an important role in ensuring each member of our community feels safe and valued. The College utilises a combination of strategies ranging from proactive intervention programs to counselling and where necessary, punitive action.

Bullying causes embarrassment, pain, discomfort to another.
- It can take many forms: physical, verbal, social media, gesture, extortion and exclusion
- It is an abuse of power
- It can be planned and organised or may be unintentional: individuals or groups may be involved.

Bullying can involve such things as but not excluded to:
- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving.
- publicly excluding a person from your group
- taking or breaking a person's property
- knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
- teasing a person because of their looks

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat room, discussion group, online social networking, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS. It may involve text or images (photos, drawings).

Examples of cyberbullying behaviour are but not excluded to:
- teasing and being made fun of
- spreading of rumours online
- sending unwanted messages
- defamation
- inappropriate commenting or 'liking' and forwarding of messages or images
- posting of images without consent

Within the College bullying can occur between students, between students and teachers and between teachers.

The Student Code of Conduct has one of its premises that 'all students have the right to feel safe at school'. The College, therefore, recognises that it has a responsibility to protect vulnerable people, especially students, from being bullied or harassed. This encompasses protection from physical harm and psychological harm that comes from continual verbal abuse and discrimination.

Aims

- To maintain the profile of the issue of bullying in the College so that it is recognised as an area of concern that impacts upon the learning of students.

- To educate staff, parents and students about how bullying can affect learning.

- To develop appropriate responses by staff, parents and students to an incidence of bullying.

- To develop an environment within the College that is supportive and recognises the rights of safety for all members of the college community.

Implementation

- The implementation of anti-bullying procedures is the responsibility of sub schools; the Teaching and Learning Leader – Digital Learning; and Wellbeing.

- The Student Code of Conduct and Anti-Bullying Procedures form the basis for implementation.

- Prevention of bullying, including cyberbullying, is the main focus in implementing a whole school approach to anti-bullying. A range of activities and procedures at all year levels are designed to circumvent problems and where necessary, modify student behaviour. Level Commons/Assemblies and Bounce sessions play a key role in this process.

- Continual education of the schooling community through guest speakers, professional development sessions, display screens/boards and relevant articles in College newsletters are essential in maintaining an awareness and knowledge of bullying.

- In the junior, middle and senior school, Wellbeing Days and Common Periods provide opportunity for issues of bullying and related topics such as sexual harassment and abuse to be considered.

- Continual review of approaches to anti-bullying is essential in maintaining effective school procedures.

- All students together with a parent/guardian are expected to sign the Cyberbullying and Responsible User Agreement Form.