

Some Suggestions

For parents before visiting school
to discuss their student being bullied

1. Before approaching the school, make sure the alleged incidents involving bullying are carefully detailed. As far as possible, set down **a)** what exactly happened, **b)** whether there was any provocation on the part of your child, **c)** whether there were witnesses and if so who.
2. Ensure as far as possible that the student knows what action you are proposing and agrees with it.
3. Make an appointment with the relevant Year Level Co-ordinator or Assistant Principal so that time can be made available for you to talk.
4. Don't attempt to sort out the bullies yourself. This is rarely effective and results in escalation.
5. At the meeting, calmly present the concern as a problem that you are sharing with the school and explain that you are hoping to work out some solution with their help.
6. Be patient. The school will need some time to investigate and check on what has been said.
7. Listen carefully and note what steps the school intends to take and what part they would like you to play.
8. If necessary, arrange for a further meeting/phone contact to assess what has occurred.

Consequences

Incidents of bullying will be responded to
in the following sequence

1. Teachers who observe bullying/harassment incidents or have this reported to them by a student will complete an incident report. Copies of this report will be given to the relevant Year Level Co-ordinator and Assistant Principal.
2. Following investigation of the incident it is the school's preferred option to mediate between the students (when appropriate) and come to an agreed resolution of the issues. A written agreement will then be signed by both parties. Students will be reminded of the school policy on bullying.
3. Students who are reported a second time may be asked to sign a contract, and further counselling from the Year Level Co-ordinator.
4. Students who are reported for bullying a third time may be withdrawn from classes for the remainder of the day. Parents will be contacted and asked to attend an interview. Consequences for further incidents will be explained. These may include external suspension.

NB: *Incidents of a serious nature may be responded to by immediately applying the Student Code of Conduct.*

All stages of consequences will be supported by the school with counselling by Year Level Co-ordinators and the Student Well-being Co-ordinator.

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Vermont Secondary College

Anti-Bullying Policy

Vermont Secondary College has as its values:

- **Excellence** in the achievement of individual and team goals.
- **Integrity** of individuals in their words, actions and relationships.
- **Responsibility** for our words and action.
- **Respect** for self, others, property.
- **Tolerance** of diversity and individual difference.

Our ability to learn, to grow and to achieve are reduced by negative attitudes and behaviour.

Bullying and harassment are unacceptable and Vermont Secondary College is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment.

Key Questions

Being bullied or harassed means that someone is subjected to behaviour which is hurtful, threatening or frightening and this behaviour is repeated over time.

1. What is Bullying?

Bullying can be physical, verbal and psychological actions by an individual or group which are intended to hurt another person. It includes:

- Repeated name calling, teasing and put downs.
- Purposely leaving someone out of activities.
- Damaging, removing or hiding belongings.
- Demands for money or possessions.
- Physical violence or threats.
- Racial discrimination.
- Sexual bullying/harassment.
- Inappropriate use of technology such as text messages and internet chat rooms.

2. What the School will do.

Provide a supportive environment which encourages positive relationships between students, their peers and teachers by modelling appropriate behaviour, and implementing a student code of conduct. This includes:

- Providing safe areas.
- Ensuring complaints are followed through.
- Including material on behaviour awareness in the curriculum.
- Keeping records of incidents of bullying.
- Supporting both parties to resolve the issues.

3. Some Common Reactions.

“I was just mucking around, can’t they take a joke?”

This is the most common response to bullying. It is not a joke to put someone down, ridicule them, make them feel uncomfortable, push them around, or take their things.

“I’ll ignore it and it will go away.”

If anything, ignoring it makes it worse. It gives the impression that bullying is okay with you and that you agree with what the bully is doing.

“I don’t want to cause trouble.”

Students have a right to feel safe at school. You’re not causing trouble, you’re standing up for yourself.

“It’s just a natural part of growing up.”

There is nothing natural about being victimised. Students have a right to feel safe at school, as well as at home.

“No-one can do anything about it.”

Most cases of bullying are sorted out very simply especially if it is reported straight away. The college is committed to solving these problems.

What Students can do to help.

- Report any cases of bullying to class teachers or Year Level Co-ordinators, or someone you trust.
- Seek help to develop ways of responding to bullying.
- If approached by a bully, stay calm and confidently walk away.
- Leave expensive possessions and money at home.
- Avoid joining in. Being part of a group which is bullying someone else is just as bad as being a bully yourself.
- Avoid joining in gossip either at school or on-line.



School Contacts:

- Year Level Co-ordinator
- Student Well-being Co-ordinator
- Assistant Principals

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