



# Yorketown Area School Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

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*“Someone somewhere is feeling the effects of something you have said or done and that is a great responsibility”.*

-Gill Hicks

## 1 STUDENT STATEMENT

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We, as students want to create a safe and supportive community where we can learn without fear of being excluded, harassed or judged.

## 2 DEFINITION OF BULLYING

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Bullying is a repetitive, mean and intended harassment that can be in them forms of cyber, verbal, physical or social. It has long and short-term effects. There is an imbalance in size, strength and social status between the bully and the victim. (Definition by 8JM 2016)

### 2.1 WHAT IS A BULLY, A VICTIM AND A BYSTANDER?

- A bully is a person who uses strength or influence to harm or intimidate those who are weaker. Bullies generally lack empathy; empathy is the ability to relate to how another person is feeling.
- A victim is someone who is feeling the negative effects of someone’s direct, repetitive and deliberately cruel, targeted words or actions.
- A bystander is a person present but not involved in a bullying situation; an onlooker. The bystander is not the primary victim but still gets hurt and is part of the bullying.

## 2.2 TYPES OF BULLYING

### Overt (face-to-face) bullying

Overt bullying (sometimes referred to as face-to-face or direct bullying) involves physical actions such as punching or kicking or overt verbal actions such as name-calling and insulting.

### Covert bullying

Covert bullying (sometimes referred to as indirect bullying) is a subtle type of non-physical bullying which isn't easily seen by others and is conducted out of sight, and therefore often unacknowledged by teachers.

Covert bullying behaviours mostly inflict harm by damaging another's social reputation, peer relationships and self-esteem.

Covert bullying can include repeatedly:

- using hand gestures and weird or threatening looks
- whispering, excluding, turning your back on a person
- blackmailing, spreading rumours, threatening, stealing friends
- breaking secrets, gossiping, criticising clothes and personalities.
- joking around with insults or publicly making fun of peers

### Online bullying

Online bullying (also referred to as cyberbullying) can be conducted in many ways, using different media including:

- the sending of abusive texts or emails
- taking and sharing unflattering or private images, including naked or sexual images
- posting unkind messages or inappropriate images on social networking sites
- excluding individuals from online chats or other communication
- assuming the identity of the victim online and representing them in a negative manner or manner that may damage their relationship with others
- repeatedly, and for no strategic reason, attacking players in online gaming.

Like other forms of bullying such as verbal abuse, social exclusion and physical aggression, online bullying has the potential to result in the target of bullying developing social, psychological and educational issues.

While online bullying is similar to real life bullying it also differs in the following ways:

- it can be invasive and difficult to escape—it can occur 24/7 and a person can be targeted while at home
- it can involve harmful material being widely and rapidly spread to a large audience, for example, rumours and images can be posted on public forums or sent to many people at once
- it can provide the bully with a sense of distance and being unknown from the victim, so there is a lack of immediate feedback or consequences.

From: <http://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au/>

### 3 EFFECTS OF BULLYING

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- |   |  |                                |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| • Low self-esteem / self-worth            | • Loss of interest in things you used to enjoy | • Poor coping strategies       |
| • Eating disorders                        | • Insomnia                                     | • Suicide                      |
| • Withdrawal                              | • Fatigue                                      | • Extreme risk taking behavior |
| • Changes in eating and sleeping patterns | • Angry outbursts at home                      | • Drug/alcohol abuse           |
| • Anxiety                                 | • Mood swings                                  |                                |
| • Depression                              | • Self-harming                                 |                                |
|   | • Self-doubt                                   |                                |

### 4 SCHOOL COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITIES – OUR PROCESS

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*Dark is not the opposite of light. It is just the absence of light. Similarly, a problem is the absence of an idea, not the absence of a solution.*

- *Unknown author*

- If a person is being bullied, or witnesses acts of bullying, they can report the behaviour via the 'I Want to Tell You' form to either an SRC rep, or a member of staff.
- Once the information has reached a member of staff, the student who has been accused will be spoken to about the accusations – they have a right of reply.
- Where bullying is established and acknowledged, parents will be contacted and a formal warning issued.
- There will be a restorative circle to discuss the situation with all participants involved. During this session, it will be discussed and agreed upon how amends can be made.
- If the bullying is severe, or continues after a formal warning, negative consequences may be applied, including detentions, suspension and exclusion.