



SAFE SCHOOL POLICY

INTRODUCTION

La Trobe Secondary College acknowledges the equality of worth, dignity and self-respect shared by all members of the College community: students, teachers, staff, families, neighbours and others.

We acknowledge the multicultural mix of those within our college community and the world around us.

We acknowledge the diversity of individuals and families, beliefs and practices, lifestyles and customs, which are contained within and outside our college community.

We affirm and respect the differences between individuals and each person's right to enjoy a safe and nurturing environment.

We acknowledge our role as educators, peers and role models to provide a positive and safe place where our students are free to explore themselves and their world, and to practice the skills necessary for them to become fully educated, aware, compassionate and empowered citizens.

We recognise the policies and principles contained within the laws and ethical frameworks of our society, whereby all people are to be treated equally and with respect; and which place responsibility upon individuals and schools to provide a safe and caring environment.

POLICY COMMITMENT

- Members of the community of La Trobe Secondary College will not use any words, behaviours or practices, which are racist, sexist or homophobic, or which for any other reason might exclude or discriminate against others.
- We are committed to showing respect for students, teachers, staff, families and other community members at all times.
- We will work to eliminate any forms of behaviour, which do not protect safety or show full respect for those around us.
- We agree to support and encourage individuals in our community to aim for their full potential, developing their unique skills and individuality.
- We agree to abide by the following policies to ensure an environment, which is free of threats, bullying and harassment.

FRAMEWORK

This policy is set in place to support the requirements and principles of the following laws and documents:

- Equal Opportunity Act, Victoria (1995, 2001 & 2002)
- Anti-Discrimination legislation (Federal and State)
- Framework for Student Support Services, DE&T Victoria
- Health and Sexual Diversity Report, Victorian Government (2003),
- Privacy Act Victoria (2001)
- Boys and Literacy Policy, La Trobe Secondary College (2000).

It is illegal to treat someone unfairly or harass them because of their actual or assumed:

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|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| - age | - sex | - Career status |
| - disability impairment | - sexual orientation | - Industrial activity |
| - parental status | - marital status | - religious belief or activity |
| - physical features | - gender identity | - pregnancy |
| - race | - political beliefs or activities | |
- Personal association with someone who has, or is believed to have these characteristics

It is also illegal to sexually harass another person, or to allow direct or indirect discrimination.

Schools and their communities are required to act in response to any such discrimination or harassment. Failure to act could also be seen as implicit endorsement of such discrimination.

DEFINITIONS

Bullying, harassment and discrimination are not accepted at the College and will be dealt with seriously and sensitively when reported. Bullying and harassment can occur in different forms and none is acceptable or too trivial to warrant complaint.

Some forms of bullying and harassment may take these forms or examples:

Physical	Any physical intimidation, such as fighting, pushing around or mobbing
Sexual	Any written, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is unwelcomed
Verbal	Any abusive language directed at another individual, or group of people, that makes them feel unwelcome, offended or unsafe. This may include name calling, jokes etc.
Isolation	Actions that isolate someone, aimed at making them feel unwelcome or uncomfortable.
Extortion	Taking or misusing the possessions of another, which causes them to feel unsafe or distressed.
Racial	Comments about another's racial identity or culture, making them feel unsafe, offended or uncomfortable.
Homophobia	Comments about another's real or assumed sexual orientation, making them feel unsafe, offended or uncomfortable. This can also include negative comments about gay, lesbian or bisexual people.
Transphobia	Is the fear, hatred, disgust and discrimination of transgendered people because of their non-conforming gender status.

Bullying or harassment can include posters, pictures, writing; or verbal, electronic (**CYBERBULLYING**), email, MSN or SMS comments.

Discrimination means treating the individual, or group of people, unfairly based upon a real or imagined attribute.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Staff and students should report all instances of bullying or harassment to the relevant Year Level Team Leader or School Mentor and the Student Welfare Coordinator (SWC). Their reports shall be treated thoroughly and confidentially. Each case will be assessed regarding its severity and appropriate action shall be taken.

Consequences for bullying and harassment may include: counselling, internal discipline, parental interview, suspension or expulsion.

The Year Level Team Leader has the responsibility for investigating and dealing with cases of reported bullying or harassment. The SWC will be involved in the investigation. Where the matter is severe, the Principal should be involved and the police may be called.

Counselling and support (possibly including outside agencies) will be arranged in conjunction with the victim SWC, Secondary School Nurse and if necessary School Mentor. Similar counselling will also be given to the perpetrator.

Parental contact will be made by the Year Level Team Leader and/or the SWC regarding each incident.

Members of the College will report any complaints of discrimination to College authorities who will deal with the matter sensitively and seriously. Possible steps include:

- Discussion, negotiation and mediation on resolving the problem.
- Referral to higher authorities such as the Equal Opportunity Commission.

PREVENTATIVE PROCEDURES

All members of the College community will be made aware of this policy, detailing the reasons and consequences implicit within this policy.

Please refer to La Trobe Secondary Colleges 'Safe School Policy' implementation strategy.