

Anti-Bullying Policy

Purpose:	Montessori International College is implementing this policy to ensure that students and staff feel safe from bullying in all its forms. The policy sets out the requirements for dealing with bullying.	
Scope:	This policy applies to employees, volunteers, parents/carers/students, and people visiting the college site. It is to be read with other Policies adopted for the health and wellbeing of staff and students. It is to be read together with the Child Protection Policy, the Anti-Discrimination Policy, and the Complaints Handling Policy.	
Status:	Approved	Supersedes: Previous Anti-Bullying Policy July 2021
Authorised by:	Principal	Review Date: July 2024
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulations 2001 (Qld) • Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth) • Australian Education Regulations 2013 (Cth) • MIC Child Protection Policy • MIC Child Risk Management Policy • MIC Disability Discrimination Policy • MIC Complaints Handling Policy 	
Review Date:	Every 2 years	Next Review Date: July 2026
Policy Owner:	Principal	

Purpose of the Policy

Montessori International College is implementing this policy to ensure that students and staff feel safe from bullying in all its forms. The policy sets out the requirements for dealing with bullying.

The basic beliefs underlying the policy are:

- Every individual has value in a community.
- Every individual has the right to feel safe from bullying or harassment in all its forms.
- Every conflict can be resolved. Victims and bullies both need help to solve conflict.
- Every individual in a community is responsible for the safety of other individuals in that community.
- Every individual in a community is responsible for ensuring that other individuals in that community can reach their potential in a supportive and non-threatening environment.

Scope

This policy applies to all students, parents, other members of the college community and people visiting the college site. It is to be read with other policies adopted for the health and wellbeing of staff and students. It is to be read together with the Child Protection Policy, the Anti-Discrimination Policy and the Complaints Handling Policy.

Responsibility

Principal

Point of Contact

Deputy Principal

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy:-

College Community comprises members of the College Board, employees, coaches, students, parents, guardians, step-parents, relatives, supporters, carers, contractors and invited guests of the College, when in the College environment or when attending any College relation function or activity at any other location.

Cyberbullying means direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example, via a mobile device, computers, chat rooms, email, social media etc, it can be verbal, written and include image, video and/or audio.

Employee/Staff means all persons employed by the College on a full-time, part-time, casual, permanent and contract basis.

Student means all persons enrolled at MIC in the current year.

Restorative Practice relates to the strategies that are used to restore positive relationships and solve interpersonal issues. Examples of restorative practices include problem-solving conversations and separating the behaviour from the person. Restorative Practice assists teachers, students and parents to build, maintain and restore relationships.

Bullying

What Bullying is - A desire to hurt, the perpetration of hurtful behaviour (physical, verbal or relational) in a situation on which there is an imbalance of power, the action being regarded as unjustified, typically repeated and experienced by the target of the aggression as oppressive, and by the perpetrator as enjoyable. There are three critical points in this definition:

- **Power** - people who bully may acquire power through various means: physical size and strength; status within a peer group; recruitment within the peer groups as to exclude others.

- **Frequency** - bullying is not a random act; it is characterised by its repetitive nature.
- **Intent to harm** - bullying is a deliberate act intended to cause harm to another, or a group of people.

Definitions under Fair Work

A worker is bullied at work if:

- A person or group of people repeatedly act unreasonably toward them or a group of workers;
- The behaviour creates a risk to health and safety

There are three broad categories of bullying.

- **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** - This form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:
 - lying and spreading rumours
 - playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
 - provoking a food-allergic reaction
 - mimicking
 - encouraging others to socially exclude someone
 - damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
 - cyber-bullying, which involves the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress.

Complainant - the person who makes the Complaint.

Respondent - the alleged bully (perpetrator).

What bullying is *not*....

It is important to acknowledge, however,

- Bullying is different from ordinary teasing, rough-and-tumble or college yard fights. Such mutual conflict/undesirable behaviour needs to be managed by college disciplinary measures.
- Bullying is also not reasonable disciplinary action taken to address a problem or inadequacy or breach of College expectation or policy.
- **Social detachment or dislike** - it is not feasible to think that every student must like every other student. Provided social detachment is not directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, excluding or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

- **Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation** - a single episode of nastiness, physical aggression, verbal abuse or an occasional push or shove is not bullying. It is simply poor behaviour which must be remedied by the College. Bullying is by its definition repeated behaviour - or a pattern of behaviour.

Policy

The policy of MIC is to take a proactive approach to bullying by establishing processes to educate and inform students and staff about the harm caused by bullying and procedures which will be followed in the event that a student is being bullied.

All students, upon entry to MIC and all on-going students will be educated about the College's anti-bullying, including cyber-bullying, guidelines as follows:

- Grace and courtesy lessons in Early Years and Primary.
- Civility discussions during community meetings held each week in the Adolescent Community and Senior Phase.

In addition:

- Parents will be included in the learning process, e.g Parents evenings/sessions and Newsletter;
- All teaching staff will be continually educated with regard to bullying at our college and more importantly, what their responsibilities are.

Strategies for prevention of Bullying

Successful elements of college programs against bullying include:-

- adoption of a whole college approach using;
- college surveys
- involvement of all members of the college community in implementing their anti-bullying policies
- instituting a program of promotion/public relations/awareness so that bullying is not something that is 'hidden'

Approach for dealing with bullying

Informal Approach

- **Identification** - a student, parent or staff member reports bullying incidents/problems to a staff member.

- **Initial interview**

Once the bullying issue has been raised a designated staff member interviews the victim and bully separately, and records the details of the incident in writing on a standard proforma. The interviewer makes both parties aware of the bullying strategy and policy and discusses the issues surrounding the particular incident. The interviewer works with the students to devise strategies for conflict resolution. The

interviewer attempts to reach a position where both parties are satisfied with the outcome; i.e. the victim feels secure and the bully is prepared to modify his/her behaviour in future. The victim understands that any further bullying must be reported immediately.

- **The strategy**

At this stage the strategy is not to apportion blame, or to punish; but to support the victim and make the perpetrator aware of the college policy and of the consequences if behaviour does not change.

- **Follow-up Interview**

If the incident is repeated or the problem continues - both parties will be asked to record the incident/problem in writing. Again, the goal is to reach a position where both parties are satisfied with the outcome i.e. the victim feels secure and the bully is prepared to modify his/her behaviour in future. The victim understands that any future bullying must be reported immediately.

The designated staff member sends a letter to both sets of parents explaining the situation, outlining the strategies that have been determined and reinforcing the consequences that may flow from a repeat of bullying.

Formal Investigation by way of Formal Complaints Policy (Ref 7 of Accreditation Regulations 2017)

Depending on the severity and frequency in cases of substantiated bullying, and the particular circumstances of a given situation, responses including, but not limited to, the following may be used;

- A restorative interview could be conducted with the perceived perpetrator aimed at increasing his/her ability to empathise with those he/she has harmed and encouraging some attempt at reparation.
- The offending student and his/her parents could be required to attend an interview to review his/her behaviour.
- Sanctions such as reflection or suspension could be assigned in cases where responses of a more restorative nature are inappropriate or unavailable, or in conjunction with a restorative approach where this is judged necessary.

College and Staff Responsibilities

- Involve students, staff and parents in the development and review of the Anti-Bullying policy.
- Ensure all members of staff are familiar with the College's Anti-Bullying Policy and provide appropriate professional development on a regular basis, including at the time of the introduction of new staff members.

Staff members will:

- Watch for early signs of distress in students. This could be evident in any aspect of college life.
- Ensure they are familiar with the college anti-bullying policy.
- Where bullying is observed, intervene immediately to stop the bullying.
- Offer the victim immediate support and help and outline what will now happen.
- Educate all students with regard to their responsibilities as bystanders to a bullying incident.
- Ensure they do not model bullying behaviour in interactions they have with students, parents or other staff members.

Student Responsibilities

Students should:

- Report all incidents of bullying to a trusted senior student, teacher or other staff member.
- Actively support students they know are being bullied.
- Refuse to become involved in bullying, including as a bystander.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents should:

- Watch for signs of distress in their child, such as, unwillingness to attend college, a pattern of headaches or stomach aches, equipment that has gone missing, request for extra pocket money, damaged clothing or bruising. Early contact is essential at this point.
- Report to a member of college staff if they know, or think, their child is being bullied.
- Keep a written record if the bullying persists: Who, What, Where and When?
- Advise their child to tell a trusted teacher.
- Reassure their child and encourage their child to not hit back or respond verbally.
- Ensure they do not model bullying behaviour in interactions they have with the college staff and administration.

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Detail of Amendments	Approved By
0.01	12.06.24	Cora King	Cross referencing of policy with relevant policies and making amendments as deemed necessary.	Principal & Executive