

Student Bullying Policy

Purpose:	The purpose of this policy is to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur	
Scope:	YMCA Vocational School students, parents/carers and employees. The scope includes full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements.	
Status:	Approved	Supersedes: N/A
Authorised by:	Principal	Date of Authorisation: 1 February 2023
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) • YMCA Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy • YMCA Student Protection Policy • YMCA Child Protection Manual • YMCA Young Persons Policy • YMCA Staff Code of Conduct 	
Review Date:	Every 2 Years	Next Review Date: 1 February 2025
Policy Owner:	Principal	Document Control Reference: SOP_YVS_71



Policy Statement

YMCA Vocational School has a zero tolerance approach to bullying.

YMCA Vocational School is committed to taking action to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur. In order to prevent bullying from occurring, YMCA Vocational School will implement the following actions:

In order to prevent bullying from occurring, YMCA Vocational School will implement the following actions:

- Raise awareness of the school community's shared understanding of what bullying is, how it impacts people and how bullying is responded to at the school
- Develop and promote effective social skills and positive relationships amongst students

In order to respond appropriately to any incidences of bullying, YMCA Vocational School will:

- Develop an appropriate mechanism for students and parents to report bullying
- Educate students and parents on how to respond, in the first instance, to incidences of bullying, and how to then report all incidences of bullying
- Educate employees on how to appropriately respond to reports of bullying
- Investigate and act upon all reports of bullying
- Take appropriate action, which might include support for targets of bullying and perpetrators and/or disciplinary measures.

Aims

This policy aims to create a harmonious and supportive school community and to contribute towards the elimination of bullying within the school community. Additionally, this policy aims to raise awareness regarding the nature and forms of bullying and provide staff, students and parents/carers with options for responding to and reporting incidents of bullying.

Scope

This policy extends to incidents that can occur outside of school hours and off school grounds, which includes travel to and from school or during off site activities. It is acknowledged that some forms of bullying can constitute a criminal offence and are as a result not governed by this document, though the school will provide support as appropriate. If the behaviours amount to harm under the YMCA Student Protection Policy and/or the YMCA Child Protection Manual, then the matter will be dealt with under the applicable policy.

Definitions

- **Bullying:** is a systematic and repeated abuse of power. In general bullying may be defined as:

- dominating or hurting someone
- unfair action by the perpetrator(s) and an imbalance of power
- a lack of adequate defence by the target and feelings of oppression and humiliation

It can occur at any age, across cultures, genders and socioeconomic groups. It can happen in the playground, toilet areas, to and from school or in the classroom.

- **Physical bullying:** this is when a person (or group of people) uses physical actions to bully, such as hitting, poking, tripping or pushing. Repeatedly and intentionally damaging someone's belongings is also physical bullying
- **Verbal bullying:** repeated or systematic name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks and verbal abuse
- **Covert bullying:** such as lying about someone, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke that make the person feel humiliated or powerless, mimicking or deliberately excluding someone
- **Psychological bullying:** for example, threatening, manipulating or stalking someone
- **Cyber bullying:** using technology, such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites to bully verbally, socially or psychologically

Advice for Parents/Carers

- Watch for indicators that your student may be being bullied. These may include unexplained injuries, damaged property, headaches, stomach aches, refusal to attend school, asking for more money or food, heightened anxiety, difficulty sleeping and hiding or secretive behaviours
- Do not encourage retaliation of any kind
- Support and reassure your student, however try not to pass any premature judgement upon the situation
- Please be patient- the school will take action, as it is appropriate and will fully investigate the situation
- Please do not challenge or contact the perpetrator or their families/contacts

Rights and Responsibilities

School Responsibilities

YMCA Vocational School acknowledges its responsibility to:

- Raise awareness of bullying and how the school will respond to it
- Take action to help prevent bullying
- Implement a reporting mechanism for students and parents
- Educate students and parents on how to respond to bullying and how to report it
- Educate employees on how to appropriately respond to bullying
- Investigate and act upon all reports of bullying, including providing appropriate support and consequences

Employee Responsibilities

At YMCA Vocational School employees have a responsibility to:

- Uphold and consistently apply this Policy
- Respond appropriately to reports of bullying, including by investigating and acting upon reports of bullying, and by providing appropriate support and consequences in accordance with the Student Bullying Policy.

Parent/Carer Responsibilities

At YMCA Vocational School Parents and carers have a responsibility to:

- Encourage their child not to bully others
- Encourage their child to report bullying to themselves or others
- Support the school in providing a safe learning environment
- Communicate with the school regarding concerns they may hold
- Follow school policies and conditions of enrolment
- Encourage their child to take steps to stop bullying as directed under this Policy

Student Rights and Responsibilities

YMCA Vocational School students have the right to:

- Feel safe and secure within the school
- Be treated with dignity and respect
- Not be intimidated, harassed and/or bullied
- Engage in a healthy and encouraging learning environment

At YMCA Vocational School students have a responsibility to:

- Not engage in bullying behaviour towards others
- Respect the property and rights of others within the school and wider community
- Report bullying occurring to them or others
- Take steps to stop bullying as directed under this Policy

Implementation

YMCA Vocational School is dedicated to providing a community that rejects any form of harassment or bullying of students. As such, the school will treat all reports seriously and sensitively. The school will respond and react appropriately, taking into account the seriousness and severity of any incidents.

Any student who is bullied, or who has witnessed an incident of bullying should report this no matter how minor it may seem. Students can report bullying by notifying teachers, youth workers, counsellors, head of campus or head of school. As a parent/carers, if a student has reported an incident, you can discuss concerns with a teacher or youth worker, in the first instance. If a staff member witnesses an incident or has an incident reported to them, they will

ensure the safety of the student and escalate as appropriate. All reports are investigated and documented. As far as reasonably possible, the investigation and outcome will remain confidential and the parents/carers of the students involved will be informed.

Following the completion of any investigation, the school will apply the appropriate measure, which can include but is not limited to:

- Mediation between the students involved
- Counselling for all students involved
- Involvement of external agencies
- A reflection period followed by a formal reflection document
- A stand-down period followed by a re-entry agreement
- A stand-down period followed by a formal Stakeholder meeting
- Exclusion from the school

In order to avoid any incidents of bullying, the school engages the following strategies:

- Responding to all reports of bullying appropriately
- Promoting a healthy anti-bullying message
- Involvement of all staff and volunteers in the anti-bullying message
- Exploration and explanation of bullying and anti-bullying policies during Body, Mind and Spirit lessons, assemblies and other appropriate meetings
- Ensure that the 'it is ok to report bullying' message is heard
- Encouraging students to support and encourage their peers
- Teacher and youth worker observations both in and out of the classroom
- Ongoing and confidential counselling for students affected by bullying
- Keeping open lines of communication with parents and carers regarding bullying concerns
- Providing a safe, supportive and encouraging environment for all students

Compliance and Monitoring

This policy is available to all staff, students and parents/carers within the school community via the school website.

YMCA Vocational School is committed to providing the community with policies and procedures that reflect any advances or changes that may occur. In order to ensure that policies remain relevant to the school, changes may be made according to:

- Changes to relevant legislation
- Changes to the school environment
- Academic study and research findings
- Internal research outcomes
- Periodic reviews