

What is harassment and bullying?

Harassment

Harassment is considered to be any unwelcome or unwanted behaviour or conduct which may be anticipated to offend, humiliate or intimidate another person. Harassment often involves ridiculing the characteristics of another person's identity, such as their race, creed, ethnicity, physical features, gender or sexual orientation in order to achieve power over them.

Harassment can include, but is not limited, to the following:

- **PHYSICAL** – fighting, kicking, punching, hitting, shoving, pinching, abusive gestures, moving in on one's personal space.
- **VERBAL or WRITTEN** – use of words in an insulting and malicious way, teasing, swearing, put downs, spreading rumours, repeated abusive phone calls.
- **EXTORTION/INTIMIDATION** – blackmailing, threatening, forcing one to give money.
- **VISUAL** – insulting letters, graffiti, rude and suggestive gestures, intentionally mimicking another's actions to mock or embarrass, drawing on someone's equipment. This may include on-line images or comments.
- **SEXUAL** – Obscene drawings and gestures, rude jokes about the target, touching, brushing up against the target, asking questions of a sexual nature displaying rude and embarrassing photographs.
- **RACIAL** – Can be expressed verbally, physically, socially or psychologically when one is labelled negatively as being different from others according to one's race.



Bullying

At Overnewton we define bullying as an intentional, deliberate, hurtful and persistent form of harassment. Bullying is often repetitive and causes distress not only at the time of the attack, but also by the threat of future attacks. It is characterised by an imbalance of power and can be defined by the negative impact on the vulnerable person who is targeted (McGrath & Noble, 2006).

Bullying comes in many forms and in addition to the behaviours listed above can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- **EXCLUSION** – Being deliberately left out of a game or group activity, being ignored, made to feel invisible, the group runs off and hides.
- **CYBER BULLYING** – Use of any communication technology to bully others through the use of phone calls, text messages, email, internet sites or digital images.
- **HOMOPHOBIC** – can be expressed verbally, such as name calling against people who are or who are assumed to be same sex attracted or gender questioning, or any homophobic language if it is referring to something that is inferior or stupid.

What is not bullying?

There are numerous behaviours that may require staff intervention and management that are not examples of bullying. *Mutual conflict* is one such example where there is a recognised disagreement but no imbalance of power between the two parties.

Social rejection and exclusive friendships are also not examples of bullying unless there is a deliberate and repeated effort to cause the excluded student/s distress. Thirdly, *a single, random episode of meanness* whilst aggressive may not be categorised as bullying as it is not repetitive.