

At our Overnewton we aim to create a safe and supportive school community for everyone.

Sometimes, it can be difficult for parents or carers to know what to do when their child talks to them about bullying.

As parents you are an important part of our work to prevent bullying and to respond effectively if it happens. Stopping bullying involves everyone.

#### **If your child talks to you about bullying:**

- 1. Listen** calmly and get the full story. Your calm response is important to allow your child to tell you all about the situation. After they've told you their story, ask questions to get more details if you need to: who, what, where, when. Although you may feel some strong emotions about your child's experience, try to keep calm to avoid more distress to your child.
- 2. Reassure** your child they are not to blame. Many children blame themselves and this may make them feel even worse. You could say things like, 'That sounds really hard to deal with. No one should have to put up with that.' or 'I'm so glad you told me. You should be able to feel safe at school; that's not fair at all'.
- 3. Ask** your child what they want to do and what they want you to do. A critical part of your response is to avoid jumping in to solve the problem. While it is natural to want to protect your child, helping them to find their own solution is a better option. It helps them feel they have some power in the situation.
- 4. Visit** [www.bullyingnoway.gov.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au) to find some strategies. The website has tips and ideas for different bullying situations. One idea is to practise strategies at home to help your child feel more confident.
- 5. Contact** the school. Your child may be reluctant for you to do this, so discuss the idea and reassure them that the school would want to know and is able to help. Make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher and, if you need to, ask to talk with the principal. Contact the school immediately if you have a concern about your child's safety.
- 6. Check in regularly** with your child. Keep the conversation going. It can take time to resolve issues, so check in regularly with your child about their experiences and their feelings. Your ongoing support is important.

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- 1. Listen** calmly and get the full story.
- 2. Reassure** your child that they are not to blame.
- 3. Ask** your child what they want to do about it and how you can help.
- 4. Visit** [www.bullyingnoway.gov.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au) to find some strategies.
- 5. Contact** the school.
- 6. Check in** regularly with your child.



**For more detailed information on the OACC Anti-Bullying Policy refer to:**

<https://www.overnewton.vic.edu.au/data/flippingbook/AntiBullyingPolicyDec2013.html>

#### **PREVENTION STRATEGIES AND OTHER ANTI-BULLYING PROGRAMS**

Overnewton aims to achieve an environment free from harassment and bullying and has implemented a range of programs and structures across all levels of the college. These include specific classroom strategies and regularly reviewing the playground and surrounds (hot spots) where bullying is likely to occur. Raising awareness through student curriculum, up skilling staff and providing parent information and education is also vital to minimise bullying. Furthermore, the importance of community cannot be overstated at Overnewton and we aim to provide a safe and caring environment for the whole college community.

## COLLEGE APPROACH TO THE MANAGEMENT OF HARASSMENT OR BULLYING

Overnewton utilises a multi-level restorative approach to the management of reported incidents of harassment and bullying. In all instances, our focus is on the student taking responsibility for their actions to help them understand the seriousness of the incident and to appreciate the feelings of the other person/s involved.

- *Level 1* – for the least serious forms of harassment or bullying. Research indicates that reflection activities, counselling, and Support Group approach are most effective over the long term.
- *Level 2*– for more serious forms of harassment and bullying, an interview process would take place and Method of Shared Concern utilised. Expectations for future behaviour would be clearly agreed to through this process and written agreements or contracts may be drawn up.
- *Level 3* – for the most serious situations such as sexual or physical assault or repeated instances of bullying. At the Principal’s discretion, a behavioural contract would be negotiated outlining the behavioural expectations and consequences should a breach arise. A community conference would be convened involving parents and an agreement formed. In serious cases, a student’s position at the College may be forfeited.

As well as appropriate and consistent consequences and support for the person reported of bullying, the College also aims to provide guidance and appropriate support for the recipient that will aim to develop conflict resolution skills and positive wellbeing.

## HOW THE COLLEGE WILL INVESTIGATE HARASSMENT OR BULLYING

