St Mary’s College

Student Anti-Harassment Guidelines

Preface

As a Catholic school, using a School Wide Positive Behaviour Framework and operating within the Presentation charism, we see St Mary’s College providing a dynamic environment in which young women are able to fulfil their spiritual, academic and personal potential.

Our Anti-harassment Guideline reflects the way we stand for the Gospel values of love, justice, truth, hope, compassion, acceptance, faith, forgiveness and integrity in the tradition of Nano Nagle.

Guideline

St Mary’s College aims to create a supportive, secure learning environment, and to break down the code of secrecy that surrounds harassment. Harassment is considered a serious matter and consequences will follow when it occurs.

Harassment refers to any repeated behaviour from one person to another that offends, humiliates, intimidates or in any other way causes distress.

The objective when dealing with harassment is resolution. It is important that the situation is resolved and that the offender makes a real commitment to stop the harassing behaviour.

Rationale

St Mary’s College is committed to providing a work environment that is safe, fair and free from harassment for all members of the school community: one that fosters standards of ethical behaviour and conduct.

The aims of the Guideline are to:

- provide a whole school commitment to social justice
- counter the view that harassment is an inevitable part of school life
- encourage a preventative approach to harassment
- create a supportive climate where communication is open and honest

All members of the St Mary’s College Community engage in resolving the anti-harassment issues, are bound by the Privacy Act (2002) and are expected to participate in this process in good faith.
Complaints of harassment should be treated seriously, promptly, fairly and in a sensitive manner. No member of the St Mary’s College Community should instigate complaints that are frivolous or malicious.

Types of Harassment (not limited to these examples)

1. **PHYSICAL eg**
   Fighting, punching, pushing, shoving, tripping, negative gestures, invasion of personal space and threats of a physical nature.

2. **VERBAL eg**
   Name-calling; offensive language; slander; put-downs, targeting people because of their race, sex, religion or ability; malicious rumours, threats and sarcasm.

3. **VISUAL eg**
   Offensive notes or offensive material; defacing others’ possessions; inappropriate use of technology such as email, cameras, text messages, mobile phones, web sites and social networking sites.

4. **BEHAVIOURAL eg**
   Demanding money, standover tactics, threatening gestures, taking or interfering with another person’s possessions or property, repeated exclusion, setting up humiliating experiences, deliberately baiting a student to produce a reaction, group intimidation and stalking.

5. **SEXUAL eg**
   Sexually orientated jokes, drawing or commenting on someone’s body; touching or brushing against someone in a sexual manner; unwanted behaviours of a sexual nature; and asking questions prying into someone’s private life.

Strategies

1. Involve and inform the whole school community of the guideline and procedure: in class for the Junior Grades; at the beginning of each Term for Grades 7 and 8; at an Assembly for the whole College at the beginning of each year.
2. Provide self-esteem building activities, and teach skills dealing with assertiveness and non-violent methods of conflict resolution.
3. Provide continual education on anti-harassment
4. Provide counselling and/or support for College members who experience harassment.
5. Provide the College Community with a set of guidelines for recognising and dealing with harassment.
6. Make the guidelines readily accessible, either in pamphlet form or in the Diary.
7. Make provision for incidents to be reported confidentially.
8. Alert the College Community to educative resources available through the Counsellor, eg videos, books.
9. Monitor incidents and reports of harassment; conduct grade surveys.
Staff Guidelines

All Staff should know and understand the College Anti-harassment Guideline.

1. Watch for early signs of distress in students, eg
   - Emotional outbursts/tears
   - Complaints of illness
   - Avoidance of the playground
   - Frequent requests to go home sick
   - Absence from school
   - Drop in performance
   - Change in behaviour
   - Solitary behaviours

2. Create a positive environment in which ‘put down’ statements are not tolerated and be aware of any continual verbal harassment of particular students in class.

3. Treat complaints seriously
   - Provide an opportunity for students to express their concerns to a trusted teacher, in privacy and ensuring confidentiality.
   - Provide public reminders to students to articulate problems to a teacher
   - Report concerns regarding harassment to the Head of Junior School / Grade Coordinators.

4. Listen to students
   - Allow students to speak freely and question them with concern without judging

5. Offer appropriate support and help

6. Use students as a positive resource in countering harassment and if appropriate, take time to discuss harassment scenarios in a class.

7. Provide reasonable staff supervision on site.
Parents / Guardians Guidelines

Possible Indicators of Harassment

- Unwillingness to attend school
- Frequent complaints of headaches or stomach aches
- Missing equipment
- Requests for extra money
- Damaged clothing or bruising
- A decline in the standard of school work
- Emotional outbursts/tears
- Inability to rest
- Change in appetite
- Aggressive behaviour and rudeness at home
- Change in pattern of communication
- Bringing home others’ belongings

Course of Action: Remember that early intervention is crucial

Take an active interest in your child’s social life.

If you suspect that your child is involved in harassment, discuss the situation with your child and inform a member of the College staff. It is important to maintain the child’s confidentiality.

Keep a written record if the harassment persists: who, what, when, where, why.

Advise your child to speak to a trusted teacher.

Reassure your child that there is support.

Encourage your child not to respond aggressively.

Parents/guardians of the students may be asked to participate in a session with the Counsellor or other appropriate staff member to attempt to resolve the situation.

Parents/guardians can be assisted by the College Counsellor to devise strategies to help the child, whether they are the harassed or the harasser.
Tell the harasser to stop because you don’t like it

Discuss the problem with your family, friends or a teacher

Talk to an appropriate adult who may seek help on your behalf with your consent

Obtain an anti-harassment form from Home Room Teacher, Coordinator, Counsellor, Librarian, Deputy Principal. Fill it out and return it to the Librarian who is the record keeper. (For Senior School students)

Record keeper assigns a Grade Coordinator to manage the complaint

Grade Coordinator interviews the alleged harasser to discuss the complaint and others who may help in the gathering of information.

Grade Coordinator discusses the complaint with the Counsellor and Deputy Principal.

Four options available.

1. No harassment found. Both parties informed. Recorded on the file. Counselling as required.

2. Finds harassment. The harasser is given a verbal warning to stop harassment. Recorded on the files. Counselling as required.

3. Finds harassment. Harasser given formal warning. Required to sign an agreement to stop harassment. Warning is recorded on the files. Counselling required.

4. Finds serious harassment. Harasser is given a First, Second or Third Offence. Recorded on the files. Counselling required.
FIRST OFFENCE

Parents of the harasser will be advised via a letter

Parent notifies Principal’s Personal Assistant on receipt of the letter that is recorded on file.

The Coordinator informs the Recorder Keeper, Counsellor, Deputy Principal, Principal, and staff. The outcome will be at the discretion of the Principal.

Both the harasser and harassed are offered counselling

Coordinator follows up informally to make sure that harassment has stopped.

SECOND OFFENCE

Harasser will be internally suspended until harasser and parents attend interview with Coordinator, Deputy Principal and Principal. The outcome will be at the discretion of the

Staff notified of outcome. Both harasser and harassed will attend counselling

The Coordinator follows up to make sure that harassment has stopped.

FURTHER OFFENCE

Harasser and harassed will attend counselling

Harasser will be suspended until harasser and parents attend an interview with Coordinator, Counsellor, Deputy Principal and Principal.

The final outcome of a third or any subsequent offence will be at the discretion of the Principal.