



# A SAFE SCHOOL

---

## Creating a School Culture Opposed to Bullying and Harassment

All members of the Aquinas Community (students, staff and visitors) have the right to their personal safety and wellbeing, a key focus of Ministerial Order 870 relating to Child Safety and the Victorian Child Safety Standards. Bullying and harassment are not tolerated as acceptable behaviour at Aquinas College.

The Aquinas Community is concerned about the victim and the perpetrator in any bullying or harassment situation. Our objective is to stop the bullying and prevent its re-occurrence. We aim to give both the victim and the perpetrator strategies to achieve this.

### What is Bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by one or more person(s) towards another/others that is designed to hurt, injure, embarrass, upset or discomfort that person. The behaviour is intentional, selective and uninvited.

### Examples of this type of behaviour:

- The use of put down comments or insults
- Name calling
- Deliberate exclusion from activities
- The setting up of humiliating experiences
- Physical aggression
- Damage to the person's property
- Pressure to conform to inappropriate behaviour

### This behaviour may:

- Be verbal, physical, social or psychological
- Be repetitive – prolonged over time
- Involve an imbalance of power
- Be in written, verbal or electronic form, such as e-mail, phone conversations, Facebook entries or graffiti.
- Include inappropriate physical, sexual or social behaviour.
- Occur at school or in transit between school and home.

### Why we don't tolerate bullying:

- All students have a right to an education free from bullying and harassment.
- Bullying/harassment is unacceptable behaviour. It harms both the bully and the victim.
- Bullying/harassment is contrary to a safe and sound teaching and learning environment.
- Bullying/harassment is contrary to the Mission Statement of Aquinas College.

### How to prevent bullying and harassment at Aquinas College:

- Refuse to be involved in any bullying situation.
- Discourage others - if you are present when bullying/harassment occurs, take some form of preventative action, if appropriate.
- Report the incident or suspected incident and help break down the code of secrecy.

If students who are being bullied have the courage to speak out, they may help to reduce pain for themselves and other potential victims. Students can approach any staff member – the Homeroom Teacher, Mentor, subject teacher, Year Level Leader, Deputy Principal – Students or the Principal. Assistance can be sought from the Counsellors at the Youth and Family Centre.

### The College recommends that Parents/Carers:

- Watch for signs or distress in their children, e.g., unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches, missing equipment, requests for extra money, damaged clothes or bruising;
- Take an active interest in your child's social life and acquaintances;
- Advise your children to tell a staff member about the incident. If possible, allow them to report and deal with the problem themselves. They can gain much respect through taking the initiative and dealing with the problem without parental involvement;
- Do not encourage your child to retaliate;
- Inform the College if bullying or harassment is suspected; even if your own child is not directly affected.
- Communicate to your child that parental involvement, if necessary, will be appropriate for the situation;
- Keep written record (who, what, when, where, why, how);
- Be willing to attend interviews at the College if your child is involved in any bullying or harassment incident.