

DEALING WITH HARASSMENT: A FAIR GO FOR ALL

Emmaus College was established as a Catholic Co-educational Regional School. As such, it has always been committed to equality of opportunity for girls and boys. As a Catholic school, Emmaus holds that God has the same loving concern for each person – male and female. Girls and boys are, therefore, valued equally in all aspects of their schooling.

Jesus Christ died and rose in order to redeem and save all people. In Galatians 3:26-29 Paul writes that the many divisions in society, including the distinction of male and female, are not a source of division in the Kingdom of God. All are of equal worth; the Holy Spirit works in faith and brings daughters and sons into union with Christ.

As a Catholic school Emmaus College has the privilege and responsibility to educate and provide means for all students to know Christ and His grace personally, to hear about God through His Word and to receive His Spirit. Emmaus College also tries to show and teach students the will of God and how they might live in the world on the basis of God's grace.

Through its curricula, Emmaus College endeavours to imitate the way God has treated human beings, with the same loving concern for each person, female and male (Corinthians 12:25). Emmaus provides the means for all students to develop their God-given talents and to use them for the benefit of society. Our society is characterised by a diversity of values and wide-ranging cultural, social, workplace economic and technological changes, contributing to an increasing range of roles for men and women in both the family and the wider community. The College aims to develop in its students an awareness and understanding of these changing roles they may be helped to evaluate such changes in the light of Christian principles and may be prepared for a satisfying and responsible family and community life.

Emmaus College aims to provide a curriculum which, in content and language, meets the educational needs of all people and which recognises equally the contributions of women and men to society.

WHAT IS HARASSMENT?

If a particular behaviour embarrasses, upsets or hurts another person, then it can be classified as harassment. It is important to note that sometimes we may be embarrassed or upset or hurt when corrected or when we fail to do or say what is expected of us. Behaviour which brings these failures to our attention is not harassment.

Harassment can include bullying, racism and sex-based harassment.

Bullying includes:

- › Physical bullying, e.g. pushing, hitting, spitting, damaging the property of others.
- › Verbal bullying, e.g. repeated 'put downs', calling names, ridiculing, threatening or spreading rumours.
- › Gesture bullying, e.g. making rude or threatening signs.
- › Extortion bullying, e.g. demanding money, food or other belongings.
- › Cyber bullying e.g. using the internet or mobile phones to bully or spread rumours.

Racial harassment includes:

Deliberate or repeated racist comments, gestures, or any other conduct which hurts people, based on their nationality, country of origin, colour of skin, ancestry or any related beliefs or behaviours.

Sex-based harassment includes:

- › Sexist harassment – behaviour which insists that gender stereotypes be maintained and exercised in the school or workplace.
- › Sexual harassment – sexual behaviour which is deliberate, uninvited, unwelcome and usually repeated and which is perceived by the recipient to be embarrassing, offensive, demeaning or compromising.
- › Sexual Assault – a term which covers a number of criminal offences, such as indecent assault, aggravated sexual assault, sexual intercourse with a young person under seventeen years of age and rape.

Harassment of any kind is unwanted and unwelcome.

ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

Emmaus College is a Catholic school which endeavours to create a climate of acceptance, care, love and support for each member of the community as it attempts to allow the Gospel to permeate all aspects of the School's work. This policy is concerned about any harassment that takes place at the College or travelling to and from the College, or attending any College functions or whilst wearing the College uniform. This policy applies to all members of the College Community including:

- › Students;
- › Teachers: teaching staff/student teachers;
- › Professional Counsellors;
- › Administrative: Secretarial, Clerical, Finance Staff;
- › Support Staff: Laboratory, Library, Computer Technicians; Maintenance; Canteen; Bus Drivers and Cleaners.
- › Parents: In their dealings with staff and students on College matters.

We believe all members of the College Community can expect:

- › to be treated fairly.

Consequence: We treat all members of the College Community with justice and equity ensuring that our actions and words are always consistent with the behavioural expectations of the College.

To feel safe and secure.

Consequence: We refrain from verbal, physical, racial, sex-based harassment and treat one another with kindness and courtesy.

To learn and grow toward their full potential.

Consequence: We support and encourage each other in our work, respecting each student to learn without interference and teachers to teach with the co-operation of all.

To feel valued, accepted and cared for as unique individuals.

Consequence: We listen to one another, accept one another as we encourage self-expression, help those in need.

To have their own property respected.

Consequence: We will respect and protect the property of others – student property, staff property, College property.

Stopping Harassment is Important

Harassment affects a person's well-being, self-confidence, work and relationships with others. It is totally against the College's ethos, and may also be against the law.

You Can Act Against Harassment

- › If you are guilty of harassment, stop now!
- › If you witness harassment you can do something about it and thereby protect others.
- › Change your friendship group if it becomes involved in bullying or hurting others.
- › Report harassment so that both the bullies and victims can receive help.
- › If you are being harassed you can take action.

Options For Actions

Option 1 - Act Alone

- › You may choose to do nothing. However, harassment could continue.
- › Approach the person who is harassing you and request that the offending behaviour stops.

Option 2 - Share The Problem

- › Discuss the situation with your parents, a friend, family member, peer, or anyone with whom you feel comfortable.
- › Discuss the problem with a Chaplain or Pastoral Associate..
- › Discuss the problem with a Counsellor.

Option 3 - Refer The Problem

Your problem may be referred to any one of the contact people listed below.

- › For Students: Your Pastoral Teacher, Pastoral House Leader, College Counsellor, Director of Students, Assistant Principal, or any other member of the College Staff whom you may choose.
- › For Staff: Your Pastoral House Leader, College Counsellor, Assistant Principal, Principal, or any other member of the College Staff whom you may choose.

If you wish, the staff listed above will help you to take appropriate action,

- › arranging for you to approach, in their presence, the person who is harassing you, or
- › arranging for them to approach, on your behalf, the person harassing you, or
- › arranging for any other action to which you both agree, or
- › arranging for the Pastoral House Leader to apply the Discipline Policy.

It is useful to keep a written record of the incidents that occur and how you felt as a result, and give a copy to the contact person you have chosen. This will help you to clarify the issue and explain to the harasser that his/her behaviour is not acceptable.

Option 4 - College Action

- › In cases of harassment the offenders will be dealt with under the College's Discipline Policy.
- › Any violent incidents of harassment will be dealt with according to the Discipline & Welfare - Working Together Policy of the College.
- › The School will not tolerate any case of retaliation against a person for reporting harassment.

Option 5 - Action By Outside Agencies

Solving the problem at school level is often easier and more efficient. However, it must be realised that this anti-harassment policy is not just a school-based matter. It is based on the Federal Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 1984. Consequently, ongoing harassment which cannot be resolved at the school level may involve the police and lead to costly civil and criminal litigation.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

Confidentiality will be respected. In all cases the contact person dealing with the complaint will not take any action without permission, however, students should also be aware that, in regard to this point, teachers are legally required to notify Child Protection Victoria if they believe, on reasonable grounds, that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from such harm.

Students may involve parents at any stage.

The College may take action against the harasser.