



Sexual Diversity Policy

RATIONALE

The St Albans Secondary College community is committed to developing and sustaining a positive, safe and caring learning environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and homophobia so that all members of the college community feel safe and included.

Any form of discrimination or harassment is unacceptable at St Albans Secondary College.

The Sexual Diversity Policy applies within the college, while travelling to or from school or while engaged in an official school related activity or event.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- We acknowledge the diversity of those within our school community and the world around us.
- We promote a school community in which everybody feels valued, respected and safe, and where individual differences are appreciated, understood, and accepted.
- We acknowledge our role as educators, peers and role models to provide a positive and safe place where our students are free to explore themselves and their world, and to practise the skills necessary for them to become fully educated, aware, compassionate and empowered citizens.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- All members of the school community have the right to feel comfortable and safe, and the responsibility to contribute to the comfort and safety of others.
- Everyone has a responsibility to develop empathy for the wellbeing of others.

FRAMEWORK

This policy supports the requirements and principles of the following laws and documents:

- Equal Opportunity Act, Victoria
- Anti-Discrimination Act (Federal & State)
- Supporting Sexual Diversity in Schools
- Safe Schools are Effective Schools
- Respectful Relationships in Education
- St Albans Secondary College Anti-Bullying Policy
- St Albans Secondary College Sexual Harassment Policy
- St Albans Secondary College Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy

DEFINITIONS

Acts of discrimination closely parallel acts of bullying. They are behaviours that are designed to hurt individuals and isolate them from their peers and community. It creates a risk to another person's health and safety, either psychologically or physically, or their property, reputation or social acceptance. Acts of discrimination against a person's sexuality can include:

Homophobic Language: This refers to any derogatory language (written or verbal) used to intentionally discriminate against people who are, or are assumed to be, same sex attracted or gender questioning. This includes, but is not limited to, name calling such as 'fag' and 'dyke' but also phrases such as 'that's so gay.'

Direct Discrimination: This refers to any spoken, written or physical behaviour of a homophobic nature.

Indirect Discrimination: This is often carried out behind the targeted student's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect discrimination can be verbal or written, including via email, text messaging, or social networking sites and includes:

- lying and spreading rumours
- playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- mimicking
- encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
- speaking or writing defamatory comments about a person's sexuality or perceived sexuality.

By-Stander: This involves being a spectator to any form of discriminatory action, and not intervening or speaking out. Being a by-stander means the person is ignoring their community responsibility to contribute to the safety and wellbeing of others.

INDICATORS OF DISCRIMINATION

Students who are experiencing acts of discrimination may show some or all of the following signs:

- Unwilling to go to school.
- Become withdrawn, and refuse to say what is wrong.
- Begin to do poorly in school work.
- Presenting regularly with damaged clothes or possessions.
- Have unexplained scratches or bruises.
- Cry themselves to sleep or have nightmares.
- Refuse to work in a particular group, or sit next to a particular student.
- Demonstrate mood swings.
- Become withdrawn from social activities with peers.
- Avoid eye contact with adults during conversations.

IMPLEMENTATION

All members of the college community will be made aware of this policy through:

1. The promotion of an environment that accepts sexual diversity through the use of media (posters, brochures), presentations at assemblies and discussions in classrooms.
2. Conducting staff PD to provide teachers with knowledge and resources on how to respond to homophobic language in the classroom, and create a safe and supportive school environment for students and staff.
3. Publishing articles in the school newsletter to highlight the school's commitment to equal opportunity and the provision of a safe, supportive non-discriminatory environment.
4. Within the context of a proactive whole school approach to health and wellbeing, conducting classroom workshops for Year 9 students to develop an inclusive attitude.
5. Developing and maintaining links with community organisations that can provide support to same sex attracted students, and referring students to these services where appropriate.
6. Scheduling and supporting school activities and initiatives which challenge homophobia and which celebrate an acceptance of diversity and the rights of individuals such as 'International Day Against Homophobia' (IDAHO Day).

Note: Our membership of Safe Schools Coalition will be maintained to provide ongoing access to resources and information.

INTERVENTION

Discriminatory behaviour should be treated in the same way as any other inappropriate behaviour in the classroom. The teacher should employ a 'Hierarchy of Consequences' to encourage the student to modify their behaviour and contribute positively to the classroom environment. The consequences should be scaffolded to deal with repeated non-compliance of the student and the severity of their actions.

What the staff/school will do:

- Staff should challenge homophobic language every time they hear it and name the issue. For example: "That comment is homophobic."
- Refer to school policy or classroom agreement: For example: "Our school has made an agreement of zero tolerance to homophobic language and discriminatory behaviour".
- Staff should give consequences for homophobic language and acts of discrimination. These consequences should be the same for the use of any offence or discriminatory language including racism or sexism. Refer to the Student Management Policy for further information.
- Staff should support positive discussions around sexual and gender diversity and always intervene in inappropriate discussion.
- If the actions are serious, or are repeated behaviour, report the incident to Year Level Coordinator.

**Always ensure that the victim is supported and if you have concerns about their wellbeing refer them to the Year Level Coordinator.

Year Level Coordinator Action:

- Discuss the incident with the reporting teacher.
- Interview all students involved in incident and record all details of the interview.
- Inform both the student at fault and, if appropriate, the victim's parents of the incident and the involvement of their child.
- Check for prior reports. Repeat offenders will attract more severe action as outlined in the Student Management Policy.
- Decide if any further follow up is needed with parents, Wellbeing and PCOs. Convene a Student Support Group (SSG) if needed.
- Provide feedback on action taken to the teacher, and to other staff through Snippets, if required.

FALSE CLAIM

If it is found that a student has deliberately falsified an accusation of discrimination against another student, the accusing student will be dealt with as the offending student.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in...	June 2016
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