EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

RATIONALE
South Oakleigh College supports the premise that all people in the College will be treated with respect regardless of gender, sexuality, race, religion, culture, differing abilities, physical appearance, disability or socio-economic status.

The College is committed to offering an educational program that caters for the needs of all students and enables all students to experience success.

PURPOSES
Provision of equal opportunity for all students is implicit in our school goals. We aim to:

- Develop programs that take account of differences in student backgrounds.
- Use teaching methods that provide for differences in pace and style of learning.
- Encourage students to stay on at school.
- Develop close relationship between teachers, parents and students which will improve students’ experiences and their success at school.
- Protect students’ rights to learn in a safe, supportive environment.

GUIDELINES
1. In planning curriculum, we will acknowledge the lives, values and experiences of both girls and boys and of students from varying social and cultural backgrounds.

2. In planning approaches to teaching and learning, we will take into account the influence of gender, socio-economic and ethnic background on the styles of learning.

3. In accordance with our teaching and learning policy, we will cater for individual differences in ability and ways of learning.

4. Our curriculum must present a view of history and the world around us that includes the contributions made by women and men, and includes different cultural perspectives.

5. All students should be encouraged to experience non-traditional subject areas.

6. All students should be encouraged to investigate a wide range of career possibilities including non – traditional careers.

7. Students should be provided with positive role models in non-traditional occupations both within and outside the school.

8. Methods of monitoring how disadvantaged groups are catered for will be established both within and outside the school.

10. Teachers, parents and students should have an understanding of sexism and sexual harassment as issues and an awareness of Department of Educational and school policies in regard to these matters.

11. Students should not be excluded from full participation in the school curriculum because of financial constraints.

12. The school should encourage and support the integration of students with disabilities and impairments.

13. The school should provide open and friendly access to parents on all equal opportunity matters.

14. Students and parents should contribute to the development of equality of opportunity through participation in relevant decision making bodies.

**STATEMENT OF BELIEF**

Harassment/Discrimination/Bullying of any kind is totally unacceptable at South Oakleigh College. These forms of behaviour communicate to people that they are in some way inferior and deny them the personal respect which is their right. These behaviours are personally offensive, prompt feelings of powerlessness and have a negative effect on the working environment of the school.

South Oakleigh College believes that all people, whether male or female have the right to:
- respect from other
- carry out their daily work without verbal or physical humiliation
- be physically safe

**FORMS OF HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION/BULLYING**

Harassment/discrimination/bullying can be on the basis of gender, race, religion, culture, differing abilities, physical appearance, disability or socio-economic status.

Harassment/discrimination/bullying in these areas is any unwelcome, unacceptable or offensive conduct, either verbal or physical which results in a person being treated less favourably than others.

**Bullying**
- deliberate intimidation/threatening behaviour by any of the following methods:
  - staring
  - threats of physical harm
  - verbal abuse
  - physical abuse (touching, poking, pushing, spitting etc)
  - the use of ‘standover’ tactics
writing, drawing and/or passing of threatening material  
teasing or tormenting  
cyber bullying  

**Racial/Cultural**  
- offensive name calling, comments, jokes or questions about a person’s place of birth and racial/cultural origin  
- offensive references to a person’s skin colour or other physical characteristics relating to a particular race or culture  
- offensive gestures which relate to a person’s race or culture  
- defacing material or displaying any material which has been defaced in a racially  
- offensive manner  
- writing /passing of notes/or posting on the web offensive remarks relating to any race or culture  

**Religious**  
- offensive name calling, comments, jokes or questions with reference to a person’s religion  
- offensive remarks to a person regarding any clothing worn for religious reasons  
- offensive remarks to a person regarding any religious celebration or religious custom  
- which he/she may be undertaking  
- defacing any material or displaying any material which has been defaced in a manner  
- which is offensive to any religion  
- writing /passing of notes/or posting on the web offensive references about any religion  

**Differing Abilities/Disabilities/Physical Appearance**  
- offensive remarks about a person’s physical or mental abilities or disability  
- offensive remarks about the ability of a person, disabled or able, to carry out a task  
- offensive remarks or gestures regarding a person’s physical appearance  
- teasing or tormenting a disabled person  
- writing /passing of notes/or posting on the web offensive references about any disability or physical appearance  

**Socio-Economic**  
- remarks, teasing, writing /passing of notes/or posting on the web offensive references relating to a person’s socioeconomic circumstances  

**SEXUAL**  

**Subtle Forms**  
- offensive staring or leering  
- suggestive comments about a person’s physical appearance or sexual preference  
- offensive comments or jokes  
- questions or comments about a person’s sexual morality
- physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another’s body
- offensive name calling
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**Explicit Forms**
- pinching, patting, touching, embracing, kissing
- repeated requests to go out with someone after prior refusal
- offensive jokes or comments
- sexually provocative remarks
- displays of sexually graphic material
- requests for sexual favours
- offensive body language
- offensive, non-verbal communication and innuendo

Incidents which involve possible criminal behaviour will be referred to the Principal.

**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**
1. Students who are harassed, bullied or discriminated against will be encouraged to report the incident to a confidante in whom they trust.

2. The confidante must report the incident to the Team Leader. The Team Leader may do any of the following:
   - Warn the student/s and/or punish the student/s where applicable
   - Refer the student/s to the Student Welfare Co-ordinator

3. If the behaviour persists the Team Leader may, with the consent of the complainant, report the incident/s in writing to the E.O. Co-ordinator.

4. Further investigation of the incident will be carried out by the E.O. Co-ordinator in conjunction with the Team Leader

5. The E.O. Co-ordinator will counsel the offending student/s, contact parents and distribute E.O exercises for immediate completion. Failure to complete the exercises will mean referral to an Assistant Principal.

6. If the behaviour persists a contract must be signed and parents will be notified and required to attend for an interview.

7. If this contract is broken then disciplinary action will be decided by the E.O. Coordinator, TL and a member of the Principal class. In most cases this may incur a suspension.

**FALSE ACCUSATIONS**
Any student who has deliberately and falsely accused another student or harassment, bullying or discrimination, the accusing student will be dealt with as the offending student.