

	<p style="text-align: center;">Whitsunday Christian College</p>	<p>Last Updated: August 2021</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Anti-Bullying Policy</p>	<p>Version: 3</p>

Context

The Anti-Bullying Policy is a comprehensive, whole school approach, which aims to enhance the development of a school environment where students feel safe, valued, engaged and purposeful.

What is harassment & bullying?

Harassment covers a wide range of behaviours of an offensive nature. It is commonly understood as behaviour intended to disturb or upset. In the legal sense, it is intentional behaviour which is found threatening or disturbing.

Bullying is a repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person and occurs when someone, or a group of people, upset or create a risk to another person's health and safety, or their property, reputation, or social acceptance.

Whitsunday Christian College Anti-bullying policy upholds that:

- Every person in the school community has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Every person has a right to feel safe and a right to enjoy learning, free from intimidation.
- Our learning community will not tolerate harassing or bullying actions or words, even if these are not intended to hurt or offend.
- Students should support each other by reporting all instances of bullying.
- Bullying will be dealt with seriously.
- We are an 'open-listening' school. Bullying is too important not to report.

Guidelines

While we aim to have an environment where harassment and bullying does not exist, part of our policy is to train children in how to identify and deal with bullying types of behaviour.

Being bullied or harassed means that someone is subjected to behaviour that is hurtful or threatening and this behaviour is repeated over time. It may also take the form of serious physical assault.

Physical bullying

Including pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, tripping people up, threatening gestures or invasions of personal space. It may also take the form of serious physical assault.

Verbal bullying

Including name calling, offensive language, putting people down, picking on people because of their race, gender, religious creed, physical appearance, or academic ability.

Sexual harassment

Including unwanted touching or brushing against someone's body, sexually orientated jokes, writings, or drawings, using rude names, unwanted invasions of a sexual nature, asking questions about someone's private life.

Students experiencing gender dysphoria or incongruence, or family members of students who are experiencing gender dysphoria incongruence, may be subject to bullying by fellow students. Students will be informed that fellow students experiencing gender dysphoria or incongruence deserve the same respect and courtesy that they would extend to any other person.

Emotional/psychological bullying

Including repeated exclusion or isolation, threats or implied threats, intimidation, offensive notes or material, manipulation and threats to an individual's reputation and sense of safety.

Cyber bullying

Includes situations where people use electronic communication (chat rooms, web sites, social networking sites, text messaging etc) to communicate in a bullying way.

Bullying is not:

Mutual conflict where there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

Social rejection or dislike – It is not feasible to think that every student must like every other student. Refusing to play with a particular child or, for example, not inviting them to a birthday party is not bullying, provided social rejection is not directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation. A single episode of nastiness, physical aggression, verbal abuse or an occasional push or shove is not bullying, neither is nastiness or physical aggression directed towards many different students. The difference is that bullying is, by definition, action that happens on more than one occasion.

What to do: Tell Someone!

Sadly, there are people who will try to hurt us with their words or actions, but there are things you can do if you are being bullied.

Anti-bullying strategies

- Tell someone. Tell a staff member at the College or your parents.
- Tell a friend what is happening. Ask him or her to help you. It will be harder for the bully to pick on you if you have a friend with you for support.
- Try not to show that you are upset or angry. Bullies love to get a reaction – it's "fun". If you can keep calm and hide your emotions in front of them, they might get bored and leave you alone.
- Don't fight back. Most bullies are bigger or stronger than you. If you fight back you could make the situation worse, get hurt or be blamed for starting the trouble.
- It's not worth getting hurt to keep possessions or money. If you feel threatened, give the bullies what they want. Report it straight away to the teacher on duty or to the office.
- Try to avoid being alone in the places where you know the bully is likely to pick on you. This might mean changing your route to school, avoid parts of the playground or only using toilets when other people are there. It's not fair that you have to do this, but it might put the bully off.

- “Excuse me?” Sometimes asking the bully to repeat what they said can put them off. Often bullies are not brave enough to repeat the remark exactly, so they tone it down. If they repeat it, you will have made them do something they hadn’t planned on and this gives you some control of the situation.
- Ignore. Often the best thing you can do is simply ignore the person and walk away. If they follow you, go and stand near a teacher and they will leave you alone.
- “So?” The response of “so?” to someone who is teasing you lets them know that you don’t care about what they are saying. It is also very hard for them to think of something else to say.
- Keep a diary of what is happening. Write down details of the incidents and your feelings. When you do decide to tell someone, a written record of the bullying makes it easier to prove what has been going on.

Remember: If you feel threatened or scared, or this is happening repeatedly – report it. If you don’t tell someone, no one can help you.

Who do you talk to if the problem remains?

Usually, it’s difficult to sort out the harassment or bullying on your own, or even with the help of friends. You need to talk to an adult. It’s the only way to get the harassment/bullying stopped.

Telling about bullying isn’t ‘telling’ tales. You have the right to be safe from attacks and harassment and you should not be silent when you are being tormented and hurt.

At Whitsunday Christian College you have the right to tell someone if there is a problem. You may just want to talk it over with someone who will listen to you and help you to decide what you would like to do about it. It is your choice. If you speak to staff about it, it will be taken seriously and dealt with discreetly. Silence may only encourage further bullying and harassment. If you see someone being harassed, tell the bully to stop and inform staff.

Who could you talk to?

- Your class teacher
- The teacher on duty
- Your coordinator
- Your Assistant Principal
- The College chaplain
- Any other staff member you feel comfortable with
- Your parents

Responsibilities

The school will:

- Ensure all staff members are familiar with the College’s anti-bullying policy and provide appropriate professional development on a regular basis, including at the time of induction of new staff members.
- Ensure that all in-bounds areas of the College are patrolled.
- Staff members will:
- Watch for early signs of distress in students. This could be evident in any aspect of school life.
- Ensure they are familiar with the College’s Anti-bullying policy.

- Where harassment/bullying is observed, intervene immediately to stop the bullying.
- Offer the aggrieved student immediate support and help and outline what will now happen.
- Educate all students regarding their responsibilities as bystanders to a bullying incident.
- Ensure they do not model bullying behaviour in interactions they have with students, parents, or other staff members.
- Students should:
- Report all incidents of harassment and/or bullying to a staff member.
- Actively support students they know are being bullied.
- Refuse to become involved in bullying, including as a bystander.

Parents should:

- Parents or carers should promptly notify their student's College of any incidents of bullying that occur at the College. Parents or carers should also promptly notify the College of any incidents of bullying that occur outside of school hours (for example on social media) which may be relevant to the College's care of the child.
- Watch for signs of distress in their child, such as, unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches or stomach aches, equipment that has gone missing, request for extra pocket money, damaged clothing, or bruising. Early contact is essential at this point.
- Take an active interest in their child's social life.
- Report to the College if they know, or think, their child is being harassed or bullied.
- Keep a written record if the bullying persists: Who, What, Where and When?
- Advise their child to tell a trusted teacher.
- Tell their child that there is nothing wrong with them.
- Ensure they do not model bullying behaviour in interactions they have with others.

Time for Action

What happens if bullying does not seem to stop?

If repeated consequences and counselling does not stop the bullying, further sanctions will be imposed.

These could include, but are not confined to:

- Exclusion from certain areas of the school premises
- Suspension
- Behaviour Contract
- Permanent exclusion

If harassment and/or bullying amounts to harm as referred to in the College Child Protection Policy, then the matter must be dealt with under the Child Protection Policy.

For any incident of harassment/bullying, a member of staff will deal with the problem on the spot, in order to defuse the immediate conflict. Once the immediate issues have been dealt with, the following steps will be taken.

- Identification
- Initial Interview
- Follow-up Interview
- Reinforce, employ sanctions

The College keeps records of all reported incidents of bullying and harassment to track the welfare of those involved and to determine if further action is required. These are analysed to ascertain major areas where bullying and harassment occurs, sex and age of victims and bullies, and strategies which have been successful in resolving the issue.