

Student Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy

Policy Development and Management

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Rationale

Northside Christian College is committed to maintaining a work and student environment that reflects Christian relational values and practices. We expect every member of the College, from the youngest to the oldest student, all our staff and the wider community to give and receive respect.

At Northside Christian College, we do not tolerate bullying in any form. All members of our College community are committed to ensuring a caring and safe environment, which promotes personal growth and a positive self-esteem.

We believe all members of our College community have the expectation and right to a safe environment and to be treated fairly with respect and courtesy. We believe these rights have concurrent responsibilities that include accepting others and treating them with dignity and respect. The Student Code of Conduct further highlights these expectations and is documented in Appendix A.

What is bullying and harassment?

Bullying and Harassment occurs when there is an inappropriate use of power by an individual or group, resulting in physical or emotional harm. Bullying can be deliberate, a one-off event or repetitive. It may be the result of malicious intent, insensitivity or a misuse of legitimate power. The bullying may be physical or psychological and verbal and non-verbal.

- Physically, bullying includes pushing, hitting, punching, kicking or any other action causing hurt or injury.
- Verbal bullying includes insults, taunts, threats and ridicules.
- Psychological bullying includes physical intimidation, manipulation and ostracism.

Harassment and bullying occurs when the person who is exposed to the negative actions has difficulty in defending him or herself, and/or feels unsafe and/or may be helpless against the harasser/s.

Any harassment or bullying or misuse of power is unlawful, un-Christian and unacceptable in the Northside Christian College community.

From time to time, students will come into conflict with each other. Harassment is not when two persons of approximately the same strength (physical or psychological) are fighting or quarrelling.

Forms of Bullying

Physical Bullying: Including fighting, pushing, spitting and shoving, pinching, gestures, invasion of personal space or any other unwelcome physical act.

Verbal Bullying: Includes name calling, teasing, offensive language, spreading rumours about others or putting people down or belittling them, their abilities or achievements (face-to-face as well as 'behind their backs'), picking on people or making degrading or ridiculing comments about their culture, race, physical appearance, gender, religious or social background.

Gesture Bullying: Includes non-verbal threatening gestures, glances which can convey threatening and frightening messages, offensive notes or material, graffiti or damaging other people's property by interfering, stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying it.

Phone Bullying:	Victims of mobile phone bullying can receive abusive phone calls or text messages from someone who uses threats of violence to scare them. Phone bullying can also include using mobile phones to send photos and images designed to tease, offend or put down others. Mobile phones also have the ability to video others and this footage can also be used to bully others.
Cyber Bullying:	Involves students who repeatedly use electronic means with the intention to harass or cause discomfort. Cyber bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies, mediums such as mobile phone text messages, emails, phone calls, internet chat rooms, instant messaging and social networking.
Extortion Bullying:	Including standover tactics, bullying others into giving up possessions, picking on others, threats to “get people”, forcing others to act against their will, making suggestive comments or other forms of sexual abuse.
Exclusion:	Includes being left out of activities on purpose.
Sexual Bullying:	Includes taunts about body parts and development; teasing about sexual orientation; notes or pictures depicting sexual content.
Sexist:	Sexism or gender discrimination is prejudice or discrimination based on a person's sex or gender. Sexist behaviour may attempt to make students behave in a certain way because they are male or female.
Picture or written Material:	Insulting, putdowns or vilifying notes or electronic messages about or to a person. The display or presentation of sexually suggestive or offensive pictures or materials with the view to embarrass, humiliate or give unwanted attention to a person. Graffiti about others, including crude words or drawings.

What do we do to prevent the bullying?

It is important that there are clear behavioural standards and codes of conduct for staff, students and the wider College community. It is our aim that students will learn to develop skills and attitudes for developing healthy, respectful and Godly relationships throughout the rest of their lives. As a College community we endeavour, through a variety of approaches and in collaboration with all the parties concerned (staff, students and parents), to prevent bullying.

All members of the College community have a responsibility to respond to incidents of bullying.

This requires staff to...

- Be role models in word and action, model assertive rather than aggressive approaches to interpersonal interactions.
- Be observant to signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying.
- Make efforts to remove opportunities for bullying by patrolling the playground carefully during yard duty.
- Arrive at class and yard duty punctually.
- Take steps to help victims, listen to concerns, offer support and, if necessary, assistance.

- Follow designated procedures (Refer to “Intervention Procedures”- further steps section).
- Take heed of and follow up parental concerns.

This requires students to...

- Have access to the College’s welfare policies and report any concerns they may have in relation to their own or others safety to a Director of Learning or Welfare staff at the College.
- Refuse to be involved in any bullying incidents or a bystander of such behaviour.
- Tell a trusted staff member. The victim may be too scared to tell.
- If bullying occurs where and when they are present, if appropriate, take some form of preventative action.
- Report the incident or suspected incidents, even if not directly involved (see “Intervention Procedures” below).
- Report bullying immediately. Protection will be provided from any further bullying and will allow the bully to be identified and receive support. The action of reporting will lead to a better quality of life for both the victim and the bully.
- Stand up for what you know is right. Help minimise bullying!
- Reporting is not ‘dobbing on your mates’. It is essential for the complete harmony and wellbeing of the Northside Christian College Community.

The College recommends that parents...

- Watch for signs of distress in their children. e.g.: unwillingness to attend school, damaged clothes, a pattern of headaches, missing equipment.
- Advise the child to tell his/her teacher or other trusted staff member about the incident.
- If possible, allow the child to report and deal with the problem him or herself.
- Inform the College if bullying is suspected.
- Discourage retaliation. This may compound the problem.
- Parents and the offending students are required to attend interviews at the College if a continuance of the offence occurs.

Other Preventative Strategies...

There will be a commitment to running resiliency and wellbeing programs within the College curriculum. Furthermore, there will be a whole school curriculum focus with explicit teaching of Christian values, attitudes and behaviours.

It is the aim of all teaching and non-teaching staff to provide pastoral care for the students and other staff. Time is set aside every day for both staff and students to provide opportunity for relationship building. When this occurs, an environment and culture where staff and students are comfortable to discuss and report harassment is established. Please also refer to the College’s Pastoral Care Policy document.

There is a part-time Chaplain and part time Student Welfare Officer employed, providing services for students at risk physically, emotionally and socially. There is a student mentoring program and buddy system for some activities within the College to further provide for the pastoral care of students.

The environment in which our young people learn is critical to keeping them free from harassment and bullying, the College therefore focuses on:

- Design and layout – knowing recognised trouble spots and / or hidden areas and developed strategies and plans to reduce risks, including CCTV surveillance.
- Supervision – monitoring the effectiveness of supervision of students

- Lunchtime activities – a variety of activities available to ensure opportunities for student participation

Ensure that once a year an awareness raising campaign is carried out by:

- Staff to students (in classroom and curriculum).
- College to parents (via newsletter).
- Staff to staff (through staff meetings and other communication).
- Reviewing this policy.

When staff, students and parents work together, we create a more caring, tolerant and Christian environment at Northside Christian College.

Intervention Strategies

If you feel you have been or are being bullied begin with:

- Ignoring it. Show outwardly that it's not upsetting, which is a short-term approach; or
- Confront the bully and as calmly as possible, state that the behaviour or action is unwanted and to stop. e.g. "I don't like it when" Be assertive, look and sound confident; or
- Talk it over with others, such as friends and parents, who may help to make constructive plans; or
- Take the matter to a trusted teacher or other significant adult, where the issue will be dealt with effectively and confidentially.

Restorative Practice

Restorative Practice is a process that actively encourages students to speak about their actions, consider the effects of their behaviour on others and help decide the best way of repairing any harm. It provides a range of approaches to reduce the harm and to fix "damage" caused by incidents. It is a problem solving approach, which supports students in their efforts to build personal relationships as a means of overcoming social conflict. Restorative Practice is a process which is authoritative and re-integrative. It stresses high support for students and high personal control. Teachers using restorative practices develop in their students social problem solving skills and empathy.

Northside Christian College is committed to creating quality relationships through The Principles of Restorative Practice that:

- Develop an awareness in students about the effects of their behaviour on others
- Avoid scolding and lecturing students
- Actively involves students in discussing the reasons and effects of their actions on others
- Addresses behaviour whilst still maintaining a student's dignity
- Views poor behaviour as an opportunity to learn through problem solving and focusing on the future
- Provide students with a range of future options for behaviour
- Form the basis of classroom management practices at the College

Protocols for dealing with incidents of Bullying and Harassment

Please note – due to the various and at times extenuating circumstances that are part of any behavioural incident, the following are to be read as guidelines only.

The College uses restorative practices when dealing with bullying and harassing behaviours. The aim of the Northside Christian College Bullying policy is to have the bullying behaviours cease, rather than just taking punitive measures against the perpetrators. Responsibility is encouraged and supported.

For any incidents of possible bullying, a member of staff will deal with the problem with practical immediacy, in order to defuse the conflict. Once the immediate issues have been dealt with, the following steps should be taken:

Step One:

Find out the facts

All students identified as being involved in a bullying / harassment incident for the first time will be interviewed separately by the staff member who observed the incident or to whom it was reported. The staff member will discuss the incident with the students involved, focusing on acceptable behaviour, and will report this to the Director of Learning and Welfare staff member and inform the Home Group Teacher. The staff member will document the incident for the appropriate Director of Learning using the "Student Complaint Form".

Appendix 1 is a Student Complaint Form. Students may be more comfortable making a written report rather than a verbal report. Forms will be available for students at the College Office. Where a verbal report is taken, the Teacher or Chaplain / Student Welfare Officer will complete the form and/or notes about the incident.

Step Two:

Director of Learning to convene separate meetings with persons involved

This includes the main perpetrators, colluders, bystanders or witnesses. This will allow all to be heard and for clarification of the facts. At this stage the emphasis is on corrective change rather than punishment e.g. If a student's bag is damaged in the bullying incident, the offender takes action to repair or replace the bag. The Director of Learning is encouraged to make phone contact with parents / guardians to keep them updated about the meeting arrangements.

Step Three:

Explain the problem

The victim and bully should not be brought together until a resolution has occurred given the power differential. Once this has taken place, the problem is explained to the group and the Director of Learning clearly states that bullying will not be tolerated. Relevant sections of this Policy may be read and reiterated to make expectations clear.

Step Four:

Share the responsibility

Do not attribute blame, but it is stated that the group is responsible and can do something about it. Teachers ask about ways the victim may be supported to feel better and what action/s are not acceptable now and in the future. A further meeting is arranged to see how things are going within a short timeframe and as appropriate.

Step Five:

Meet them again / Monitor

Reconvene the meeting a week later to discuss progress of the process. If the bullying has continued, the next step will be for the Principal or his/her proxy to deal with the incident. The parent/s of the student displaying bullying behaviour are invited to the College and informed of the situation and the College's concern with it.

All incidents will be thoroughly investigated. The names of the victim(s) and the person(s) bullying will be recorded and their subsequent behaviour monitored.

Bullying is against the law. In addition to any College sanctions, any person guilty of bullying may be subject to legal processes.

Repeated Bullying

Students who continue to be involved in ongoing bullying will be interviewed by the Director of Learning together with their parents and the Principal. Appropriate action, which may include detention, mediation, referral to support services, suspension or expulsion, will be taken.

Bullying Consequences

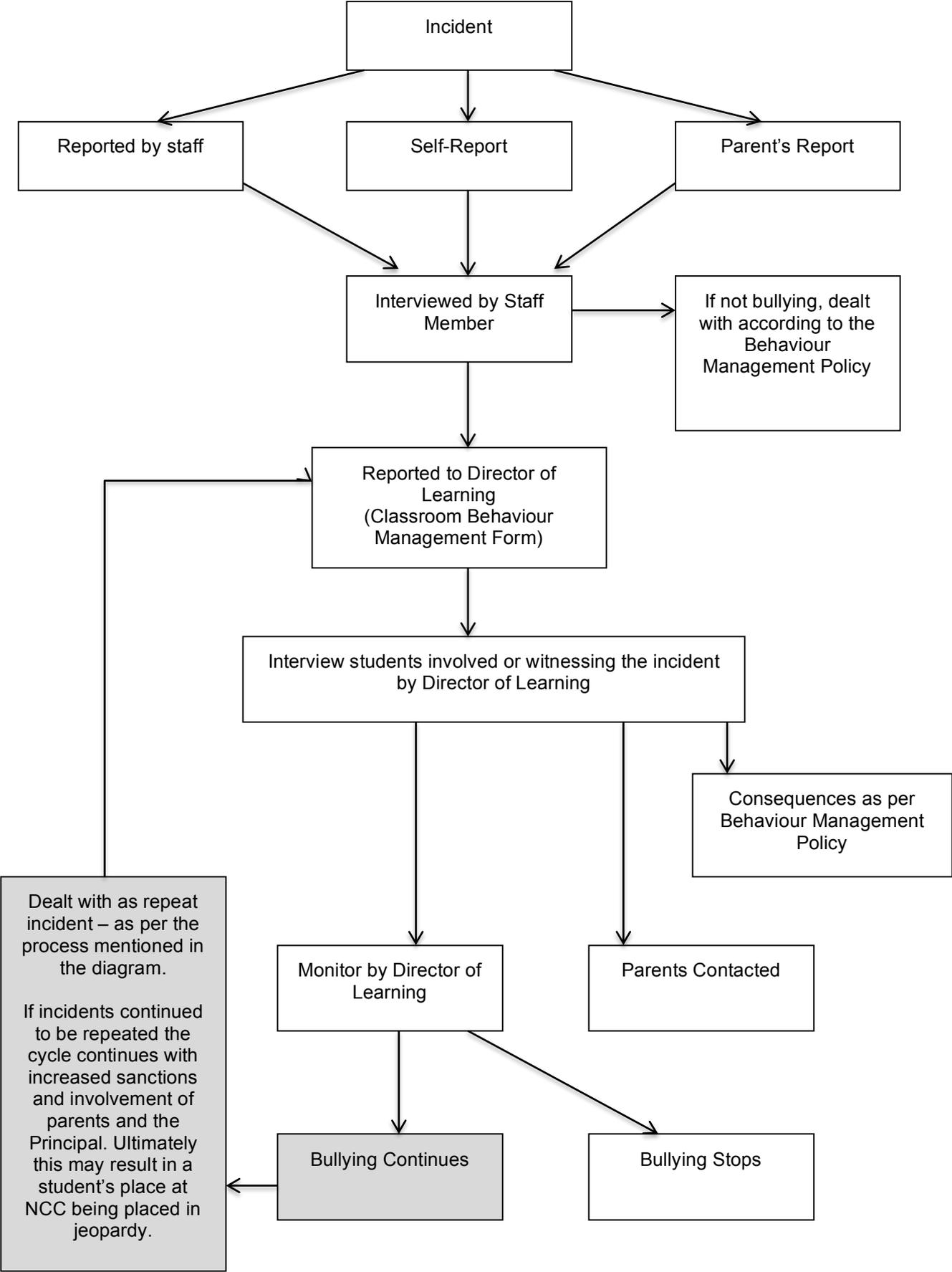
Consequences for bullying by students will be in accordance with the College's Behaviour Management Policy.

There must be clear consequences for bullying, and if a student is found to be bullying, then he or she will expect some of the following responses or sanctions:

- Written records being kept on the student's file
- Warnings accompanied by a formal letter to the student and his/her parents
- Consultation with parents
- Repair/replace any damage plus parent contact
- Referral to the Director of Learning / Deputy Principal and/or Principal
- Counselling and parent interview
- Exclusion from privileges
- Suspension from the College, resuming only on the condition that a formal contract is signed undertaking to cease all bullying behaviour
- Expulsion and parent interview

Those who bully or harass others are themselves in need of help. This could be by way of assistance with behaviour modification strategies, counselling and the provision of very clear boundaries.

Protocol Flowchart



Resources

The Australian Government recognises student well-being and safety are essential for academic and social development. All students should be able to learn and develop in safe, supportive and respectful environments. Australian schools, families and communities all have a responsibility to provide safe environments and teach children how to use technology in safe and productive ways.

The following resources provide information for teachers, parents, students and the broader community about creating safe online and offline environments.

Safe Schools Hub

The Safe Schools Hub – www.safeschoolshub.edu.au is a one-stop shop for information and resources underpinned by the National Safe Schools Framework. The Hub assists school communities to nurture student responsibility and resilience, build a positive school culture, foster respectful relationships and support students who are impacted by anti-social behaviour, including bullying and cyberbullying.

Bullying No Way!

Bullying No Way! – www.bullyingnoway.gov.au is an educational website for Australian school communities and the general public. As well as providing information for individuals, the website provides online curriculum and other resources to support the bullying prevention work of schools. Cybersafety resources and information aimed at children, parents and teachers are provided on the website.

The Alannah and Madeline Foundation

The Alannah and Madeline Foundation is a national charity keeping children safe from violence and its devastating impact. The foundation runs innovative programs and initiatives such as; Children Ahead, Buddy Bags, National Centre Against Bullying, eSmart Schools, eSmart Libraries and eSmart Homes.

Cybersmart Program

The Australian Communications and Media Authority's Cybersmart Program - www.cybersmart.gov.au is a national Cybersafety and Cybersecurity education program designed to encourage participation in the digital economy by providing information and education which empowers children to be safe online.

The Cybersafety Help Button

The Cybersafety Help Button – www.dbcde.gov.au/helpbutton is a free downloadable resource providing a one- stop-shop for Cybersafety information. The Help Button is easy to install and use, and can be downloaded onto computers and mobile devices. Users have the option to talk to someone about online issues that are of concern, report inappropriate online content or behaviour, and learn about good cybersafety practices.

The Easy Guide to Socialising Online

The Easy Guide to Socialising Online – www.dbcde.gov.au/easyguide provides information about the cybersafety features of different social networking sites, search engines and online games. It provides clear, step-by-step instructions on how to adjust privacy settings as well as site specific advice on how to report cyberbullying, abuse and inappropriate content.

Cybersafety Help-Australian Government Facebook page

The Australian Government's Cybersafety Help Facebook Page – www.facebook.com/cybersafetyhelp provides a gateway to online resources and discussion about cybersafety issues. Through the page, visitors can be kept up to date on current cybersafety news and find links to educational resources. Further information on other Australian Government cybersafety initiatives is available from a range of resources. Other strategies to support young people include:

- For younger children, parents might consider the use of filters, labels and safe zones so they can restrict the sites their child can access or the materials they can receive (see the CyberSmart site at <http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/> for advice about filters and other ways to restrict access to dangerous materials).
- For younger and Middle School students, parents should consider keeping the computer in a public area of the house, such as the family room, so they can see what sites are being accessed and the type of messages their child is receiving.
- For all young people, parents should be advised to talk to their children about the ways they can protect themselves when using information technologies. For example:
 - to be careful who they give their telephone number to or their online handle;
 - never give out or share personal information numbers (PINS);
 - don't believe everything you read online – just because someone tells you they are fifteen, it doesn't mean they are telling the truth;
 - never send a message to others when you are angry. Remind them that what they write becomes available in cyberspace and cannot be taken back;
 - never open a message from someone they don't know;
 - be polite in all online or text message dealings; and
 - never arrange to meet someone they have met online unless they take their parents or (for older children) a trusted friend with them.

If needed, further help can be obtained from:

Kids Helpline

Phone: 1800 551 800

Kids Helpline is a free, private and confidential, telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25.

Lifeline

Phone: 131 114

Lifeline is a national charity providing all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.

Please note that neither of these organisations are Christian organisations.

Review

The College keeps central records of all reported incidents of bullying. These will be analysed on a regular basis to ascertain major areas where bullying occurs, age of victims and bullies, and which strategies have been successful

Northside Christian College is committed to ongoing data collection, including incidence and frequency of harassment, aggression, violence and bullying to inform decision-making and evaluate effectiveness of policies, programs and procedures.

An important consideration is that overcoming bullying is neither simple nor quick. The College will constantly reinforce the fact that bullying is not acceptable and remind staff, parent, carers and students how to counteract bullying, as well as offering programs to improve their emotional intelligence (self-esteem, assertiveness and resilience); students

will be made aware of their responsibilities not to bully and not to condone bullying by being silent bystanders; and parents need to be confident to approach the College with their concerns, and encouraged to work with the College in a non-blame situation so that their children are protected.

The Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy will be reviewed and/or modified annually. The staff and the parent community will be asked to comment on the effectiveness of the policy implementation and this feedback will be utilised to modify the process. Procedures to assist the evaluation are:

- Staff Opinion Survey
- Parent Opinion Survey
- Student Survey

A representative group, including one parent, one member of the teaching staff, one board member, one executive team member and the Chaplain/Student Welfare Officer will identify indicators to assess the effectiveness of the strategies, programs and procedures they have in place to address bullying once a year. It is advisable for this group to meet at the end of semester one.

Responsibilities

The Principal has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

Evaluation

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

Related Policy Documents

Behaviour Management Policy

Child Safety Policy

Grievance and Complaints Management Policy

Pastoral Care Policy

Supervision Policy

Resources

Department of Education and Training. (2016, November). Bullying Prevention Policy. Retrieved from

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/prinprevent.aspx>.

Document History

- Approved by Committee of Management on 26/7/2013
- Updated draft document prepared by the Deputy Principal in April 2017.
- Document updated after consultation with the Head of Welfare in October 2017.
- Reviewed and approved by the Executive Team in October 2017.

Appendix A: Student Code of Conduct

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12

Principle 1

Students have the right to feel safe and secure within the College environment, free from intimidation, bullying and harassment, and to be treated with love, justice and equity according to the Scriptures. Students have the responsibility to behave in a considerate and thoughtful manner, and to treat others with love, justice and equity.

Principle 2

Students have the right to work and play in an environment free from interference or damage to personal property. Students have the responsibility to respect all property, including that of other students, and to do nothing that would harm another's well-being.

Principle 3

Each student has the right and responsibility to receive Biblical counsel and correction when needed from members of staff.

Principle 4

Each student has the right to be valued and treated with respect. Courtesy, consideration of others, co-operation and honesty are essential to the proper functioning of a Christian community. Each student has the responsibility to treat others with respect and courtesy, to be honest and co-operative in all aspects of College life, and to respect authority.

Principle 5

Each student has the right not to be exposed to harmful substances, influences or immoral behaviour in the College environment. Each student has the responsibility not to behave in a manner that could negatively influence others.

Principle 6

Parents have the right to expect that their child will be treated fairly, reasonably and consistently by the Principal and staff in the implementation of the Code of Conduct and to expect that their children will be educated in a loving and disciplined environment in which love for God and others is encouraged. Parents have the responsibility to support the College in its efforts to maintain a positive teaching and learning environment, and to provide a loving and disciplined home environment in which love for God and others is encouraged.

Principle 7

Each teacher has the right to be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment. Students have the right to learn in an orderly and cooperative environment and to be able to develop their God-given talents and abilities. Each teacher has the responsibility to maintain an orderly and co-operative environment. Students have the responsibility to develop their God-given talents and abilities for His glory and to do nothing that would prevent others from learning.

Appendix B: Student Complaint Form

Student Complaint Form

This form should be completed and lodged to the Head of Welfare, the College Chaplain or a Teacher if:

- The student believes they have been bullied or harassed
- The student witnessed someone else being bullied or harassed
- The Head of Welfare, the College Chaplain or Teacher requests lodgment of this form or completes it as a result of a verbal report made by a student.

Today's Date	
My Name	
My Year Level and Teacher name	
Name of person who displayed bullying or harassing behaviour?	
Date/s and location of incidents	
Witnesses to incident	
Description of acts of bullying or harassment	
Describe the impact of the bullying or harassment	
What actions have been taken to date about this matter?	
Any other relevant details?	
Complainants signature	Head of Welfare, College Chaplain or Teachers Signature

When the Teacher, Director of Learning, College Chaplain or Head of Welfare receives this form they will:

- Interview the student making the complaint, annotating the interview
- Follow the procedure in the Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy
- This form is to be kept in the student file in the office of the appropriate Director of Learning, not in the student file kept by the teacher

Appendix C: Anti-Harassment and Bullying (Information for Parents)

Northside Christian College is committed to maintaining environments that reflect Christian relational values and practices. We expect every member of the College, from the youngest to the oldest student, all our staff and the wider College community to give and receive respect.

Harassment and bullying in all its forms is contrary to the ethos of the school. All reported instances of harassment and bullying will be appropriately investigated.

Definition

Bullying and Harassment occurs when there is an inappropriate use of power by an individual or group, resulting in physical or emotional harm. Bullying can be deliberate, a one-off event or repetitive. It may be the result of malicious intent, insensitivity or a misuse of legitimate power. The bullying may be physical or psychological and verbal and non-verbal.

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Picture or written Material: Insulting, putdowns or vilifying notes or electronic messages about or to a person. The display or presentation of sexually suggestive or offensive pictures or materials with the view to embarrass, humiliate or give unwanted attention to a person. Graffiti about others, including crude words or drawings.

Guidelines for Students

Are you being harassed? There are positive steps you can take:

- Stand up for yourself. Tell the person harassing you to stop if you feel safe to do so.
- Talk about your problem with your friends, or an older buddy, and ask them to support you.
- Talk about your problem with an adult; a parent, family friend, pastor, teacher or counsellor. They will be able to suggest ways make the situation better.
- Report acts of bullying and harassment against you. If you wish to report acts of harassment, please see your Teacher, the College Chaplain or the Head of Welfare. You can make a written report or a verbal report. Action will be taken to protect you.

If you report harassment or bullying, be very clear and truthful. It is a serious thing to accuse someone of harassing you if they have not.

A school where harassment is tolerated or ignored can be a hurtful and discouraging place to be. By seeking to be positive and encouraging to others, and to stand up against harassment, we can work together to ensure our College is a safe place in which to live and learn.

If students observe somebody else being bullied, they should act in the following manner:

- If the incident is happening in the playground, they should seek help from the teacher on duty. The matter must be reported and dealt with for the sake of all concerned.
- If the incident is happening in the classroom, they should report the matter to their teacher.
- The teacher will investigate and deal with the matter as per the established procedures.

Northside Christian College has ZERO tolerance for all forms of bullying and harassment and all forms of child abuse.

Parent Guidelines for Dealing with Bullying or Harassment

If you feel that your child may be subject to bullying:

1. Ask your child if he/she has reported the incident to your child's teacher. If he/she has, please see the teacher to find out what was done about the issue.
2. If your child is afraid to see the teacher, please make an appointment to see the teacher and report the matter yourself. Please note that some students are afraid to report a matter because they are afraid that the bully will find out and carry on more bullying. Our undertaking to families is:
 - When we investigate harassment and/or bullying, we protect those who give the information.
 - A student who carries out, or threatens to carry out such reprisals will be dealt with according to the Anti-Harassment and Anti- Bullying Policy.
3. If bullying continues after you have reported it to the teacher, please make an appointment with the Director of Learning or the Principal.

Symptoms of being a victim of bullying or harassment

Some children may be unwilling or unable to identify the occurrence of bullying against them, but they may show some symptoms that will lead a parent to suspect such an activity.

- An unusual unwillingness to go to school
- Continued unusual signs of physical/emotional distress; e.g., stomach aches, loss of appetite, bad dreams, bedwetting
- An unusual loss of interest or withdrawal from aspects of life and relationships
- The development of an unusual level of frustration and anger

If you find your child displaying these symptoms please inform their teacher, Director of Learning, Head of Welfare or the College Chaplain to request an investigation and/or intervention by the College.