



*In One Spirit... we welcome · we nurture · we excel*

# Anti-Bullying Policy

*Bullying in all its forms has no place at Holy Spirit College.*

## 1. RATIONALE

Our College seeks and affirms each student's worth, dignity and gifts. Bullying strikes at the basis of these values and prevents students reaching for excellence in every dimension of life. Students are entitled to receive their education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. Bullying affects everyone; not just the bullies and victims. It also affects those other students who may witness violence, intimidation and the distress of the victim. It can damage the atmosphere of a class, school and family.

The College will take whatever steps are necessary to prevent, or intervene in, such behaviour. Every member of the College community has the right to be free from bullying. Therefore all members of the College community have a responsibility to actively practise and promote:

- tolerance for individual differences;
- the values of courtesy, respect, compassion, and care for others in the conduct of relationships;
- a supportive and encouraging climate where the achievements and efforts of others are applauded;
- a commitment to adhering to, and upholding, all aspects of this policy.

A safe, secure community requires all members to be sensitive to others. Bullying in the College also has legal ramifications. The College has a duty of care towards students and staff and that means taking all reasonable measures to ensure that the College is a safe place for students and staff.

Apart from the common law duty of care, there exists a general framework of State and Commonwealth civil legislation that applies to bullying. As a result, the College is responsible for ensuring it is a safe learning and work environments for students and staff, free from victimisation, harassment, unlawful discrimination, vilification, abuse or any other threats to the health and safety of the school's occupants.

## 2. AIMS OF GUIDELINES

- To counter views that bullying is an inevitable part of school life
- To provide a safe, secure learning environment for our pupils
- To create a supportive climate and break down the code of secrecy
- To create an environment where the victim is able to return to school life
- To provide suitable counselling services for the bully and the victim when necessary
- To provide a physical environment which engenders good behavioural patterns
- To move beyond a crisis-management approach to an environment free from abuse

## 3. WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is when individuals or groups, persistently over a period of time, behave in ways, which cause another person to feel hurt, physically or non-physically. Bullying may take many forms, for example:

August 2014

Page 1 of 5



*In One Spirit... we welcome · we nurture · we excel*

# Anti-Bullying Policy

## 3.1 Physical bullying

Pushing and shoving, kicking, invasion of personal space, the destruction of property, tripping, punching, standing over someone, pushing books from someone's hands, shooting/throwing objects at someone.

## 3.2 Verbal bullying

Any comment of an offensive nature that refers to ability, race, religion, gender or sexuality; including name-calling, offensive language, spreading of rumours, using words that suggest stupidity or physical problems, mocking, imitating, teasing, abusive phone calls, laughing at someone's mistakes, using unwelcome nicknames (this can include electronic and digital forms of communication).

## 3.3 Gesture bullying

This includes making gestures (physical, verbal and written) to intimidate or to embarrass.

## 3.4 Exclusion bullying

This includes the deliberate isolation (both explicit and implicit) of an individual student from his or her peer group

## 3.5 Extortion bullying

The use of force to obtain money, food or personal belongings from other students; harassing other students to do tasks e.g. buying lunch, carrying materials.

## 3.6 E-bullying

The use of information and communication technologies such as email, (mobile) phone and text messages, instant messaging (SMS), chat rooms and video internet sites e.g. YouTube. E-bullying often takes place outside school hours and at home. If the bullying is of a serious and threatening nature then obviously it becomes a legal issue and our recommendations are that students and parents [seek advice](#) through the Police.

(This list is by no means exhaustive.) If bullying amounts to harm as referred to in the Child Protection Policy \*\*\*\* then the matter must be dealt with under the Child Protection Policy (to be approved 2007).

## 4. WHAT BULLYING IS NOT

Bullying is different from ordinary teasing, rough-and-tumble or schoolyard fights. What makes it different is that the incidents are ongoing, and there is usually an imbalance of size, strength and power between the students involved.

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

# Anti-Bullying Policy

## 4.1 Mutual conflict

In mutual conflict situations, 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.

## 4.2 Social rejection or dislike

Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

## 4.3 Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation

Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying.

The excuse 'it was only a joke' is unacceptable if the other person has not taken it as a joke, and instead is upset by it.

## 5. PROCEDURES

### 5.1 Staff Identification

- Watch for early signs of distress in students. This could be evident in any aspect of school life.
- Where bullying is observed it should be reported to the relevant Year Coordinator or Counsellor.
- Offer the victim immediate support and help. Be aware that dealing with incidents with both parties present then and there is inappropriate. Offer your support to the victim and outline what will now happen.
- Use all your students as a positive resource in countering bullying.
- Ensure that all accessible areas of the school are patrolled thoroughly.

### 5.2 Education (Proactive Approach)

All students upon entry to the College should be educated about the College Bullying Guide.

1. Year 8 students would be taken through activities and discuss the issue of bullying.
2. Education for all other year levels would occur through Contact Groups and Year Level assemblies throughout the year.
3. Attempts will be made to include parents in the education process. e.g. Parents and Friends evenings and Newsletter.
4. All teaching staff will be continually educated with regard to bullying at our school and more importantly, what their responsibilities are.



*In One Spirit... we welcome · we nurture · we excel*

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### 5.3 Prevention

- A bullying audit will be conducted as necessary in Years 8 and 9.
- Establishment of an email address for students/parents to anonymously report bullying. [stopbullying@hsc.qld.edu.au](mailto:stopbullying@hsc.qld.edu.au)

### 5.4 Students

- Students should report all incidents of bullying to a trusted member of the peer support group or a teacher or Year Level Coordinator or other staff member.
- Students will be required to record the events in writing or through an interview process.
- Both parties will be required to discuss the incidents with a Year Level Coordinator or Counsellor. This interview would normally not occur at the same time. A report would be formulated by the Year Level Coordinator or Counsellor at this time.
- Bullies may be required to apologise to the victim. This may be in the form of a written or verbal apology.
- If further incidents of bullying by the same student occur, the student's parents will be required to attend an interview to discuss the consequences of moving to Stage 2 of the College Bullying Policy.
- Bullying incidents may be reported anonymously via email at [stopbullying@hsc.qld.edu.au](mailto:stopbullying@hsc.qld.edu.au).

### 5.5 Parents

- Watch for signs of distress in your student. There could be an 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 your student's social life.
- If you think your student is being bullied, inform the Year Level Coordinator, Counsellor or Assistant Principal (Welfare) immediately.
- Keep a written record if the bullying persists: Who, What, Where and When?
- Advise your student to tell a trusted teacher.
- Tell your student that there is nothing wrong with them. Do NOT encourage your child to hit back or respond verbally.
- Parents/Carers of the students involved will be contacted by the College. At this time the incident and future actions will be outlined.
- Parents/Carers will be assisted by the Year Level Coordinator or Counsellor to devise strategies that will help your child.



In One Spirit... we welcome · we nurture · we excel

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### 5.6 College Response (Reactive Approach)

The disciplinary procedures which will be adopted to protect the rights of all individuals will include some or all of the following:

#### 5.6.1 Stage 1 (Reported Bullying incident Number 1)

- No blame approach – possible mediation meeting, alternative behavioural strategies discussed, linking behaviours to enrolment agreement and Anti-bullying Guidelines discussed and explained.
- Incident recorded on file.

#### 5.6.2 Stage 2 (Reported Bullying incident Number 2)

- Year Coordinator or Assistant Principal (Welfare) to contact parents. A record of interview kept on student file.
- Possible suspension or appropriate consequence.
- Bully referred to Counsellor and counselling may be offered to victim(s).

#### 5.6.3 Stage 3 (Reported Bullying incident Number 3)

- Possible suspension and enrolment (maybe?) reviewed.
- Bully referred to Counsellor and counselling may be offered to victim(s).
- Interview with parents.
- Intervention by Assistant Principal (Welfare) or by Year Coordinator.