

HARASSMENT | STUDENT BULLYING

PURPOSE AND APPLICATION

The purpose of this policy is to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur. This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Hillcrest Christian College Child Protection Policy, B104. 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.

Hillcrest Christian College ('the College') is committed to providing a safe and secure community for all of its members and will therefore not tolerate any actions that undermine a person's rights in relation to this. Hillcrest Christian College will take whatever steps are necessary to prevent, or intervene in, such behaviour.

Every member of the College community has a right to be free from bullying. Therefore all members of the College community have a responsibility to actively practice and promote:

- the values of courtesy, respect, compassion, and care for others;
- a supportive and encouraging culture where the achievements and efforts of others are celebrated; and
- a commitment to adhering to, and upholding, all aspects of this policy.

A safe, secure community requires all members to be sensitive to others.

SCOPE

Students, parents and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements.

POLICY STATEMENT

The College has a zero tolerance approach to bullying.

The College is committed to taking action to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur.

In order to prevent bullying from occurring, the College will implement the following actions:

- Raise awareness of the school community's shared understanding of what bullying is, how it impacts on people and how bullying is responded to at the school
- Develop and promote effective social skills and positive relationships amongst students.

In order to respond appropriately to any incidences of bullying, the College will:

- Develop an appropriate mechanism for students and parents to report bullying
- Educate students and parents on how to respond, in the first instance, to incidences of bullying, and how to then report all incidences of bullying
- Educate employees on how to appropriately respond to reports of bullying
- Investigate and act upon all reports of bullying
- Take appropriate action, which might include support for targets of bullying and perpetrators and/or disciplinary measures.

This policy also explains the bullying reporting mechanism for students and parents, and details how employees will respond to reports, including that all reports will be investigated and acted upon, with appropriate support and consequences implemented.

REFERENCES

Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulations 2001 (Qld)

Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)

Australian Education Regulations 2013 (Cth)

Hillcrest Christian College Child Protection Policy, B104

Hillcrest Christian College Child Protection – Risk Management Strategy, B105

Hillcrest Christian College Disability Discrimination Policy, B2016

Hillcrest Christian College Student Code of Conduct Policy

Hillcrest Christian College Dispute Resolution Policy, B204

DEFINITIONS

Bullying: is a systematic and repeated abuse of power. In general bullying may be defined as:

- dominating or hurting someone
- unfair action by the perpetrator(s) and an imbalance of power
- a lack of adequate defence by the target and feelings of oppression and humiliation.

It can occur at any age, across cultures, genders and socioeconomic groups. It can happen in the playground, toilet areas, to and from school or in the classroom.

Physical bullying: this is when a person (or group of people) uses physical actions to bully, such as hitting, poking, tripping or pushing. Repeatedly and intentionally damaging someone's belongings is also physical bullying.

Verbal bullying: repeated or systematic name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks and verbal abuse.

Covert bullying: such as lying about someone, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke that make the person feel humiliated or powerless, mimicking or deliberately excluding someone.

Psychological bullying: for example, threatening, manipulating or stalking someone.

Cyber bullying: using technology, such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites to bully verbally, socially or psychologically.

1. RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1. College Responsibilities

The College acknowledges its responsibility to:

- raise awareness of bullying and how the school will respond to it
- take action to help prevent bullying
- implement a reporting mechanism for students and parents
- educate students and parents on how to respond to bullying and how to report it
- educate employees on how to appropriately respond to bullying
- investigate and act upon all reports of bullying, including providing appropriate support and consequences.

1.2. Staff Responsibilities

The College employees have a responsibility to:

- uphold and consistently apply this Policy
- respond appropriately to reports of bullying, including by investigating and acting upon reports of bullying, and by providing appropriate support and consequences in accordance with this policy and Positive Behaviour Policy.

1.3. Parent Responsibilities

The College students have a responsibility to:

- encourage their child not to bully others
- encourage their child to report bullying to themselves or others
- encourage their child to take steps to stop bullying as directed under this Policy, the College's and the College's Positive Behaviour Management Policy.

1.4. Student Responsibilities

The College students have a responsibility to:

- not engage in bullying behaviour towards others
- report bullying occurring to them or others
- take steps to stop bullying as directed under this policy and Positive Management Policy.

2. STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTION

At the College all members have responsibility to work actively towards the prevention of bullying.

2.1 STAFF

This requires staff to:

- be positive role models at all time, in both words and in deeds
- be vigilant in monitoring for signs of bullying behaviour
- make efforts to remove occasions for bullying by proactive supervision during breaks
- take steps to help victims by removing sources of distress
- actively seek appropriate assistance (from Deputy Heads of Junior Learning Community; Senior Learning Community Year Level Co-ordinators (Year 7-9) or Senior Studies Co-ordinator (10-12) or Deputy Head of SLC) to help students develop resilience;
- recognise instances of bullying and be able to differentiate them from playful activity;
- report suspected incidents of bullying to the Head of Year or other appropriate member;

2.2 STUDENTS

When a student who is being bullied has the courage to speak out the student may create an opportunity for a long term solution to the problem. When a student who witnessed bullying has the courage to speak out the student helps reduce the distress to the victim and the student contributes to the building of a safe and secure school environment.

This requires the students to:

- make a conscious decision not to be involved in any incidents of bullying;
- take any form of preventative action, if present, when a bullying incident occurs; and
- report any incidents of bullying (including suspected incidents) to a member of staff or senior student.

2.3 PARENTS

This requires parents to:

- watch for, and report, signs of distress in their child - eg unwillingness to attend school;
- advise their child to tell a member of staff if bullying has occurred;
- keep a written record of the incident;
- not encourage their child to retaliate;
- be willing to work with the College if their child is involved in incidents of bullying (either as victim or bully); and
- inform Hillcrest Christian College of any cases of suspected bullying even if their son is not directly affected.

When staff, students and parents work together to prevent incidents of bullying there is a much greater chance of creating a safe, secure, tolerant and happy school community.

3. SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF BULLYING

The College will provide support to all victims of bullying. A victim may be assisted by:

- counselling to help develop strategies for dealing with any potential bullying
- receiving an explanation, apology from the bully
- receiving a report as to the outcome of the College intervention/investigation procedures.

4. REPORTING BULLYING

It is essential that all forms of bullying be reported. All reports of bullying will be dealt with on a confidential basis.

International students and their parents and agents are also able to alert and access support from the staff of the Hillcrest International Learning Community.

To ignore bullying is to give your approval to bullying and will only serve to foster its existence in the College.

Procedures for reporting

Anyone who is bullied or witnesses an incident of bullying behaviour should report the incident no matter how minor. Stakeholders should follow the procedures below:

As a Junior Learning Community (JLC) student - You should alert your class teacher.

As a Senior Learning Community (SLC) student - You should alert your Year Level Co-ordinator if you are in Years 7-9. If you are in Years 10-12, you should alert the Senior Studies Co-ordinator.

As a parent - If your child is in the JLC then discuss the situation with your child's class teacher. If your child is in the SLC, then discuss the situation with your child's Year Level Co-ordinator (YLC) for students in Years 7-9 or contact the Senior Studies Co-ordinator for students in Years 10-12.

As a teacher - After ensuring that safety of the victim, if the student is in the JLC then discuss and document the incident with the Deputy Head JLC. If the victim is the SLC, then discuss and document the incident with the Deputy Head of SLC.

5. INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

All reports of bullying will be investigated by the appropriate member of staff. The nature and extent of the investigation will depend upon the seriousness of the bullying. As far as is reasonably possible the investigation and its outcome will be kept confidential although parents involved will be informed.

6. OUTCOMES

Following the completion of an investigation into bullying, the College will implement such measures as are appropriate which could include one, or more, of the following:

- conflict resolution/mediation with students, and or families involved
- counselling
- restitution
- an agreement regarding standards of future behaviour
- detections
- suspension
- expulsion

Policy Owner | College Executive