

STUDENT BULLYING POLICY

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REVISED	June 2006	June 2007	May 2008	October 2009	October 2010
	July 2011	October 2011	In-house Review – Jan 2017	Adopted Feb 2017	Approved by Executive 5 February 2026

1. Introduction

An important facet of the mission of Nambour Christian College, herein referred to as the College, is to endeavour to provide a secure and supportive Christ-centred learning community for every student. In such an environment, the College aims to ensure that students will feel secure and be encouraged to reach their full potential and mature into effective members of society. The Student Bullying Policy is one of a number of policies formulated to protect students and staff thus providing a foundation to help translate the mission into reality

Other relevant College policies which deal with student issues include Suspension & Exclusion Policy, Student Behaviour Policy, Acceptable Use Policy and Child Protection Policy and in any inconsistencies, the Child Protection Policy, must take precedence.

This policy incorporates the intent of the National Safe Schools Framework and the Kandersteg Declaration.

2. Purpose

This policy seeks to build an environment conducive to safety through pro-active management of all forms of bullying that may occur within the College. Students and parents are encouraged to raise concerns promptly, initially through their class teachers and other support mechanisms, for remedy at an early stage.

3. Principles

- a) It is expected that students will uphold Christian values and comply with the law, to:
 - value the dignity and respect of the individual;
 - promote the principle of equal opportunity and gender equality;
 - refrain from any behaviours that impinge negatively upon a person's dignity, rights, morale or work effectiveness.
 - contribute to quality of life through respect and tolerance;
 - protect cultural and social diversity; and
 - engender fairness and respect in relationships.
- b) **Natural Justice**

The principles of natural justice will apply to decisions made under this policy. The fundamental principles of natural justice are:

 - those making a decision are not biased and do not have the perception of bias; and
 - any person who has a complaint against them must be given a fair opportunity to be heard in response to the specifics of the complaint and to put their side of the matter, with this

principle incorporating the requirement that decisions must be based on rational and logically probative evidence.

c) **Privacy**

Privacy legislation applies to all records generated under this policy.

d) **Timely Action**

Matters need to be addressed with reasonable promptness.

e) **Confidentiality**

A complaint must be treated with the utmost confidentiality. This does not affect the complainant's right to seek external assistance at any time.

It is important when handling a complaint that confidentiality of all parties concerned is respected and protected. Information will be shared only on a 'need to know basis' and as necessary to comply with the requirements of this policy or as required by law or as required for the proper management of the College.

Information will be regarded as confidential if information has the 'necessary quality of confidence' in that any unauthorised use beyond that which is necessary (to comply with the requirements of this policy or as required by law or as required for the proper management of the College) would be unreasonably or unfairly detrimental to a party.

There is no guarantee of confidentiality in relation to information that is provided to staff. While confidentiality will be respected, for staff, the duty of care, professional obligations and the best interest of the child will certainly override confidentiality in the College e.g., mandatory reporting overrides confidentiality.

When the College is working with other agencies (mandatory reporting), the College is not obligated to either inform parents or to confirm or deny that a referral to an external agency has been made.

4. The Law

The College has a Christian duty and a duty to take reasonable care for the safety and welfare of students and staff within the context of College operations and when the teacher/student relationship is established. Without limitation, legislative obligations also arise under:

- Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)
- Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2017
- Child Protection Regulation 2011 (Qld)
- Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld)
- Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld)
- Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)
- Education (General Provisions) Regulations 2006 (Qld)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)
- Criminal Code of Qld

5. Definitions

Bullying

Please refer to Annexure 1 for examples of bullying. For the purposes of this policy the College has adopted the description of workplace bullying in the *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)* supported by relevant provisions of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)* and the *Workers Compensation Act 2003 (Qld)*.

A person is said to be bullied within their association with the College if an individual or a group of individuals:

- Repeatedly behaves unreasonably towards the person or a group of people to which the person is a member; and
- The behaviour creates a risk to health and safety.

In addition, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and vilification are all types of bullying. Note: A single incident of discrimination or sexual harassment may constitute bullying.

Assaults and physical attacks are also types of bullying and a single assault or physical attack may constitute bullying.

Annexure 2 sets out examples of behaviours that may indicate the occurrence of bullying.

Cyber Bullying

The term cyber bullying is used to denote misuse of technology to bully others. This can include identification by image. The definition of bullying can be adopted for cyber bullying. However cyber bullying often gives rise to offences that are against criminal law e.g.

- Threats
- Assault by words
- Stalking

Cyber bullying can also lead to breaches of privacy and defamation laws. Cyber bullying that occurs beyond the College day is a matter for parents (and the police, e-safety commissioner) and may also involve the College.

Harm

The term “harm” is as defined in the Education (Accreditation for Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld).

Inappropriate Behaviour

Inappropriate behaviour means behaviour that is contrary to Christian values. The phrase “inappropriate behaviour” may include behaviour that falls short of the definition of harm or bullying.

Parent

The reference to parent also means guardian. .

Informal concerns/issues

Parents are requested to raise issues of concern at the earliest opportunity with class teachers or Year coordinators of their students.

Formal complaints/issues

Parents or the College are able, at any time, to raise a formal complaint (in writing) through the Head of School, or the Executive Principal. This will be formally investigated and documented.

6. Scope

This policy and procedures apply to all allegations that raise concerns about suspected or alleged bullying behaviour and it applies to all students attending the College, on campus and attending College activities or when their association with the College is identifiable.

7. Policy Statement

- Students are required to conduct themselves in a manner respectful of others at all times.
- Bullying in all its forms is unacceptable at the College and all issues/concerns will be acted upon at a formal or informal level.
- The College will impose remedies and responses as appropriate, additional to any penalties which may apply at law.
- The issue of bullying will be proactively addressed within the curriculum and discussed in such forums as camps and year level assemblies. Additionally, students and parents will be informed through means such as handbooks and newsletters.
- The College will assist pastorally students who are the victims of bullying whether at the College or outside of the College.

8. Procedures

**Informal concerns /
issues. Refer to “A”**

**Formal complaints /
issues. Refer to “B”**

A: Informal concerns/issues

It is always best if issues can be addressed at the earliest opportunity. This can be done by consultation with classroom teacher, year level coordinator, RTC Teacher, Head of School or Director of Student Wellbeing.

Consequences and remedies

Consequences may include educating students regarding appropriate behavior, spending time reflecting in the RTC classrooms, mediation and one on one counselling with the Director of Student Wellbeing. This could result in suspension/exclusion.

Note: Informal concerns/issues of bullying may escalate to a formal investigation at the discretion of the College.

In general terms, the College may endeavour to apply the following strategies in its discretion:

- a) In the event of suspected bullying (refer to definition) –
 - Any student experiencing suspected bullying is supported and encouraged to inform his/her parent/s, a teacher or another responsible adult
 - This information will be forwarded to the appropriate Head of School, Deputy Head of School, RTC Teacher or other delegated staff.
 - NOTE: Form SB1 to be used to document this process.
- b) The parents will be informed through the process of any bullying incidents.
- c) Once an issue of concern is reported the following course of action may be adopted including the following:
 - (i) Both the victim, suspected perpetrator and other people with relevant information will be interviewed by the Head of School, Coordinator, or RTC Teacher (or other delegated staff) specifically assigned to handle such cases.
 - (ii) Supportive pastoral care will be made available to the victim and the suspected perpetrator.
 - (iii) The situation will be monitored.

- (iv) The course of action may include consequences appropriate to the circumstances such as
- apology
 - mediation
 - psychosocial assessment
 - counseling
 - restitution
 - suspension
 - probation
 - exclusion (in such an event, the Exclusion Policy will be enacted)

Should a student be involved in perpetrating one or more further incidents of bullying, the matter will be referred to the Principal for consideration of continued enrolment.

B: Formal complaints/issues

The formal complaint process may have already passed through many of the steps of the informal process. The formal process will reflect the College's Formal Complaints Policy and will include the elements of procedural fairness, natural justice, confidentiality and timely action.

In the formal complaints process the College may endeavour to apply the following strategies in its discretion:

- a) The College aims to create an environment of understanding and cooperation in which the victim of bullying will feel empowered to seek help. (Refer to Annexure 3 for a range of suggested strategies).
- d) In the event of suspected bullying (refer to definition) –
- Any student experiencing suspected bullying is supported and encouraged to inform his/her parent/s, a teacher or another responsible adult
 - This information will be forwarded to the appropriate Head of School, Deputy Head of School, RTC Teacher or other delegated staff.
 - Form SB1 to be used to document the process.
- e) The parents will be informed through the process of any bullying incidents.
- f) Once an issue of concern is reported the following course of action may be adopted including the following:
- (i) Both the victim, suspected perpetrator and other people with relevant information will be interviewed by the Head of School, Coordinator, or RTC Teacher (or other delegated staff) specifically assigned to handle such cases.
 - (ii) Supportive pastoral care will be made available to the victim and the suspected perpetrator.
 - (iii) The situation will be monitored.
 - (iv) The course of action may include consequences appropriate to the circumstances such as
 - apology
 - mediation
 - psychosocial assessment
 - counseling
 - restitution
 - suspension
 - probation
 - exclusion (in such an event, the Exclusion Policy will be enacted)

- (v) Should a student be involved in perpetrating one or more further incidents of bullying, of in the event of a single but very serious incident of bullying, the matter will be referred to the Principal for consideration of continued enrolment.
- (vi) Reported bullying behaviours which amount to “harm” will result in activation of the Child Protection Policy and the matter may be referred to state authorities, as required under mandatory reporting obligations.

9. Responsibilities

- a) **College Board:** To discharge their duties in a manner which ensures that appropriate policies for effective management of the College are established, implemented and maintained. The Board may receive a report from the Executive Principal.
- b) **Principal:** To provide, promote and in-service this policy with the College community.
- c) **Heads of Schools / Coordinators:** Will implement and manage the College procedures as outlined in Section 8.
- d) **Staff:** A staff member who observes or receives a complaint of suspected bullying must report such to one of the people indicated in Section 8 to enable a response to be initiated.
- e) **Students:** All students are expected to contribute to the care and wellbeing of other students by complying with all College policies, rules and directions. Students need to be familiar with examples of bullying and report incidents of suspected bullying.
- f) **Parents** are requested to: Immediately report incidents of suspected bullying to a staff member.

10. Claims verified as false

The College will endeavour, to the best of its ability, to verify all complaints for substance. Should any complaint be lacking in substance, the complaint may be considered to be vexatious. If a complaint is determined to be vexatious or without any basis, subject to compliance with the Complaints Policy and Procedures, disciplinary outcomes may be applied.

11. Copy of Policy

A copy of the Bullying Policy will be located on the parent and staff portal.

12. Complaints Policy

Should the outcomes of this policy be unsatisfactory to the parent concerned, that parent may choose to make a formal complaint to the Executive Principal or to seek remedy at law. See the Complaints Policy and Procedures.

13. Records

Records of bullying and outcomes will be kept securely.

14. Review

It is intended that this policy will be formally reviewed annually or thereabouts but may be amended sooner if triggered by changes in law, operational shifts or as part of the College commitment to continuous improvement.

EXAMPLES OF BULLYING

There are a number of different forms of physical and psychological bullying.

These may involve acts of physical violence, verbal abuse, gesture, extortion and exclusion. Other examples of bullying include –

- Discrimination
- Harassment
- Sexual harassment
- Vilification (criticism / slander)
- Persistent name calling
- Persistent teasing or practical jokes
- Spreading malicious gossip
- Pushing or jostling
- Punching
- Intimidation / extortion
- Coercing a person to do something that they do not wish to do
- Damaging or stealing an individual's property or work
- All forms of deliberate racism and sexism
- Deliberate isolation of an individual
- Misuse of College email
- Taking and distributing of unauthorised images/photos
- Posting on websites of unauthorised pictures or personal information pertaining to students and/or staff through any devices or social media
- Inciting behaviours in others to cause situations of bullying
- Excluding someone from activities without justification
- Refer to sexuality or sexual name calling
- Ridicule of students

OBSERVED BEHAVIOURS THAT MAY INDICATE OCCURRENCE OF BULLYING

Changes in behaviour that may be symptomatic of bullying could include:

- lack of confidence
- withdrawal from College activities
- refusing to go to College
- emotional outbursts
- demands for extra money
- loss of appetite
- sleeplessness
- wanting to change the route to College
- avoidance of specific lessons
- physical symptoms such as loss of normal bodily functions

If a student should exhibit such behaviours, the parent or student is encouraged to contact the College.

ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGIES

Nambour Christian College utilises a number of specific practices and procedures to attempt to address and minimise bullying activity within the College. These strategies are both implicit and explicit within the daily functions of staff, including teachers and administrators, in their interaction with students.

By way of example, the College may endeavour to apply the following strategies in its discretion:

Explicit Strategies

- All bullying reports will be acted upon immediately or as soon as reasonably practicable.
- NCC utilises anti-bullying posters to promote a culture and environment of respectful behaviour.
- During Child Protection week, a strong anti-bullying message may be the key theme for one of the days of the week. In that context, students will receive information about recognising bullying when they see or experience it personally, recommended responses to bullying behaviour and information about who to contact in the event of a bullying experience. This event may be conducted every year.
- Anti bullying messages will be given to students for example at assemblies and via College newsletters
- The Bullying Complaints form will be actioned at Year Level Coordinator meetings with the RTC Teacher.

Implicit Strategies

- NCC upholds a clear zero tolerance policy to bullying and aims to enforce this consistently in the manner with which bullying reports are dealt with. The College endeavours to maintain an early-intervention approach to all bullying matters. All reports of bullying are dealt with immediately or as soon as reasonably practicable by an appropriate member of staff.
- A comprehensive bullying complaints form is used to clearly report direct information about an incident. This is designed to try to ensure a clear and accurate transmission of facts and a reliable method of record keeping. This form is forwarded to the Head of School.
- Parents are informed about any incidents as deemed appropriate by the College. This provides an opportunity for parents to reinforce the zero-tolerance to bullying policy in the home environment and an opportunity to engage families in the resolution of the issue. Parents are also advised of their option to involve police in appropriate circumstances.
- The zero tolerance to bullying policy may be reinforced with the students through year level assemblies conducted by the NCC Adopt-A-Cop, where students may be made aware of outcomes of public bullying occurrences and consequences to bullying are seen to be enforced.

BULLYING COMPLAINTS FORM

The purpose of this form is to detail occurrences of alleged bullying so that this incident can be dealt with in line with the College Student Bullying Policy.

INCIDENT DETAILS – TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT/STUDENT, TEACHERS/STAFF & GIVEN TO HEAD OF SCHOOL OR COORDINATOR

Name of person making complaint: _____

Name of student affected by the behaviour (*Alleged Target*): _____ Year Level _____
[this may also be the student making the complaint]

Location of alleged offence _____

Is this the first time this has happened? YES / NO If yes, please refer the matter to the RTC
If no, please detail history -

Dates incident occurred _____ / _____ / _____ Time if known: _____

Details: _____

Whom is this complaint against? (*Alleged Perpetrator*) _____ Year Level: _____
 (attach extra pages if necessary)

Please detail the offences, actions or behaviours this complaint refers to -

Were there any witnesses to this event? YES / NO
 Names 1. _____ Year Level _____
 2. _____ Year Level _____
 3. _____ Year Level _____

I maintain that the above is true and accurate to the best of my recollection. (There are ramifications for false claims)

 Name Signature Contact Phone Numbers

OFFICE USE ONLYName of *Alleged Perpetrator* (for filing purposes): _____Name of *Alleged Target* (for filing purposes): _____

Other (for filing purposes): _____

Date original complaint received: _____

Name of person who received the complaint at the first instance: _____			
Method by which complaint was made known	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent completed form	<input type="checkbox"/> Student completed form	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent phoned office	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
The complaint was referred to:	<input type="checkbox"/> Head of School	<input type="checkbox"/> Co-Ordinator	
Snapshot Overview of Case: _____			

Action taken and/or comment: _____			

Records made: _____			
Matter:	<input type="checkbox"/> Concluded	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuing	Date for next follow up: _____
Date of next follow-up: _____			
Method of follow-up required: _____			
Issued followed up on: _____			
Action taken and/or comment: _____			

Records made: _____			
Matter:	<input type="checkbox"/> Concluded	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuing	Date for next follow up: _____
Date of next follow-up: _____			
Method of follow-up required: _____			
Issued followed up on: _____			
Action taken and/or comment: _____			

Records made: _____			
Matter:	<input type="checkbox"/> Concluded	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuing	Date for next follow up: _____
Date of next follow-up: _____			
Method of follow-up required: _____			
Issued followed up on: _____			
Action taken and/or comment: _____			

Records made: _____			
Matter:	<input type="checkbox"/> Concluded	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuing	Date for next follow up: _____
Date of next follow-up: _____			
Method of follow-up required: _____			
Issued followed up on: _____			
Action taken and/or comment: _____			

Records made: _____			
Matter:	<input type="checkbox"/> Concluded	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuing	Date for next follow up: _____

Please print more pages if necessary.