



## STUDENT BULLYING POLICY

ISSUED	February 2005	LOCATED	T:\Admin\Executive\1.College Policies - All major College policies\College Policies		
REVISED	June 2006	June 2007	May 2008	October 2009	October 2010
	July 2011	October 2011	In-house Review – Jan 2017	Adopted Feb 2017	

### 1. Introduction

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

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;
  - refrain from any behaviours that impinge negatively upon a person’s dignity and rights, morale and 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 two fundamental principles of natural justice are:

  - those making a decision are not biased; 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.

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.

Information will be regarded as confidential if:

- Information has the 'necessary quality of confidence' in that any unauthorised use would be detrimental to a party; and
- While confidentiality will be respected, for staff in schools, the duty of care, professional obligations and the best interest of the child may override confidentiality in the school eg, mandatory reporting overrides confidentiality.
- When the school is working with other agencies (mandatory reporting), the school 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 common law duty of care to provide and promote a safe environment for students. Legislative obligations also arise under

- Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)
- Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2014
- Child Protection Regulation 2000 (Qld)
- Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001 (Qld)
- Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2001 (Qld)
- Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 9Qld)
- Education (General Provisions) Regulations 2006 9Qld)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)
- Criminal Code of Qld

#### 5. Definitions

Bullying

For the purposes of this policy the definition of Bullying is adopted from the Workplace Health and Safety Act.

*"A person is subject to harassment [bullying] if the person is subjected to repeated behaviour .... by a person .... that*

a) *is unwelcome and unsolicited;*

b) *is often offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening; and*

- c) *a reasonable person would consider the behaviour to be offensive, humiliating, intimidating or threatening ...*

#### Discrimination

Deliberate exclusion, sexual harassment and vilification are all types of bullying. Note: discrimination and sexual harassment can be a single incident. Other single incidents can include assaults and personal physical attacks.

#### 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 school day is a matter for parents (and the police, e-safety commissioner) and may also involve the school.

#### Harm

Significant detriment as defined in the Education (Accreditation for Non-State Schools) Act 2001.

#### Inappropriate Behaviour

That which is contrary to Christian values and which falls short of the definition of harm or bullying.

#### Parent

The reference to parent may also mean caregiver.

#### Informal concerns/issues

Parents are requested to raise issues of concern at the earliest opportunity with class teachers or Year coordinators of their students. Each concern will be assessed and documented.

#### Formal complaints/issues

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

## 6. Scope

This policy and procedures apply to all bullying behaviours and all students attending the College, on campus and attending school activities.

## 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 formally or informally 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 school or out of school.

## 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 will usually 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.

- 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 College, Coordinator or RTC Teacher.
  - 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 will usually be followed 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 further incidents of bullying, the matter will be referred to the Head of College 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 natural justice, confidentiality and timely action.

In the formal complaints process:

- 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 2 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 College, Coordinator or RTC Teacher.
  - 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 will usually be followed 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 further incidents of bullying, the matter will be referred to the Head of College 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, at the discretion of the Head of College.

## **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 and maintained. The Board may receive a report from Head of College.

- b) Head of College  
To provide, promote and in-service this policy with the school community.
- c) Heads of Schools / Coordinators  
Will implement and manage the College procedures as outlined in Section 8.
- d) Staff  
A teacher who observes or receives a complaint of suspected bullying must report such to one of the people indicated in Section 9 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 school 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, verify all complaints for substance. Should any complaint be lacking in substance, they will be considered Vexatious. Disciplinary measures will then be put in place.

### **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 Head of College or to seek remedy at law. See NCC Formal Complaint policy.

### **13. Records**

Records of bullying and outcomes will be kept securely.

### **14. Review**

This policy to be reviewed annually or as necessary.

## EXAMPLES OF BULLYING

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

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

- Discrimination
- Sexual harassment
- Vilification (criticism / slander)
- Persistent name calling
- Persistent teasing
- 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 school email
- Taking and distributing of unauthorised images/photos
- Posting on websites of unauthorised pictures or personal information pertaining to students and/or teachers through any devices or social media
- Inciting behaviours in others to cause situations of bullying
- Exclusions
- 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 school activities
- refusing to go to school
- emotional outbursts
- demands for extra money
- loss of appetite
- sleeplessness
- wanting to change the route to school
- 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 address and minimise bullying activity within the school. These strategies are both implicit and explicit within the daily functions of teachers and administrators in their interaction with students.

### Explicit Strategies

- All bullying reports will be acted upon immediately
- NCC utilises anti-bullying posters to promote a culture and environment of respectful behaviour.
- During Child Protection week, a strong anti-bullying message will be the key theme for one of the days of the week. 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 will be conducted every year.
- Anti bullying messages will be given to students 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 enforces this consistently in the manner with which bullying reports are dealt with. The College maintains an early-intervention approach to all bullying matters. All reports of bullying are dealt with immediately by an appropriate member of the senior administration.
- A comprehensive bullying complaints form is used to clearly report direct information about an incident. This ensures 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. This enables the zero-tolerance to bullying policy to be re-enforced in the home environment and engages the families in the resolution of the issue. Parents are also advised of their option to involve police where the matter becomes a criminal offence.
- The zero tolerance of bullying policy is re-enforced with the students through year level assemblies conducted by the NCC Adopt-A-Cop, where students are made aware of any 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 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 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