



Anti-Bullying Policy

Student

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1 Purpose

When considering the area of relationships at Covenant Christian School (the School) we start with reference to the Bible, the very Word of God written. It is the power of God unto salvation, the truth that enlightens our understanding and the only infallible authority for all our activity. That framework of truth presented to us in the Bible - a Christian world and life view - underlies our understanding of everything, including relationships at the School.

The Anti-Bullying Policy is part of the School's implementation of the National Safe Schools Framework which is based on the following overarching vision: *All Australian schools are safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote student wellbeing.*

It would be easy to speak of what not to do when addressing the issue of the breakdown of relationships between students in a school. However, we seek to be positive, working out of prescribed biblical principles.

1.1 Biblical Principles

- The first and great commandment says – “*Love the Lord your God with all heart, soul, mind, strength.*” - Matthew 22:37-40
- The second is like the first, “*Love thy neighbour as thyself.*” - Matthew 22:37-40.
- “*Esteem others better than yourself...Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*” - Philippians 2:3-4.
- “*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good*” - Romans 12:21.
- “*Be kindly affectionate to one another... in honour giving preference to one another.*” - Romans 12:10.
- “*Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them...*” – Matthew 7:12

2 Vision and Mission Statements

Vision:

In dependence on God's grace, Covenant Christian School will nurture and equip students with a heart to glorify God by serving Him and living according to His Word.

Mission:

Covenant Christian School is a safe, caring and loving community. In partnership with parents we cultivate Christian character in our students and equip them to joyfully serve God and contribute positively to society.

This will be achieved through a Christ-centred approach where the gospel is central. God's Word is applied to all areas of learning and experience. Students and staff are challenged, encouraged and supported to love learning and pursue excellence to the glory of God.

3 Objectives of this Policy

- That all Council members, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents should have an understanding of what the Bible requires regarding relationships with others and how this can be brought to bear in a pastoral manner.
- That all Council members and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the School policy is regarding the breakdown of relationships, and follow it when relational breakdown is reported.
- That all students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when relationship breakdowns are reported.

- That the safety and wellbeing of students and their education not be affected by any bullying within the School.¹

4 Organisational Scope

This policy is School-wide.

5 Definitions

For purposes of this policy, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

Appropriate adults:

Adults who are able to support and help the student in an effective and God-honouring manner. This may be a parent, one of the teaching staff, the school Chaplain, one of the administrative staff or another adult the student trusts.

Bullying:

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, and over a long period.

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Bullying has three main features:

- It involves a misuse of power in a relationship
- It is ongoing and repeated, and
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Covert bullying: A set of non-physical bullying behaviour that are more subtle or easier to hide than other forms of bullying. This may include threats to an individual's reputation and/ or sense of safety, threatening gestures, manipulation, spreading rumours or repeatedly ostracising others. These behaviours aim to inflict harm by reducing a person's connection to peers.

Cyberbullying: Bullying that occurs through social media and/or other internet –based platforms. It may involve the use of SMS or other messaging apps on a digital device.

Mobbing: is the intentional and systematic bullying by a group of people towards another person. The mobbing may be towards a

¹ Education Act (ACT) 2004 condition of registration section 88(6)(b)(ii) and renewal of registration 97(6)(b)(ii).

	<p>student or students who are younger, a student or students who are of similar age, or upwards towards a teacher.</p> <p><u>Physical bullying</u>: Repetitive, unwanted physical contact or threats of unwanted physical contact with a person or group of people. The threats can also be to the person's property. It can include hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing or tripping.</p> <p><u>Verbal bullying</u>: Repetitive spoken or written comments directed at a person or a group of people. It can include using put-downs, name-calling and insulting language.</p>
Bystander	<p>Is a person or group of people who witness or know about any type of bullying or harassing behaviour and are not directly involved. Any member of the School community can be a bystander and can act to prevent or stop bullying, harassment or violence.</p>
Duty of care:	<p>The responsibility to exercise reasonable care to protect the safety of any students against injury that should reasonably have been foreseen. This duty exists whenever a student/teacher relationship exists, while students are on school premises during hours when the school is open and while on school based activities taking place elsewhere. Part of this duty is to encourage emotional resilience in the students, and how to be confident to seek help if necessary.</p>
Emotional Resilience:	<p>The capacity to not be bothered by the mean words or actions of another. It arises through being taught to identify why someone is being mean and how to stop the mean behaviour. Dr Brooks Gibbs wrote, <i>"If we victim proof students we are more likely to bully proof schools."</i>²</p>
Respectful relationships:	<p>Are interpersonal interactions where all parties feel safe, are treated with fairness, are valued and feel accepted. This concept applies to all relationships, including friendships, student-student, student-teacher, teacher-family, family and partner relationships.</p>

6 Policy Content and Guidelines

6.1 Principles to be applied:

It's important to address bullying from a correct viewpoint of who God is and who people are as fallen beings made in His image. We must not react to aggression out of hate, anger, or vengeance—but we also do not have to submit to abuse. The issue of bullying is to be responded to using the following Scripture-based principles:

1. All people are fearfully and wonderfully made.
2. Treat others as you want to be treated (modified Golden Rule).
3. Love your enemies. (Note that loving your enemies does not mean being a doormat. Loving people includes confronting their sinful behaviour in appropriate ways).

6.2 Training

The School will ensure that it provides training to staff and students about bullying, and will deal with bullying promptly in accordance with the Discipline Policy, noting that bullying behaviour often has complex causation and responses.

² https://www.brooksgibbs.com/about_brooks

6.3 Forms of harassment or bullying:

The forms of harassment or bullying and the pain and distress inflicted by each can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures);
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;
- Cultural – students are ridiculed, teased or bullied about anything that relates to their cultural identity
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments;
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing; and
- Cyber - repeatedly sending and/or posting offensive messages, hurtful comments, material that is sensitive or embarrassing, making repeated threats of harm using electronic means and deliberately excluding another from an online group or mailing list. Applications where cyberbullying can occur include: email, personal websites, chatrooms, blogs, social networks e.g. Facebook, webcams and phones, YouTube, forums, and SMS.
- Mobbing – intentional bullying by a group of people towards a single person.

6.4 Implementation – Instructional

The School is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all students so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. A two-fold approach will be implemented:

- (1) Intentionally aiming to develop and maintain a school culture in which all students should be developing a loving / serving attitude towards others, thus making any form of bullying or other aggressive, unwanted attention of any kind unacceptable at the School.
 - a. The School establishes a safe, respectful and supportive environment by:
 - i. committing to develop a safe school through a school-wide consistent approach;
 - ii. building the self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social management capabilities of students to engage in respectful relationships;
 - iii. applying disciplinary measures, where necessary, which aim to foster and restore respectful relationships;
 - iv. supporting teachers to guide students in developing balanced social and emotional expectations of others in the school environment;
 - v. fostering an engaging, respectful and God-honouring school environment;
 - vi. involving the school community in the development of school processes and procedures that promote student safety and wellbeing;
 - vii. ensuring schools are organised in ways that provide a duty of care; respecting differences and promoting godly and respectful behaviour; and
 - viii. providing intensive, individualised behavioural support for students that require additional support in an appropriate and timely manner.
- (2) Intentionally developing the students' emotional resilience to minimise the impact of any bullying which may occur. As bullying often involves a misuse of power in a relationship, we aim to address the imbalance by empowering the potential victim of bullying. The School will implement instruction, pastoral care, and other appropriate means to help lift students' emotional resilience.

6.5 Implementation - Disciplinary

If a student experiences any form of bullying or harassment, all students should be able to communicate with appropriate adults knowing that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a covenant community, meaning that we look out for the welfare of all, and each member has a responsibility to alert the appropriate authority when relational problems occur.

Staff need to be aware that the majority of children who experience bullying will not tell anyone. When they do, it is because they are very stressed by what is happening. Staff must be:

- a) Empathetic
- b) Calm and professional

- c) Gather as many facts as possible
- d) Assess if the student is in crisis, i.e. flight or fight mode, as they may be considering self-harm or even suicide.

7 Signs and Symptoms

A student may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is experiencing trauma due to unsavory interpersonal relationships. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins truanting
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay a bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable towards other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

8 Legislative Compliance

The School is required to manage its policy documentation within a legislative framework. The legislation directing this policy is the:

- [*Children and Young People Act 2008 \(ACT\)*](#)
- [*Crimes Act 1900 \(ACT\)*](#)
- [*Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)*](#)
- [*Disability Standards for Education 2005 \(Cth\)*](#)
- [*Discrimination Act 1991 \(ACT\)*](#)
- [*Education Act 2004 \(ACT\)*](#)
- [*Education and Care Services National Law \(ACT\) Act 2011*](#)
- [*Human Rights Act 2004 \(ACT\)*](#)
- [*Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 \(Cth\)*](#)
- [*Information Privacy Act 2014 \(ACT\)*](#)
- [*Racial Discrimination Act 1975 \(Cth\)*](#)
- [*Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)*](#)
- [*Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(Cth\)*](#)

9 References

Anti-Bullying Policy Procedures [to be added once finalised]

National Safe Schools Framework [link](#)

Bully Zero website [link](#)

Bullying No Way! Website [link](#)

Dr Brooks Gibbs' "Raise Them Strong" website [link](#)

Axis resources:

- Bullying Conversation Kit <https://axis.org/conversation-kit/bullying/>
- Parent Guides (located on W: drive):
 - (Cyber)Bullying
 - Depression and Anxiety

10 Approval Agency

The School Council.

11 Policy Sponsor

Principal

12 Contact Person

The following person may be approached on a routine basis in relation to this policy:

Principal

Ext: 102