



Anti-Bullying and Cyber-Bullying Policy

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1. Anti-Bullying and Cyber-Bullying Policy

1.1 Purpose

This Anti-Bullying and Cyber-Bullying Policy is one of the essential safeguarding measures implemented by Coast Christian School (referred to as the 'School'). As a part of the School's student welfare and wellbeing focus, this policy is intended to provide School community members with practices and procedures to prevent and address issues of student bullying, including cyber bullying, appropriately, consistently and effectively. The School does not tolerate bullying in any form, seeking instead to encourage Christ-like behaviour, counsel and support for all students.

1.2 Scope

It is the responsibility of all members of the School community to promote and encourage positive student behaviour in a safe and supportive school environment. All School employees, students, School community members and School visitors are expected to abide by this policy.

This policy applies to the behaviour of students during school hours or at a school event (such as a sporting carnival or excursion). It includes all School environments, both physical and online.

Should the School become aware of serious bullying outside of School hours, the matter is to be reported to the relevant parents, the police or relevant authority (such as the online service provider).

1.3 Distribution of this policy

Key ways in which this policy is disseminated and reviewed include:

- Provision to all School staff, students and community members (parents, contractors, volunteers and visitors) at the time of their engagement with the School.
- Professional learning for School staff each July Professional Development Week on the policy and related plans and procedures with opportunity for policy evaluation.
- Specific new School staff Induction Programme training and familiarisation of the Anti-Bullying and Cyber Bullying Policy and related procedures.
- Explicit instruction in Term 2 for the School students about the definition of bullying, anti bullying, being an 'upstander' (as opposed to a 'bystander') and the School's policy and procedures, at an age appropriate level.

- Regular reminders from the Principal, in the School Newsletter, to parents about what constitutes bullying, the School's policy and procedures.
- The annual School survey whereby School staff, parents and students provide feedback about the School's anti-bullying strategies and areas for change and/or improvement.
- This policy is a public facing document available on the School's website: <https://coastcs.nsw.edu.au>.

1.4 Related policies/documents

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following documents:

Child Safe Policy and Code

Code of Conduct for Students

Code of Conduct for School Community Members

Student Discipline and Behaviour Management Policy and Overview

Internet Use Agreement and Student Internet Permission Form

Privacy Policy

Statement of Doctrines and Beliefs

Student Welfare Policy

Vision, Mission and Values

1.5 Child Safety

School community members have a duty of care to take reasonable measures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students whilst in the care of the School. Under the Child Safe Standards, evaluation of the risk of harm that may arise needs to be addressed with the implementation of reasonable preventative measures. A student safe environment is where the risk of harm is prevented or minimised and the student feels safe and supported.

1.6 Responsibilities

The School Board is responsible for approving this policy and amendments of it, together with other responsibilities set out below in this policy.

The School Principal is responsible for implementing this policy throughout the School and on the School's public website, as set out in this policy.

All staff, students and parents are to abide by this policy.

All School Community Members are to be aware of their reporting obligations, including reporting requirements, under this policy and related policies above.

2. Anti-Bullying Policy

2.1 Rationale

The School's *Statement of Doctrines and Beliefs* outlines the immense value God places upon humankind,

'God has created humanity in His image and ascribed dignity, sanctity and worth to human life from conception until death. God requires human life to be accorded respect and to be protected from harm (Genesis 1:27, Psalm 139:13-16, Exodus 20:13)' ('Humanity' section).

This forms part of the School's God-given mandate, developing an environment where all School Community Members, including students, feel safe, supported and included. The School's Vision, Mission and Values do not promote bullying. Rather, bullying in any form is against the values and beliefs of the School and will not be tolerated, condoned nor trivialised.

Romans 12:9-21 provides an illustration of the way in :

"Be good friends who love deeply...bless your enemies...get along with each other...make friends with nobodies...don't let evil get the best of you; get the best of evil by doing good."
(The Message)

The School has an expectation of respect for students, staff, parents and visitors alike. The expectation is that every School community member gives and receives care, kindness and respect. Two of the three School rules include this expectation, 'Be Kind' and 'Show Respect'.

At School, a safe, positive and caring Christian environment is sought in which acknowledgement of each human being is unique and created by God and therefore of immense value.

Staff, students, parents and caregivers at the School have a shared responsibility in making sure that bullying behaviours are dealt with quickly and effectively whenever they occur.

The School endeavours to raise awareness of what makes students resilient, to develop strategies to reduce vulnerabilities and increase coping skills. We are an Anti-Bullying school. We take this position because we believe that ALL people are made in God's image, and ALL are therefore worthy of our respect. Ephesians 2:10 "For we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which He prepared in advance for us to do". Showing respect for others is one of the ways we can demonstrate our respect towards God as The Creator of all living things and towards one another as His creation.

2.2 What is Bullying?

Bullying is when someone or a group of people with more power repeatedly and intentionally causes hurt or harm to another person or group of people who feel helpless to respond. Bullying can continue over time, is often hidden from adults and will probably continue if no action is taken.

The key features of bullying are that it:

- causes hurt and distress,
- is repeated and
- involves the use of power in an unfair way.

Bullying is NOT:

- single episodes of social rejection or dislike; or
- single episodes of acts of nastiness or spite; or
- random acts of aggression or intimidation; or
- mutual arguments, disagreements or fights.

It is noted that whilst the above examples do not constitute 'bullying', these behaviours may well be contrary to the School's Student Code of Conduct, could have the possibility to become 'bullying' and require Staff intervention as a mitigation and preventative strategy.

Forms of Bullying:

Physical: fighting, pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking, rude and intimidating gestures, invasion of personal space, taking or damaging belongings.

Group: ganging up against, isolating or rejection from the group.

Verbal: mocking, name calling, putting someone down, offensive language.

Victimisation: picking on, excluding, threatening to "get", stand over tactics.

Sexual: unwanted sexual invitation or inferences, touching or brushing against in a sexual manner, writing or drawing or commenting about someone's body sexually, sexually oriented jokes or name calling and comments about someone's private life.

Discrimination: of any kind based on race, gender or religion.

2.3 How do we prevent bullying?

The School aims to develop a whole school culture which promotes respect for others through teaching and demonstration in all areas of school life. To effectively implement proactive responses, School Community Members have specific roles to prevent and address bullying. These include the following:

School Staff will:

- Deliver Christian education in the context of curriculum, chapel services, assemblies, and general nurture where the value of the individual is affirmed and the importance of qualities such as compassion, kindness, tolerance and respect are encouraged.

- Model examples of how to relate to one another with love and acceptance.
- Encourage the teaching of tolerance, respect and valuing of difference and diversity.
- Provide access to this policy, the *Code of Conduct for Students* and *Code of Conduct for School Community Members* to all members of the School community via website, hard copies (available on request) and newsletter articles from time to time.
- Programme specific activities in all classes which promote values associated with anti-bullying with a School wide focus in Term 2 each year.
- Provide definitions of bullying - including explanations of the roles of perpetrator and bystander.
- Provide support, counselling (where needed) and guidance to the victims of bullying.
- Providing support, intervention and counselling (where needed) for individuals who bully others.
- Be aware of signs of insecurity, discomfort and suspected incidents of bullying.
- Make efforts to remove occasions of bullying by proactive management of students in the classroom and playground.
- Arrive at class and to playground supervision on time.
- Act on situations immediately regarding bullying and appropriate follow through (including strategies to prevent re-offending).
- Report suspected incidents to the appropriate staff member and Principal.

School Parents will:

- Model anti-bullying attitudes and behaviour.
- Support the values of tolerance and respect in the home.
- Encourage children to exercise these values in all contexts including at school.
- Understand the definition of bullying.
- Report bullying and encouraging students to do same.
- Provide support and encouraging their child to seek help.
- Be alert to any signs of distress or anxiety, unwillingness to attend school, missing equipment, damaged clothing or bruising, and contacting the School of any concerns.
- Communicate effectively and respectfully with appropriate Staff staff.
- Reassure students who are being bullied, of their value.
- Work in partnership with the School to resolve bullying issues.

School Students will:

- Model anti-bullying attitudes and behaviour.
- Show respect for all members of the School community.
- Understand the definition of bullying.
- Speak out against bullying and report it if seen.
- Report to staff bullying that is experienced by oneself.
- Support students who are bullied.
- Suggest anti-bullying strategies to your teacher.
- Encourage others to make a stand against bullying, to be 'upstanders'.

2.4 What should happen if a bullying incident is observed or reported?

Bullying is a serious issue, actions taken in response to bullying need to be prompt and decisive.

- The incident is investigated by the teacher to whom it has been reported (if this is a Casual teacher this teacher will report to the Stage teaching partner or the adjacent classroom teacher for investigation)
- The teacher determines whether or not the incident is bullying, according to the agreed definition in this Policy
- If it is not bullying the incident is dealt with by the teacher in accordance with the Student Discipline and Behaviour Management Policy
- Notes throughout the process are to be uploaded or created on Sentral under Wellbeing, unless required otherwise by the Principal
- If it is bullying the incident is dealt with using the following strategies:
 - **Interview with the victim.**

This is done by the investigative teacher in a supportive, sensitive manner with consideration for the victim's protection, privacy and safety. Ensure that any physical needs are met (such as First Aide) and that the victim has time to become calm and collected. Consideration is to be made upon whether another staff member also needs to be present for the interview.

The main aim of the interview is to ascertain the victim's perspective. A secondary aim is to explore ways in which bullying can be minimised.
 - **Interview with bullies (and relevant bystanders/upstanders).**

This is done by the investigative teacher, interviewing one student at a time, starting with the student seen as the group leader. The interviewee is to consider the bully's protection, privacy and safety. Ensure that any physical needs are met (such as First Aide) and that the bully has time to become calm and collected. Consideration is to be made upon whether another staff member also needs to be present for the interview.

This is a non-adversarial interview designed to emphasise the concern of the person who is being hurt or elicit some empathy and to come to some agreement as to what the person might do to help the victim. During the meeting, the School Staff member is to remain calm, empathetic, never angry nor indignant. Respect is to be shown for each person with procedural fairness and natural justice for all students involved.
 - **Parents are contacted and informed.**

The investigative teacher contacts the parents of the victim and the bully/ies (and possibly any bystanders/upstanders involved) to advise them of the report, the results of the investigation and of the School's response. The parents are invited to maintain communication with the relevant School staff.
 - **School Staff are advised.**

All School staff who are responsible for supervising students on playground duty and/or classroom supervision are advised of the bullies and the victim so that continued observations can occur.

- **Wellbeing support for both the victim/s and bully/ies**

The Principal (who is the School's Child Safe Officer) may also require the victim and/or bullies to access support from the School's Wellbeing Officer (formerly School Chaplain) as part of the remediation and follow-up process. Where deemed relevant, the Principal may offer access to a trained, external counsellor or psychologist.

- **Ongoing support for victims and bullies.**

It is essential that daily follow-up takes place. This involves asking the bullies individually how they have followed through what they agreed to do to help the victim, and asking the victim how they are progressing and whether or not there have been any further incidents. The follow-up is initially carried out daily, and then tapered off if all is going well. This is done by the investigative teacher and supported by the classroom teacher of each of the students involved. Respect is to be continually shown for each person with procedural fairness, natural justice and the reasonable protection of privacy for all students involved.

If the bullying behaviour does not stop as a result of this intervention, then the Principal is advised and the usual sanctions of the Student Discipline and Behaviour Management Policy will be implemented. This may include a suspension or the implementation of a specific level within the Behaviour Management system. Communication with the parents of the bully/ies and victim/s will be maintained. For severe cases of bullying, the student may be expelled without moving through the levels of the behaviour management system.

If not already a part of the process, the School's Wellbeing Officer (former Chaplain) is included at this level in order to provide support for the bully and the victim. School Staff on playground duty and classroom teachers are required to continue to support the students involved in the bullying incident. The Principal may also continue to provide daily support for the victim and bully, depending upon the specific circumstances.

The Principal will reconsider offering access to a trained, external counsellor or psychologist.

If required, the Principal will contact the local Police "School Liaison Officer/s" (SLO) to provide further support to relevant staff and students. Schools should keep in regular contact with the School's SLO:

- SLA: Senior Constable Rebecca Armitage or Senior Constable Peter Hughes
 - a. Location: Gosford Police Station
 - b. Phone: (02) 4323 5599 or 0437 776 727.

Further counselling information and support services are available to schools, students and families through the following sources:

- Beyondblue
 - a. 1300 224 636
 - b. www.beyondblue.org.au
- Bullying. No way!
 - a. 1800 551 800
 - b. www.bullyingnoway.com.au
- Cybersafety
 - a. www.cybersmart.gov.au/report.aspx
- Kids' Helpline
 - a. 1800 551 800
 - b. www.kidshelp.com.au
- Reach Out
 - a. www.reachout.com.au
- The Australian Psychological Society
 - a. www.psychology.org.au

3. Cyber-bullying Policy

3.1 Policy Statement

The School encourages the use of technology for educational purposes. However, the misuse of such technology can cause direct or indirect psychological or physical harm to others. Such misuse is viewed as Cyber-Bullying at the School. It shows a direct lack of respect for others. We expect staff, students and parents to give and receive respect within a secure, supportive and caring environment. The School is an Anti-Bullying school.

3.2 What is Cyber-Bullying?

Cyber-Bullying is the term used for bullying using the internet or by SMS. It involves bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat room, discussion group, social media, instant messaging or through mobile phone technologies. It includes, but is not limited to, actions such as:

- Using technology such as mobile phones to record conversations for the purpose of slandering an individual by altering the context of the conversation and playing it back in a public, private, or semi-private setting or placing the recording on the internet for global access.
- Using any technology such as mobile phones to photograph individuals, especially in what are considered private settings such as change rooms, and using the photographic material to slander, vilify, promote in an irresponsible way, or present in such a way as causes embarrassment to the individual. This

would include placing the photographic material on a computer which others may view, or on any intranet, or on the internet for global access, or by producing hard copy(s) of the photos without the knowledge of the person concerned, or by distributing photos in any form to any other individual.

- Obtaining physical photos of a person and translating them into electronic form and then placing those images on any computer without the permission of the person concerned, for any use other than identification of students within the school community by School staff.
- Creating or using any website to place information on it which may cause damage or psychological harm to any student or place them in potential danger from another person. For example, placing home and address details of anyone on a website, or placing name(s) on a website with comments about the person(s) named, or placing any identifiable details on a website of another person without that person's express permission.
- Sending an electronic message(s) to a person which is threatening, degrading, or slanderous, or sending the message(s) to others.

3.3 Why is Cyber-Bullying not acceptable?

Bullying displays disrespect towards others. It has a negative effect on personal relationships. At School, we have an expectation of respect for all others. We expect every member of the School community both to give and receive respect within a secure, supportive, and caring environment.

Cyber-Bullying is a form of bullying which is treated seriously at the School because often the victim is defenseless and unaware of the personal attack until such attack is released into the public domain. Also, the content of Cyber-Bullying can sometimes be of a highly vilifying and degrading nature.

3.4 What are the preventative measures?

To protect the School students from cyber bullying occurring at the School, a number of preventative measures have been implemented:

Mobile Phone/Communication Device policy:

It is strongly recommended that students do not have a mobile phone, smart watch nor any other smart device whilst at School. These items are valuable and cause undue stress if lost or damaged. If parents require their child to have a mobile phone or other smart device for transport reasons, the phone or device must be switched off and surrendered to the School Office staff at the beginning of the school day where the student's name will be attached to the device and stored for safe keeping. The phone/smart device is to be collected by the student/parent at the end of the school day and placed in the student's school bag. Students who use a phone/smart device at School without permission will

have it confiscated for the rest of the day. The parent will be contacted by the classroom teacher to ensure that the parent is aware of this policy and of the consequences that will be applied should this occur again. The classroom teacher may choose to discuss a solution to the communication problem with the family.

A second occurrence will mean that the phone will be confiscated and held in a secure location in the School Office until collected by a parent. Upon collection of the phone, School staff will once again explain to the parent the School Mobile Phone/Smart Device Policy and the consequences attached, ensuring that the parent is aware of the breach of policy.

3.5 How will we respond to any reports of Cyber-Bullying?

Often, Cyber-Bullying occurs outside of the School property and premises. Should such Cyber-Bullying be brought to the School's attention, the School will respond, as in all instances of bullying, in a matter which seeks reconciliation and a return to a balanced and healthy relationship.

Any student who suspects or becomes aware that Cyber-Bullying has or is occurring should report the details in the first instance to the classroom teacher as soon as possible. The teacher needs to inform the Principal the same day. If the instance is noted by a teacher, the teacher should report to the Principal that same day.

The Principal should be informed of any unresolved or serious situation and, if appropriate, the Police contacted.

The Principal will investigate the issue, gather evidence from appropriate students and apply appropriate discipline and/or provide counselling to the students concerned. Serious cases of Cyber-Bullying may result in instant expulsion.

As in all serious disciplinary matters at the School, parents will be notified of the circumstances involving their child/ren and usually be invited to discuss the matter with the Principal.

3.6 Using the Computer Network and the Internet at the School:

Staff and students are advised of the appropriate use of the internet whilst at School. This advice is provided by classroom teachers and appropriate staff. Upon enrolment and at the commencement of each school year, the School provides the student with a copy of the 'Using the computer Network and the Internet at Coast'. This policy includes an [Internet User Agreement form](#) which is to be signed by the parent and student. A copy of this form is retained by the Office Manager

in the student's enrolment file. Appropriate use of the internet at School is explained to each class within the first week of Term One each year.