

## **ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSEMENT**

Policy No. 1103

### **1) Rationale**

- a) Grace Christian College is a Christian college that conducts the entirety of its affairs in accordance with its Statement of Faith, which outlines God's good purposes for his people and how Christians are to live their lives in obedience to Him.
- b) Grace Christian College recognises that each person is a unique creation of God and loved by Him. Therefore, we aim to maintain a caring learning environment where that belief is demonstrated through positive relationships between all members of the school community.
- c) The value that we attribute to each individual will be evident in the way we speak and behave toward them. It is clear from the teaching of Jesus and the apostles that the way we treat people is a strong reflection of how seriously we hold to the Gospel of Christ. Through the study of scripture we find the following characteristics are among those that are essential to a Christian community.
- d) With these characteristics in mind and the application of verses such as Ephesians 4:29, "...Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers..." it is clear that living the Gospel of Christ will bring with it the appropriate treatment of each other.

### **2) Purpose**

- a) The purpose of this policy is to address the issue of bullying and harassment by endeavouring to change attitudes and to proactively prevent bullying and harassment. Bullying can be defined as an act of aggression or harassment causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another. It is an abuse of power and aims to control or demean others.
- b) The aim is to have all members of the school community experience a sense of self-worth, belonging to a community and an understanding that they are a person of value. Students will be encouraged to pursue their individual interests and develop their skills in an environment that supports individual endeavour, expression and individuality within the framework of a co-operative and equitable community that recognises the oneness of mankind under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

### **3) Definitions of Bullying**

- a) Bullying
  - i) Bullying behaviour takes different forms and is almost always deliberate, repeated and indicative of an imbalance of power. Bullying behaviour seeks to harm, humiliate, dominate, intimidate, embarrass, ostracise, or isolate.
  - ii) Bullying can include such behaviours as:
  - iii) Physical violence and attacks
  - iv) Verbal or written taunts, name calling and put-downs
  - v) Threats and intimidation
  - vi) Exclusion from the peer group
  - vii) Interfering with someone's personal property
  - viii) Repeated unreasonable behaviour toward someone
  - ix) Sexual harassment
  - x) Discrimination, including racial discrimination.
- b) Indirect Bullying

- i) Indirect bullying can also take place. Examples of indirect bullying include:
  - ii) Unjustified criticism or complaints
  - iii) Deliberately excluding someone from activities
  - iv) Withholding information that is vital for effective work performance
  - v) Setting tasks that are unreasonably above or below a person's ability
- c) Cyber bullying
  - i) Cyberbullying is bullying using digital technologies, including mobile phones, email and social media tools. Students involved in bullying do so by playing a number of different roles:
    - ii) Engaging directly in bullying behaviour or assisting and actively joining in
    - iii) Encouraging the bullying behaviour by giving, for example, silent approval, by smiling, by laughing or by making comments. Standing by silently and passively, doing nothing when knowing or seeing bullying behaviour.
- d) Racist Bullying
  - i) Racist Bullying (or Racism) is a form of bullying that includes repeated, deliberate and ongoing behaviour that belittles, mocks, intimidates, vilifies or shames someone because of their physical appearance, ethnic background, religious or cultural practices, and/or the way they talk or dress.

#### **4) Strategies and Procedures to prevent bullying**

- a) Bullying is obviously a transgression of the aims and goals of Grace Christian College and is to be abhorred by all members of the college community. Through the combined efforts of staff, students and parents the college will seek to minimise the presence of bullying amongst the members of the college community. The college will achieve this by doing the following.
  - b) Identify Behaviours
    - i) Identifying the behaviours that are considered to be bullying and encouraging all community members to avoid exhibiting them.
  - c) Maintain Procedures
    - i) Maintaining procedures used to deal with bullies such as consequences and applying the schools discipline strategy to prevent on-going cycles of repeated bullying.
  - d) Take reports seriously
    - i) Taking reports of bullying seriously and acting to resolve the issues as soon as possible.
  - e) Uphold rights
    - i) Encouraging all members of the school community to uphold the rights of others.
  - f) Encourage Reporting
    - i) Encouraging students and parents to report incidents of bullying. The school will promote the notion that it is 'OK to tell' of incidents of bullying.
  - g) Education
    - i) The school will seek to provide appropriate curriculum, literature and resources, which support the school aims and goals regarding bullying. Bullying will be addressed through the school's resilience, relationship and life skills programs and the school's Chaplain.
  - h) Counselling
    - i) Where it is deemed necessary the school may recommend students receive counselling to help with personal development e.g. anger management, assertiveness training etc.
  - i) Pastoral Care and Mentoring
    - i) Where possible the school will offer pastoral care and mentor support to victims and perpetrators of bullying.
  - j) Response Responsibility for Students incidents
    - i) In the case of students, incidents of bullying will initially be dealt with by the notified member of staff who will take immediate steps to help the victim by ensuring he/she is removed from imminent danger and by providing reassurance, advice and support. Serious or on going incidents should be reported to the Assistant Principal or Principal.

- k) Response Responsibility for Adults Incidents
  - i) In the case of staff and parents, incidents of bullying should be dealt with according to the Grievance policy.

## 5) Cyber Bullying Strategies

- a) Student Behaviour
  - i) Prevention of Cyber Bullying requires all students to behave responsibly when online, at college or at home. Behaving safely and responsibly online means students must:
  - ii) Use appropriate language at all times.
  - iii) Treat all people with respect
  - iv) Protect students own privacy and personal information
  - v) Respect other people's property, particularly with regard to copyright laws
  - vi) Respect other people's privacy thus adhering to Privacy laws
  - vii) Do not share personal information, photographs, movies, etc., of other people
  - viii) Select appropriate spaces to work and network
  - ix) Be proactive in letting someone in authority if 'something is not quite right.' Responsible people are the Principal, Deputy Principal, and/or a Class teacher.
- b) Device Management and Filtering
  - i) The school's IT Co-ordinator will manage an internet filter to protect students from inappropriate content and also monitor the content of student interactions using networking platforms and school owned devices.
- c) School Programs
  - i) Respectful behaviour and appropriate internet behaviour will be addressed through the school's resilience, relationship and life skills programs by various staff and the school's Chaplain.

## 6) Responding to Reports of Bullying

- a) Bullying can have serious consequences especially if it is sustained. Therefore, the school takes a more formal approach than it does when dealing with day-to-day disagreements between students or staff.
- b) Making a report
  - i) A bullying report can be made formally on the schools "Student Bullying Report Form". This form is available on the school's web site or in the school's main office and can be submitted to the assistant principal via email to a printed copy can be handed to the school office. Students can also report bullying verbally to their home room teacher, class teacher, office staff, the assistant principal or directly to the principal. Any staff member receiving a verbal bullying report must inform the Assistant Principal so they can begin an investigation.
- c) Investigation
  - i) The Bullying report will be investigated by the Assistant Principal who may delegate this task to another staff member or a team of staff. An investigation will seek a detailed report from the student making the report so that further investigation can be carried out. The process of investigation will include questioning the alleged perpetrators and possible witnesses which may involve other students, staff or connected adults.
- d) Response
  - i) Once the investigation is completed, a resolution to the bullying will be decided on and put in place. This resolution may involve mediation, sanctions, counselling and will aim to bring together perpetrators and victims, teaching staff and parents.
- e) Ongoing Management
  - i) It is essential that bullying is not continued and the school put in place strategies to ensure that it is dealt with and not repeated.
  - ii) Bullying reports must be submitted on the school's bullying report form and these reports will be filed and stored by the Administration staff.
  - iii) The school will keep records of bullying reports and will review the documentation and create reports on bullying in the school. The school will use this information to guide future intervention and creation of positive behaviour programs to create a safe school environment for its students.
- f) Reporting to the School Board
  - i) The principal will make regular reports on bullying in the school to the school Board.

## 7) Implementation

- a) The implementation of this policy rests with the principal and the school's Information Technology Coordinator.

## 8) Other Documents

- a) Other documents that are related to the Anti-bullying & Harassment policy are:
- i) "Student Bullying Report Form which is made available to the parents and students through the school office and the school's website.
  - ii) Policy 1091 Child Safety and Wellbeing
  - iii) Policy 1062b Child Safe Code of Conduct
  - iv) Policy 1102 Student Code of Conduct

## 9) Endorsement

<b>Created date</b>	May 2016
<b>Last Review</b>	March 2026
<b>Consultation</b>	School Leadership Team, School Board, SRC, School Community
<b>Endorsed by</b>	Grace Christian College Wodonga Board
<b>Endorsed on</b>	20/4/2026
<b>Board Chairman</b>	Matthew Hood
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Next review date</b>	1/4/2027

