

Student Bullying and Harassment Management Policy

Rationale

Chevalier College exists to proclaim and witness to the love of God, and to make the Gospel values real in the lives of young people and their families. Each person at Chevalier College, made in 'the image and likeness of God', has real worth and dignity.

The college is responsible for supporting the young people in its care and, in particular, those who are experiencing difficulties and those who require additional assistance and encouragement to behave appropriately.

Aims

To provide direction to college staff in the development of response and management strategies relating to student bullying and harassment that reflect the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart ethos and adhere to any applicable legislation.

To provide the best possible outcomes for the students in the care of Chevalier College and for the college community as a whole.

Key Legislation

- Education Act

The above legislation is not meant to be exhaustive. No reliance should be placed on the non-identification of a particular piece of legislation to support an inference that behaviour which may be prohibited or controlled under that non-identified legislation, is implicitly or tacitly not forbidden by the College.

POLICY

1. What is bullying?

Bullying is the repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a person or persons less powerful than the perpetrator. Bullying behaviour causes the victim to feel degradation, a loss of self-worth, intimidation, grief, fear and/or pain.

The imbalance of power in situations of bullying may be obvious or subtle, physical or psychological. It may involve a bully grasping an opportunity and a victim accepting a situation.

Bullying can be done through a number of different actions and behaviours, it can be overt or covert, and it can occur in both individual and group situations.

Some bullying can be quite subtle or involve words known only by the students, making it difficult for adults to recognise. These complexities can make bullying more difficult to identify if a person or group is being bullied.

1.1. Examples of bullying

Overt

- Hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, shoving, poking, throwing objects
- Unwelcome touching
- Intimidation, threatening or abusive language

- Subjection to practical jokes
- Unwelcome or offensive phone messages, SMS and/or email
- Verbal insults, offensive language
- Name calling
- Unwelcome comments about a person's appearance, activities, relationships, beliefs, abilities etc.
- Ridicule or put downs in front of others

Covert

- Silent treatment
- Gestures or looks intended to threaten or intimidate
- Exclusion or isolation
- Stalking
- Spreading rumours
- Putting people down behind their backs
- Removing and hiding belongings

Cyber bullying

- The use of any information and communication technology involving deliberate, isolated or repeated hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others, or is undertaken recklessly, without concern for its impact on others.
- Setting up or collaborating in any activity relating to a pseudo account

1.2. Behaviour that isn't bullying

Not all aggressive or harmful behaviour between students is bullying. While conflicts and aggressive behaviour need to be addressed, it is important to be clear when these behaviours are not actually bullying. The definition of bullying has three critical aspects:

- i. a repeated pattern
- ii. the misuse of power within relationships; and
- iii. behaviour which causes harm

All three aspects need to be present in order for behaviour to be called bullying.

2. What is harassment?

Harassment is behaviour that is unwelcome, uninvited or unreciprocated. Harassment may be explicitly directed at an individual or group or occur through the creation of a hostile environment. Harassment offends, upsets, humiliates or intimidates another person.

Harassment is not always intended. Acts or behaviour that some may view as amusing or trivial may hurt or offend another.

Harassment usually consists of a pattern of unwelcome behaviour. However, it can consist of just one offensive, hurtful, humiliating and/or intimidating act. The basis of harassment is often discriminatory and may relate to:

- sex or gender
- sexual preference, sexuality or gender identity

- race, colour, national or ethno-religious origin, nationality, ethnicity, descent or ancestry
- socio-economic status
- disability, impairment or handicap
- religious beliefs or customs

Harassment can include, but is not limited to, verbal comments or abuse, physical contact, threats, displaying inappropriate and offensive images or documents, stalking, offensive communication, jokes and ridicule, propositions, and inappropriate initiation rites.

Harassment can include sexual harassment, which is a form of harassment on the grounds of sex or conduct of a sexual nature such as unwanted sexual advances, unwelcome requests for sexual favours or physical contact, derogatory sexual comments, taunts, intrusive questions and rumours.

3. How the college will endeavour to prevent incidents of bullying and harassment

Based on research, prevention strategies through education that involve the whole school community (students, staff and parents) are more likely to reduce bullying and harassment. Therefore, at Chevalier College we recognise that we all share the responsibility of preventing bullying and harassment.

3.1. Environment

The college believes it has a responsibility to foster and maintain a school environment in which students from all backgrounds and circumstances can feel safe and supported.

As an MSC school, the focus of the college environment will be heart-centred, compassionate and respectful, and will encourage the development and maintenance of meaningful relationships.

All staff are expected to model appropriate behaviour and conduct themselves in accordance with the MSC ethos and the Code of Conduct.

The college staff will ensure that students are appropriately supervised and aware of the college's expectations in relation to behaviour.

3.2. Strategies

The college will establish strategies and mechanisms to aid in the prevention of bullying and harassment within the student body.

The college will develop and maintain incident management systems to respond to bullying and harassing behaviour by students, and will develop and maintain programs to support all students involved in incidents, encourage improved behaviour, develop resilience and assist in the restoration of damaged relationships.

All allegations of bullying and harassment will be taken seriously.

All incidents of bullying and harassment will be dealt with in accordance with college pastoral care processes and the Student Behaviour Management policy and procedures.

3.3. Awareness and Support Programs

The college will provide awareness and support programs that assist staff and students to identify and deal with incidents of bullying and harassment.

The Assistant Principals – Pastoral Care to ensure that:

- pastoral staff engage, where necessary, in appropriate training and have access to information regarding the identification and management of student bullying and harassment behaviours
- students are provided with opportunities to participate in programs that assist in building a harmonious school community to mitigate incidents of bullying and harassment.

3.4. Response

Bullying and harassment are viewed as major breaches of the college rules and behavioural expectations and, therefore, follow up action will align with the college's Student Behaviour Management Policy.

When bullying or harassment has been identified, the following processes will be implemented.

- HCYAs and Assistant Principals – Pastoral Care will:
 - investigate the incident
 - provide guidance and other support for the recipient of the bullying (e.g. re-skilling and re-teaching of strategies, resilience and social skills, counselling, conflict management skills, social networking etc.)
 - provide guidance and support for 'bystanders', 'supporters' and witnesses of the bullying (e.g. intervention strategies etc.)
 - implement appropriate and consistent sanctions for the student who bullied (within the context of the college Behaviour Management Policy)
 - establish interventions and support for the student who bullied (e.g. a bullying prevention plan with specific interventions developed to reduce the bullying behaviour, teaching of replacement behaviours, reinforcers etc.)
 - where appropriate, involve parents

3.5. Investigations

Investigations will be conducted under the principles of procedural fairness. Procedural fairness requires impartiality of the decision maker. A decision should not be made until all the facts are known, the student has had the opportunity to respond and, in serious cases, the student has an opportunity to obtain advice.

All processes must be conducted in a manner ensuring fair practice and equity, respect to all parties and due observance of confidentiality.

Where an investigation identifies the bullying incident may include criminal behaviour, the investigator must inform the Principal as soon as possible, who will refer the incident to the police.

4. Responsibilities

Staff

Staff are expected to:

- promote a culture that reflects the ethos of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and to promote a Christian community and environment

- promote professionalism, respect and care within our community
- relate to students with compassion and availability, creating a sense of family which permeates their attitude as professional teachers and caring adults
- take appropriate action to stop observed incidents of bullying or harassment
- pass on information about any reported or observed bullying or harassment behaviours to relevant staff for further action, including (where necessary) disciplinary actions and actions relating to investigations of incidents.
- provide the best possible outcomes for the students in their care.

Students

Students are encouraged to:

- behave in a manner that reflects the heart-centred spirit of the college
- take some positive action to stop bullying or harassment, such as immediately reporting incidents to a member of college staff
- behave in accordance with this policy and other relevant college policies, including:
 - Student Behaviour Code, as published in the Student Information Booklet each year (college website)
 - Student ICT Usage Policy (college website)
 - Student Behaviour Management Policy (college website)

Parents/Caregivers

Parents/Caregivers are encouraged to:

- familiarise themselves with college policies
- support the policies and disciplinary processes of the college
- listen to their child and encourage them to speak to their home room teacher, house coordinator or any other staff member of their choice if they have experienced or witnessed incidents that they consider to be bullying or harassment
- contact the college if they have any concerns.

Related documents

Student Bullying and Harassment Management Procedures

Student Behaviour Management Policy

Student ICT Usage Policy

Student Behaviour Code

End of Policy