

# ANTI – BULLYING (Extract CREST Education Policy)

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Hillcrest Christian College does not tolerate bullying in any form. All members of the Hillcrest community have the right to a safe and nurturing environment that promotes personal growth and positive self-esteem for all.

## **What is bullying?**

A person is bullied when they are intentionally and regularly exposed to negative or harmful actions by one or more other people. Bullies are people who deliberately set out to embarrass, intimidate, exclude, threaten and/or hurt others repeatedly. Bullying is a clear form of harassment and an abuse of power.

Bullying can take many forms and can be planned and organised. It may be demonstrated as follows:

**Physical Bullying:** includes fighting, pushing, spitting, hitting, shoving, gestures, standing over or invading someone's personal space, forcing others to act against their will.

**Verbal Bullying:** includes name calling, offensive language, putting others or their family down directly or behind their backs, picking on people because of their culture, gender, social background or religion and humiliating someone through sarcasm or insults.

**Victimisation:** includes intimidation, including stand-over tactics, picking on others, threats to get people, repeated exclusion, rumours, interfering with another's property by stealing, damaging or destroying it, writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, extortion of money or lunch by force.

**Sexual bullying:** includes touching or brushing against one in a sexual manner, sexually oriented jokes, drawings of, or writing about someone's body, using rude names or commenting about someone's morals or appearance, unwanted invitations of a sexual nature, asking questions about someone's private life.

**Exclusion bullying:** leaving people out of activities on purpose.

**Racial discrimination:** of any kind is a form of bullying.

**Cyber bullying:** includes sending e-mails, use of social media sites or text messages which contain material that is threatening and or offensive, includes using phones and internet to harass or threaten others.

## **Cyber-Bullying**

With the increased prevalence of students using the internet and mobile phone technology for communication, it has become clear that a number of students are using cyberspace for the purposes of bullying and intimidating others. Recent Australian statistics show that it is a growing phenomenon where up to one in four students are either perpetrators or victims of cyberbullying.

## **ANTI - BULLYING** *(continued)*

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It is generally agreed that the College's duty of care necessarily extends to situations involving students whose main point of association is the College. As a result, the process of dealing with cyberspace bullies will be as follows:

- If a student is the victim of intimidating or denigrating information, he/she will print the offensive material, or bring in the relevant mobile phone SMS message or screen shots and present it to the relevant Year Level Coordinator.
- After follow up with the alleged bully, if the material is found to be genuine then the bully will receive a punishment ranging from a one day internal/external suspension to immediate expulsion (at the discretion of the College), depending on the severity of the offensive material. The student may be able to return to the College on the grounds that the offensive material has been removed where possible (if it is a website, blog social media site or similar) and a written apology has been made to attempt restitution of the break in relationship.
- Parents of the victim and perpetrator of the bullying incident will be fully informed of the incident and the intended consequences.
- The College will take a proactive stance on this form of bullying by regularly reminding the student body of their responsibilities towards one another as well as to the proper and wise use of technology. This will be done through year level and sectional assemblies, chapels, the use of the ICT contract, student diary and the College's newsletter.

### **If we are bullied:**

- We may feel frightened, unsafe, embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated
- Our work, sleep and ability to concentrate may suffer
- Our relationships with our family and friends may deteriorate
- We may feel confused and not know what to do about the problem

### **What do we do to prevent bullying at Hillcrest Christian College?**

Our aim as a Christian community is to restore and build up, encouraging each other to act in a manner that is in keeping with the Christian ethos of the College. The College will take the necessary steps to resolve all bullying situations in age appropriate ways that may include consequences, forgiveness and restitution so that, where possible, relationships are renewed and restored within the school community. As a College community we will not allow cases of bullying to go unreported, but will speak up – even at risk to ourselves. It is every student's and parent's responsibility to report bullying to a relevant staff member to ensure support is provided to those involved in bullying situations.

The concepts of acceptance, care and safety will be given a whole school focus each year, within the framework of promoting a 'zero' tolerance attitude towards bullying. Ongoing staff development sessions will ensure that the profile of zero tolerance is maintained.

#### **a) This requires Staff to:**

- i. Be role models in word and action at all times
- ii. Be alert to signs of distress or evidence of bullying
- iii. Make efforts to remove occasions for bullying by active patrolling during yard duty
- iv. Arrive at class on time and move promptly between periods

## ANTI - BULLYING *(continued)*

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- v. Take steps to support both victim and perpetrator and remove sources of distress without placing the victim at further risk
- vi. Report suspected incidents to the appropriate Staff member, Pastoral / Class teacher (Junior & Middle Schools) / Year Level Coordinator / Head of School, promptly, and ensure that all reported incidents are followed up appropriately
- vii. Ensure that they aren't addressing bullying behaviour by being bullies themselves
- viii. Provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving. Education will include age specific programs within appropriate school curriculum to help students recognise and prevent bullying.
- ix. Increase the school community's awareness on the characteristics of bullying and harassment and suggest strategies to counteract them via newsletter items and assemblies

### **b) This requires students to:**

- i. Refuse to be involved in any bullying situation. If you are present when bullying occurs:
  - If appropriate take some form of preventative action
  - Report the incident or suspected incident to staff and/or parents and help break down the code of secrecy

If students who are being bullied have the courage to speak out, they may help to reduce the pain for themselves and other potential victims.

### **c) The College recommends that parents:**

- i. Watch for signs of distress in their children, e.g. an unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches, missing equipment, requests for extra money, damaged clothing, or bruising
- ii. Take an active interest in your child's social life and acquaintances, including online networks
- iii. Advise your child to tell a staff member about the incident. If possible allow the child to report and deal with the situation themselves.

The child can gain much respect through taking the initiative and dealing with the problem and reporting the incident without parental involvement
- iv. Inform the College if bullying is suspected or if your child is reluctant to speak with staff
- v. Keep a written record (who, what, when, where, why, how). In cyber bullying cases, keep copies of any offensive emails or messages
- vi. Do not encourage your child to retaliate
- vii. Communicate to your child that parental involvement if necessary, will be appropriate for the situation
- viii. Be willing to attend interviews at the College if their child is involved in any bullying incident
- ix. Be willing to inform the College of any cases of suspected bullying – even if their child is not directly/indirectly involved
- x. Work directly with staff to find effective resolutions

## ANTI - BULLYING *(continued)*

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### Consequences/Intervention:

Consequences of bullying will be in line with Behaviour Management Guidelines. All incidents of bullying are treated seriously regardless of the type of bullying that takes place, however the consequences may vary depending upon the type of bullying and frequency. *All students who are identified as behaving in a bullying manner will be placed on an appropriate Conduct Card, receive support, be exhorted by a member of staff to desist and given consequences as outlined here. In very serious cases, the Police may be involved.*

There will be ongoing parent communication with regard to the bullying and the maintenance of Hillcrest as a safe environment for all members of our school community.

The consequences will include one or more of the following; as determined by the relevant staff involved in managing the bullying incident. The degree of severity will depend on the nature of the incident, the age and maturity of those involved and the duration of the bullying.

- Conduct Card: 1 – 2 weeks
- Note in diary (diary to be signed by parent) or letter home to parents
- Community Service
- Detention (s) – Lunchtime or Afterschool
- Interview with parent / students / Year Level Coordinator / Head of School
- Internal or external suspension
- Written apology to the victim and the College
- Referral to external professional counseling
- Referral to a social welfare agency
- Referral to a behavior change program
- Police involvement

Expulsion if severe behavior continues unabated and if the nature of the incident warrants this level of response.

## SOCIAL MEDIA *(Extract CREST Education Policy)*

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Social media is the production, consumption and exchange of information through online social interactions and platforms. It encompasses popular platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube and also includes blogs, forums, wikis, photo galleries and videos and includes email and mobile devices.

This policy refers to all members of the College community, students, staff and families and is not limited to a geographic location or school operating hours. All members of the College community are expected to uphold Crest Education's values and to protect the integrity, reputation, rights and confidentiality of its staff, students, parents and volunteers. Communication by students, parents and staff via technology should adhere to the same acceptable rules of politeness as in face to face discourse. This will be demonstrated by the following expectations:

- Being impartial and professional
- Not impersonating or falsely representing another person
- Behaving with respect and courtesy; not bullying, intimidating, abusing, harassing or threatening others
- Dealing appropriately with information, recognising that some information needs to remain confidential
- Being sensitive to the diversity of colleagues, peers, students and the community. Not making defamatory comments or depictions about members of the community
- Not using offensive or threatening language or resorting to personal abuse towards another member of the community