

 CREST EDUCATION POLICY	TITLE	CREST ANTI- BULLYING & HARASSMENT – STUDENTS POLICY		
	VERSION	15/2026		
	LOCATION	STUDENTS		
	ISSUE DATE	FEBRUARY 2026		
	REVIEW DATE	FEBRUARY 2028		
	REVIEWED BY	DEPUTY PRINCIPAL	RATIFIED BY	EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL
PURPOSE	To provide policy and procedure direction to all staff, students, parents, and volunteers of the Educational Precinct.			
BACKGROUND	CREST Education seeks to establish and maintain high level professional standards in relation to all activities within the Educational Precinct. This policy is in accord with the CREST Education ‘Vision’, ‘Mission’, ‘Philosophy’ and ‘Key Commitment of documents as published and in line with CREST Board Policy.			
<u>RELATED DOCUMENTS</u>	CREST Child Safety and Wellbeing CREST Community Charter for Parents CREST Staff Code of Conduct CREST Positive Behaviour Plan CREST Restrictive Interventions Policy CREST Student Attendance Policy CREST Enrolment Policy Agreement CREST Missing Students Policy CREST Digital Wellbeing Policy CREST Student External Suspensions and Expulsions Policy Ministerial Order 1125 Crimes Act 1958 Equal Opportunity Act 2010 Working with Children Act 2005 Education and Training Reform ACT 2006 (VIC) Disability Standards for Education 2005 Victorian Government Bullying Guidelines 2024			

CREST Education (also referred to as The College) is committed to the wellbeing and safety of all students. This policy aligns with relevant Commonwealth and Victorian laws and supports a whole-school, proactive approach to prevent and respond to all forms of bullying and harassment.

PURPOSE

To provide policy and procedural direction to ensure a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment for all students, in line with the CREST Education Vision, Mission, Philosophy, and the Victorian Department of Education and Government guidelines.

SCOPE

In addition to the management of day-to-day interactions while students are onsite, the College has a duty of care for students in actions that occur outside of school hours or premises, including behaviours which can cause physical or psychological injury where such behaviour poses a reasonably foreseeable risk of harm or significantly and negatively impacts the wellbeing and/or safety of other members of the College community.

We recognise that there are times when a student’s behaviour may significantly and negatively impact the wellbeing and/or safety of other members of the College community. These might be single events or the cumulative impact of repeated behaviours.

The College reserves the right to respond to behaviour that occurs outside school hours or off school premises where:

- It involves CREST students, staff or families
- It impacts the safety, wellbeing or educational environment of staff and students
- It undermines the school's values or reputation
- It constitutes a criminal offence
- It creates a risk to the school environment

In such circumstances, the College reserves the right take reasonable disciplinary action, and will work in partnership with families and, where appropriate, with external authorities to address concerns.

DEFINITIONS

See Appendix 1 for detailed definitions, including types of bullying and harassment, and behaviours not considered bullying.

Inclusive Language: This policy uses "students who have been targeted" and "students engaging in bullying behaviour" in place of "victim" and "bully."

POLICY FRAMEWORK

1. Prevention

- Explicit teaching of social and self-management and awareness curriculum in a wide range of learning contexts such as Pastoral Care, Wellbeing and Health classes. This is also supplemented through incursions, chapels, assemblies, and the camps program.
- Delivering Consent Education across Prep to Year 12.
- Promoting student leadership and voice in wellbeing initiatives.
- Staff professional development in identifying and preventing bullying.
- Active supervision and structured activities during break times.
- Raising community awareness through newsletters and parent sessions.
- Recognising positive behaviour with school-wide acknowledgements.

2. Early Identification

- Staff are trained to observe and report signs of bullying.
- Students are encouraged to report concerns to a Pastoral Teacher, Year Level Coordinator, or Wellbeing staff.
- Reports may be made verbally, in writing, or through an anonymous online form via Crest Connect.
- Staff must log incidents using Crest Connect Pastoral Notes and inform Heads of Campus for follow-up.

3. Response and Intervention

- All allegations are treated seriously, confidentially, and in line with natural justice principles.
- Allegations involving prior disciplinary concerns are escalated immediately to the Head of Campus.
- The College may act on behaviour occurring off-site or online where it places others at serious risk.
- Responses include:
 - Informing and counselling all involved parties.
 - Parent contact and engagement.

- Behaviour Support Plans where required.
- Restorative practices to rebuild relationships.
- Cyberbullying response as per E-Smart Policy.
- Disciplinary action in line with enrolment agreement and Student Behaviour Management Policy, and responsible behaviour processes
- Escalation to Level 5 Discipline (suspension/expulsion) for repeated or severe behaviours.
- Mandatory reporting to Child Protection or Victoria Police, if applicable.

4. Responding to Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment complaints will be managed seriously and sensitively. Investigation begins when:

- A written or direct complaint is made.
 - A credible verbal report is received.
 - Staff witness or hear reliable evidence of misconduct. Serious allegations may be reported to authorities and regulatory bodies.
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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

College Responsibilities

- Enforce a zero-tolerance policy.
- Implement whole-school prevention strategies.
- Maintain a register of bullying incidents through CREST Connect
- Provide restorative practices and wellbeing support.
- Review and evaluate policy effectiveness annually.
- Ensure enrolment contracts, student codes of conduct, and acceptable use agreements support action on off-site and online behaviours.
- Review behaviour management procedures to allow for timely intervention and meet regulatory standards.

Student Responsibilities

- Refuse to participate in bullying.
- Implement Positive Behaviour strategies.
- Report incidents to trusted adults.
- Support peers and seek help when needed.

Parent Responsibilities

- Be alert to signs of distress.
- Encourage children to report issues.
- Keep records/screenshots of incidents (especially cyberbullying).
- Engage respectfully with the school to resolve concerns.
- Not engage in online or personal confrontation with either students engaging in bullying behaviour, or their parents, in an attempt to resolve the issue themselves.
- Ensure compliance with state and federal laws by working with their child to close existing accounts if they are under the minimum age and
- Ensure that children do not have access to restricted social media platforms through use of accounts other than their own.

REPORTING PROCESS

1. Students, parents, or staff members submit reports.
2. Initial response by staff member, with documentation, through CREST Connect Pastoral Notes – Confidential. Deputy of Wellbeing notified.
3. Head of Campus notified and case reviewed. Level 5 – Critical incidents, as per the Crest Severity Table, communicated to Deputy: Staff and Students and/or Principal.
4. Support and action plan developed, in line with College policies and procedures
5. Ongoing monitoring and, if needed, review. Reporting to external authorities if required.

REVIEW AND MONITORING

- Annual review by Executive Team.
 - Analysis of bullying data and student feedback.
 - Staff, student, and parent surveys.
 - Updates in response to legal or policy changes.
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APPENDIX 1 – DEFINITION OF TERMS

Harassment can include behaviour such as:

- telling insulting jokes about particular racial groups
- sending explicit or sexually suggestive emails or text messages
- displaying racially offensive or pornographic posters or images
- making derogatory comments or taunts about someone's race
- asking intrusive questions about someone's personal life, including his or her sex life.
- Defamatory or disrespectful comments, including comments and statements made online
- Gossip, rumour and innuendo

Bullying is a clear form of harassment and an abuse of power. Bullying refers to deliberate and repeated acts which intimidate others, or which impact the safety and well-being of others. Bullying can involve an individual or a group misusing their power or perceived power over one or more persons. Bullying may be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).

- **Overt bullying:** involves physical actions such as punching or kicking, or observable verbal actions such as name-calling or insulting
- **Covert bullying:** can include hand gestures, threatening looks, whispering, excluding, turning your back on a person, restricting where a person can sit or who they can talk to.

Bullying and harassment can take many forms:

- **Physical:** Unnecessary physical contact against a person's will e.g. fighting, pushing, spitting, hitting, shoving, gestures, standing over or invading someone's personal space, forcing others to act against their will pinching, patting, brushing up against a person, touching, kissing or hugging, pushing, shoving or jostling including putting your hand or an object into someone's pocket. Physical harassment may be defined as unnecessary rough handling or physical force that may result in bodily injury, pain, intimidation or impairment. Unnecessarily confining someone is another example of physical harassment.
- **Verbal:** Verbal harassment or abuse involves words that attack or injure an individual, words that cause one to believe an untrue statement, or words that speak falsely of an individual. It 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 food by force. In relation to sexual harassment, it is against the law to victimise a person who:
 - has made a complaint or intends to make a complaint;
 - acts as a witness or intends to act as a witness; or
 - supports a victim or intends to support a victim.

- Sexual:** Any form of unwelcome sexual attention that either is intended to be humiliating, intimidating or offensive or occurs in circumstances where a reasonable person would have apprehended (understood) that it would have had that effect. This may occur in and across gender, age groups, nationalities and power structures. Sexual harassment has nothing to do with mutual attraction or consenting friendships. Sexual harassment can be verbal, physical, written or visual. Examples of sexual harassment may include:

 - the distribution or display of offensive pictures or written material;
 - repeated unwelcome requests for social outings or dates;
 - offensive comments about a person's physical appearance, dress or private life;
 - jokes, intrusive questioning, messages or telephone calls of a sexual nature;
 - direct propositioning, or subtle pressure for sexual favours;
 - unwelcome familiarity or physical contact such as patting, pinching, touching or staring; or
 - indecent exposure, sexual assault or rape
- Racist bullying:** Belittling, mocking, intimidating or shaming someone because of their physical appearance, ethnic background, religious or cultural practices and/or the way they dress or talk
- Emotional:** Emotional harassment is defined as emotional abuse which is acts or omissions that have caused or could cause serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional or mental disorders. This can take many forms such as belittling, domination, criticism, coldness, corrupting, cruelty, extreme inconsistency, repeated exposure to fear through harassment, ignoring, inappropriate control such as lack, over or inconsistent control, rejecting, isolating and terrorizing
- Cyber bullying:** Bullying that takes place over digital devices such as mobile phones or computers. It can occur through messaging, social media, or other online forums where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, sharing negative, harmful, false or embarrassing content about somebody else. It can include sharing personal or private information without consent. Some forms of cyberbullying can be considered as criminal or unlawful behaviour. (Refer to Crest E-Smart Policy)
- Defamation:** Making false, derogatory statement(s) in private or public about a person's character, morals or reputation. Printed or published defamation is a libel. This includes creating, sharing or distributing defamatory content about any member of the school community including students, staff, parents or volunteers.
- Homophobic or transphobic bullying:** Bullying on the basis of sexuality or gender expression. It can include physical violence, cyberbullying, name-calling, exclusion, jokes and/or sexual harassment.
- Bullying on the basis of perceived vulnerability:** This can include bullying which targets persons with a disability, those with depression or anxiety, belonging to a minority group, those who are introverted or non-assertive and persons with a history of trauma.

What is not bullying

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management.

Mutual conflict: involves an argument or disagreement between people but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

Relationship breakdown, social rejection or dislike: is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Single- episode acts: of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours

DIRECTION

That all CREST staff follow the procedures and guidelines of this CREST policy.

CREST EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL

REVISION STATUS

Date of Revision	Issue Number	Revision Detail	Authorised By
FEBRUARY 2026	15	Revision and update to Appendix 1 Definition of Terms	Executive Principal