Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedures

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Student Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy Statement of Beliefs

1. Penrith Anglican College affirms Jesus' command to love our neighbour as ourselves (Mark 12:31) and to treat others the way we would like to be treated (Luke 6:31). There is no room in the Christian faith for belittling or abusing someone. Every person, regardless of what he or she looks or acts like, is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27; James 3:9-10) and is worthy of the dignity that God gives to every person.

2. It is the right of all individuals in the College community to feel safe, secure and free from harassment. The College rejects all forms of bullying. No student, parent, caregiver, community member or staff member should experience bullying within the learning or working environment of the College.

3. This policy applies to all student bullying behaviour, including cyberbullying, that occurs both during College activities and also outside of College activities, where there is a clear and close relationship between the College and the conduct of the student.

4. It is the responsibility of all members of the College community to ensure that their behaviour supports the College's mission and core values. All members of the College community are expected to contribute to the prevention of bullying and harassment by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respect in all their exchanges and relationships.

Key Legislation

There are two key pieces of Legislation in New South Wales:

Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)

Anti-discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)

Other Policies

Please note, there are a number of other College policies that relate to The Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures which you need to be aware of and understand, including but not limited to:

- Student Code of Conduct Behaviour Management Policy and Procedure
- Child Protection Policy and Procedure
- Counselling Support Policy and Procedure
- Hand Held Devices Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy

Student Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

What is bullying?

Bullying is the repeated and intentional behaviour that causes fear, distress or harm and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.

Types of bullying behaviour

There are some specific types of bullying behaviour

- **verbal or written abuse**- such as targeted name-calling or jokes, abuse, insults, sarcasm or displaying offensive posters
- **physical violence**- including threats of violence
- **social**- such as excluding, ignoring, ostracising, alienating or making inappropriate gestures
- **psychological**- spreading rumours, hiding or damaging possessions
- **discrimination**- unwelcome or unreciprocated conduct or harassment, which could reasonably be expected to cause offense, humiliation or intimidation. The specific areas of discrimination covered in the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 are: age, race, gender, sexuality, marital status and disability
- **cyberbullying**- any form of bullying or harassment either online or via mobile devices. Cyberbullying can be conducted in many ways, using different media including, but not limited to
  - the sending of abusive texts or emails
  - taking and sharing unflattering or private images
  - posting unkind messages or inappropriate images on social networking sites
  - assuming the identity of another person online and representing them in a negative manner or manner that may damage their relationship with others
  - excluding other persons online

- **victimisation**- a person is victimised if threatened, harassed, harmed or subjected to any form of detriment as a result of a complaint about bullying. In relation to bullying it is unacceptable to victimise a person who has made a complaint, intends to make a complaint, acts as a witness, intends to act as a witness, supports a victim or intends to support a victim

What is not bullying?

There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing are not bullying

- **mutual conflic**t-which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation
- **single-episode acts** of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people is not bullying
- **social rejection or dislike** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others

These types of behaviours would be investigated and dealt with using procedures from the Student Welfare and Behaviour Management Program.

Signs of bullying

Possible signs of bullying include

- Crying at night and having nightmares
- Refusing to talk
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts, or scratches
- An unwillingness or refusal to go to College
- Feeling ill in the mornings
- A decline in quality of College work
- Becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence
- Beginning to bully siblings
- Acting unreasonably

Anti-Bullying Procedures: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying

These procedures outline the programmes and processes for preventing and responding to bullying or harassment at Penrith Anglican College. They reflect the College's mission and values and in particular, the core values associated with Compassion, Humility and Courage. More specifically the procedures are based on the premise that students learn best when they feel safe, loved, cared for and valued. The College sees individual differences as a strength from which a strong community is forged. They provide guidance for students in making wise choices through programs that are age appropriate, promote responsible decision-making and reflect the values of a Christian world-view as outlined in the core values. Finally, all relationships within the College should be characterised by courtesy, grace and understanding.

Prevention Strategies

Penrith Anglican College has a range of strategies in place to reduce incidences of bullying. The strategies employed for the Secondary School and Primary School are consistent and overlap through College Structures, but for clarity are outlined separately.

Primary School Strategies

- Raising awareness of the College's Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure with all students consistently throughout the year via class discussions and explicit teaching in PD lessons using the NESA NSW PDHPE Syllabus
- The Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure is made available to students, parents, staff and community through publications posted on the College website and intranet with the facility to provide feedback for future reviews
- Promoting a Buddy System which encourages our Year 6 students to support our Kindergarten students and to help them with play and friendship issues
- Allocating Friendship Buddies to all new students and a Mentor System as the need arises to promote the use of collaborative practices to support each other
- Engaging experts in the field of bullying and cyber bullying to provide evidence-based research and information to parents, staff, students and the broader community
- Engaging the College Police Liaison Officers to provide presentations on cyberbullying and as a consultant in relation to specific issues related to bullying or cyberbullying
- Developing a whole College approach to bullying and cyberbullying using the tools and support of eSmart schools
- Facilitating student access to the College Counsellor as the need arises
- Having "safe" places/people for students to go if they feel they are being bullied, such as the "friendship spot"

Secondary School Strategies

- Raising awareness of the Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures with all students and staff at the beginning of each year via briefings at House/Year meetings and explicit teaching in Mentor groups and Positive Education lessons
- The Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures are made available to students, parents, staff and community through publications posted on the College website and learning platform
- A whole College approach using the principles of Restorative Practices using the College core values to assist in the process of restoring damaged relationships that result from bullying. Core values and the IB Learner profile will guide the College implementation of this goal
- Using a peer Support program that links Year 7 students with Year 10 students trained with the Peer Support Foundation
- Facilitating student access to the College Counsellor as the need arises. Raising awareness for students about how to access counselling support and facilitating processes to make access as simple as possible. Provide education for parents and students about the role of counselling support in the College and externally
- Using external providers such as the Peer Support Foundation and Brainstorm Productions to assist in raising awareness about critical issues in relation to bullying and cybersafety
- Engaging experts in the field of bullying and cyberbullying to provide evidence based research and information to parents, staff, students and the broader community
- Engaging the College Police Liaison Officers to provide presentations on cyberbullying and as a consultant in relation to specific issues related to bullying or cyberbullying
- Developing a whole College approach to bullying and cyberbullying using the tools and support of eSmart schools
- Having places for students to go if they feel they are being bullied, such as the College library

What if a student is bullied? Responding to Bullying Behaviour

- Those who believe they are being bullied or harassed should make it known to the person(s) bullying, that the comments or behaviours are unwelcome and/or hurtful. They should tell the person who is bullying that they want the behaviour to stop
- For those who witness bullying or harassment; they have a responsibility to make it known to a teacher, Head of House, Stage Coordinator or Director of Student Wellbeing. Observing bullying without reporting such behaviour, can be seen as approval for the unacceptable behaviour
- In cases of cyberbullying, students are encouraged to:
    - Not respond to messages or postings and where possible block the person sending unwelcome material
    - Keep evidence of any bullying (screen captures, screen name, text and/or images)

    If cyberbullying persists, contact a teacher, Stage Coordinator, Head of House or Director of Student Wellbeing, who will investigate. If you are not sure about the source of the cyberbullying or if it is threatening, contact the police. The police assistance line is 131444. The College has a Police Liaison Officer, Steven Stopford who may also assist. His contact telephone is 0418212767 or email stop1ste@police.nsw.gov.au. The Stage Coordinator, Head of House or the Director of Student Wellbeing is able to provide this contact if necessary.

- If the bullying or harassment continues, or if the student is unable or unwilling to handle the matter by himself or herself, they should contact an adviser. For information, advice or to make a formal complaint, a list of possible advisers are:
    - Classroom Teacher
    - Mentor Teacher
    - Stage Coordinator
    - Head of Department
    - Chaplain
    - Head of House
    - Director of Student Wellbeing
    - Head of Primary/Secondary
    - Director of Studies or IB Coordinator
    - College Counsellor
    - Deputy Principal
    - Principal

Responsibilities of Stakeholders

Staff

College staff have a responsibility to

- Respect and support students
- Model and promote appropriate behaviour
- Have knowledge of College policies and procedure relating to bullying behaviour and prevention
- Respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the College's Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure
- Provide restorative procedures for both the person who bullies as well as the object of the harassment and bullying
- Provide curriculum and pedagogy, where appropriate, that supports students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community

Students

Students have a responsibility to

- Behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity
- Behave as responsible digital citizens
- Follow the College Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure
- Behave as responsible bystanders
- Report incidents of bullying according to the Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure

Parents and carers

Parents and Carers have a responsibility to

- support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible online behaviour
- be aware of the College Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour
- support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the College's Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure
- report incidents of College related bullying behaviour to the College
- work collaboratively with the College to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur for both the person who bullies as well as the person being bullied

The College Community

All members of the College Community have responsibility to

- Model and promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the College community
- Support the College's Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure through words and actions
- All persons affected by a bullying incident need to work collaboratively with the College to resolve incidents of bullying whenever they occur

Expectations of Stakeholders

Students should expect:

- To be treated with dignity and respect and in return that they will treat others appropriately
- They will be listened to if they are experiencing any difficulties
- They will participate in ongoing training to provide them with appropriate skills to deal with social situations
- Their rights need to be balanced with their responsibilities

Parents and caregivers should expect:

- They will be kept informed and involved in resolving any issues that involve bullying or antisocial behaviour
- The programmes in place are explained annually to staff, students and parents and they are adhered to
- Parental workshops regarding parenting and pro-social behaviours will be offered regularly
- Appropriate strategies, as outlined in College policies, will be used to resolve issues
- Procedural fairness will underpin any decisions made

Staff should expect:

- To be treated with dignity and respect and in return staff should treat parents, colleagues and students in the same manner
- Support from parents and executive when dealing with bullying behaviours
- They will be listened to, and supported, and that procedural fairness will be the basis for dealing with all issues
- Students and parents to understand that rights need to be balanced with responsibilities

College Response to Bullying Between Students (Primary School)

Anti-bullying and Student Welfare Policies are written in collaboration with students, parents and staff.

A Student Wellbeing programme will be put in place to provide additional support for students in need. This may be something as simple as asking for a teacher to volunteer to be a special buddy to a student in need of additional support. The teacher would seek out the child at various times and engage in general conversation with the student.

Classroom strategies
- Class Essential Agreements will be negotiated every year with teacher and students
- Class teacher and student will deal with smaller issues
- Parents and staff will collaborate with students to look at underlying problems and seek solutions
- Issues will be resolved in a calm manner with time given to hearing/recording what each student has to say, and assistance offered to all students, to help them cope with different situations
- Reconciliation will be the aim of all negotiation
- The rights of all children to be safe will be promoted

If a student/parent/teacher reports an alleged incident of bullying/harassment, the Head of Primary (or delegate) will investigate allegation to determine whether bullying has occurred.

If not bullying, staff will intervene and resolve as required. The incident will be recorded on file (NB Inappropriate/physical play resulting in hurt, whilst not classified as bullying, is not tolerated as part of our safe playground policy.) Appropriate intervention will occur.

If bullying has occurred, formal procedures would be implemented which follow routine disciplinary procedures. The steps involved may include some or all of the following steps:

1st Offence (minor)
- Person who is bullying
    - Head of Primary (or delegate) will inform the student of procedures
    - Once-only chance to self-rectify
    - Incident Record on file
- Person affected by the bullying
    - Head of Primary (or delegate) will inform the student of procedures
    - Discuss protective and proactive strategies.
    - Incident Record on file

1st Offence (major)
- Restorative meeting (counsellor, Stage Coordinator or Head of Primary may be involved)
- Warning and/or detention
- Contact with parents and recorded in file

2nd Offence
- Parental contact
- Parent and student interview
- Recorded in database following outcome of parent/student interview
- Temporary removal of privileges or exclusion from activities, such as off-site sport, may be a consequence
- Restorative meeting involving stakeholders
- Ongoing counselling support as necessary

3rd Offence
- Limited removal from classes or College, at the discretion of the Principal, following a procedurally fair process outlined in the Whole College Discipline Policy
- For more serious cases this may include permanent removal from College following a procedurally fair process as outlined in the Whole College Discipline Policy

College Response to Bullying Between Students (Secondary School)

The response procedures will vary depending on the nature and extent of the incident of bullying. The following procedures are guidelines only.

No reported or observed incidence of bullying will be ignored, but staff dealing with reports need to differentiate 'least severe' e.g. occasional thoughtless or teasing, from 'most severe' e.g. continual group harassment with threats and possible physical injury.

The staff member to whom it was reported may deal with the least severe incidents informally. This may involve discussion with the victim and the student(s) engaged in bullying (separately) as well as possible mediation and resolution. The incident must be reported to the Head of Secondary and recorded in the College's database. In some circumstances a member(s) of the Student Wellbeing Team may be involved in counselling and/or monitoring the situation.

Investigations of complaints will be conducted in a prompt and fair manner and as confidentially as possible. The only staff members and students who will be made aware of a complaint will be those people whose involvement is necessary to resolve the problem.

The process of Restorative Justice, as determined by the College's core values will be followed to investigate and resolve matters of discipline and broken relationships within the College.

No one will be intentionally disadvantaged or victimised as a result of making a complaint. The College will take appropriate action if allegations are proved as a result of an investigation.

There will be counselling support offered to the student being bullied. This support will also extend to the person conducting the bullying behaviour, as appropriate.

There should be an opportunity for the person displaying bullying behaviour to make an apology to the victim. The apology:
- should be written with assistance from a teacher/mentor. A verbal apology may also form part of a restorative meeting (mediation) in cases where the imbalance of power is not so great and a restorative approach is more likely to be successful in restoring relationships that have been damaged
- would be shown to the victim by the Head of Secondary, Director of Student Wellbeing or Counsellor (but not kept by victim)
- would be placed on file
- should include an admission and acknowledgement of what they have done

For more severe incidents, formal procedures would be implemented which follow routine disciplinary procedures. The steps involved may include some or all of the following steps:

1st Offence
- Warning and/or detention. (Depending on severity)
- Contact with parents and recorded in database
- Restorative meeting (Counsellor, Head of House or Director of Student Wellbeing will be involved)

2nd Offence
- Parental contact
- Parent and student interview (Head of Secondary, and/or Director of Student Wellbeing involved)
- Recorded in database following outcome of parent/student interview
- Temporary removal of privileges or exclusion from activities, such as off-site sport, may be a consequence
- Restorative meeting involving stakeholders
- Ongoing counselling support as necessary

3rd Offence
As for 2nd Offence, as well as
- Limited removal from classes or College, at the discretion of the Principal, following a procedurally fair process outlined in the Whole College Discipline Policy
- For more serious cases this may include permanent removal from College following a procedurally fair process as outlined in the Whole College Discipline Policy

Ongoing incidents

For ongoing incidents of confirmed bullying, the Principal will be notified. The discipline enacted will be at the Principal's discretion.

The system allows the College to track, over time, behaviour that could be defined as bullying. It also allows the College to develop both a big picture of what happens in terms of interactions between students as well as monitor issues of frequency and severity.

Review of Programmes

The Anti-Bullying Policy will be formally reviewed within five years as determined by the Management of Policies Cycle.

Ongoing amendments will be added as necessary through collaboration with the College community and all changes will be communicated to students, parents, teachers and support staff.

Conversations, surveys and safety audits with members of the College community will be used to help to gather information and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy, its procedures and programmes.