**4.3 Bullying and Cyber Bullying Policy**

### Bullying and Cyber Bullying Policy

Bullying is unacceptable in any form at Cedars Christian College. In our school environment we have an expectation that all members of the school community will be respected and that there will be a tolerance of individual differences. The essential dignity of each individual is accepted as all are members of the community and as such neither bullying nor harassment in any form will be tolerated. The school will not accept any activity that compromises the development and maintenance of a caring and supportive environment.

1. **Purpose of Policy**

   The purpose of this policy is to raise awareness of bullying in the school community and to outline the appropriate steps to take with regard to bullying. It is also to make clear that the College has a zero tolerance to bullying in any form.

2. **Applicability**

   This policy applies to all members of the college community. Bullying must be seen as unacceptable by all if a zero tolerance approach is to be successful.

3. **Definitions**

   **Bullying:** Bullying is behaviour, either physical or psychological, which has the potential to harm or place under stress another individual who is not able to defend themselves in the actual situation. Bullying is behaviour that includes verbal and physical attacks on others and which may cause physical or psychological harm. Key features of bullying are that it:
   - causes hurt and distress,
   - is repeated,
   - involves the use of power in an unfair way.

   Bullying behaviour can be infinitely varied but some examples of bullying are:
   - any form of physical violence such as hitting, pinching, biting, pushing, spitting or other threatening behaviour
   - invasion of another person’s space with the intention of intimidation
   - use of racist or hurtful names, offensive names, ‘put downs’ or comments that belittle another persons achievements both verbally and in written form such as graffiti or comments in a diary
   - Spreading rumours, making offensive or hurtful telephone calls, sending hurtful notes, SMS text messages or emails
   - Continually and deliberately ignoring, teasing or singling out others with the intention of causing distress
   - Damaging, hiding or destroying another person’s property.

   **Cyber Bullying:** Cyber bullying is any form of bullying that utilises technology such as instant messaging; online chat rooms, online bulletin boards and email. In many ways this is a more
insidious form of bullying since it may even reach into the victim's home, which might have previously been regarded as a safe haven from bullying behaviour. In other words, technology now allows the bully to inflict psychological harm on his or her victim anywhere and at any time without respite (Butler & Mathews, 2007).

Examples of Cyber bullying include:
- Sending or posting hateful or threatening comments or pictures via email or on the internet or via social networking sites.
- Using technology to engage in the social exclusion of someone and in hate group recruitment
- Stealing someone’s identity or accessing their profile with the intent to hurt or embarrass them in some way
- Multi-messaging to deliberately clog up someone’s email and cause them distress
- Engaging in cyber-stalking and the invading of privacy
- Referring to the College or any of the students or teachers in a negative or disparaging way
- Covertly filming, recording or taking a picture of someone and posting images of them to cause hurt or embarrassment
- Sending or encouraging others to send sexually explicit images of anyone.

Each of these forms of bullying has the potential to cause long-term harm to both the victim and the perpetrator (Stewart & Knott, 2002).

4. Policy Content

a. Reporting Bullying

The reporting of bullying is a shared responsibility of all members of the college community. Reports should initially go through the classroom, homeroom or pastoral care teacher as these are the primary contacts for individual students.

If a student feels they are being bullied they should:
- understand that it is not their fault and consider what action they can take
- tell a trusted adult such as a parent, teacher, Welfare Coordinator or counsellor
- report the incident as soon as possible either in person, through a phone call or via email to the relevant Welfare Coordinator.
- In the case of cyber bullying, parents/students are encouraged to take a screen shot of the incident and provide either a hard copy or electronic copy to the College.
- The school will provide contact details for the local area Police Liaison Officer to the parent/guardian or parties involved if requested
  Contact Information: Kerryn Mura - 0437 885 532

b. Essential Responses in the case of a bullying report

Essential responses in the case of bullying would include taking complaints seriously, conducting investigations, and keeping records of interviews. (See Anti Bullying Action Plan for more details).

c. Zero Tolerance

Every report of bullying, in any form, must involve a remedial response, no matter the degree of seriousness. Clear consequences are an important part of this policy - the Anti Bullying Action Plan details the steps involved.
Students will be seen to be encouraging bullying if they:
- fail to report bullying
- pass on notes, emails or rumours
- provide an audience
- laugh at a bully
- fail to support someone who is being bullied
- retaliate with physical or verbal bullying

Responses must follow the procedural fairness guidelines outlined in the college's discipline policy. Discipline may vary based on each individual case and the circumstances that surround it.

d. Strategies to Prevent Bullying

Strategies must be in place to effectively teach the skills and understandings that will lead to eliminating bullying behaviours. The specific strategies for each sub-school can be found in the Anti-Bullying Action Plan. However, this policy states that the strategies must:

- be taught across key learning areas
- be reinforced consistently through school practices that promote respectful relationships

The strategies will also:
- empower the whole college community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment and victimisation
- contribute to the general health and wellbeing of all students (NSW DET, 2007)

e. Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for addressing and preventing bullying behaviours. The Deputy Principal is responsible for leading the development, implementation and evaluation of the Anti-Bullying Plan and for ensuring that the plan is accessible to members of the school community. The members of the welfare team will assist in implementing this within their areas of responsibility.

f. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

The Anti-Bullying Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that all members of the school community are aware of and remain committed to it and to ensure staff are aware of new technologies and types of bullying.

g. Dissemination of Information

Information regarding the College policies on bullying is distributed to each student in his or her diary to ensure easy access. Information and / or processes should be distributed in the newsletter and through announcements on assemblies. The policy will be regularly updated. Anti-bullying is also be taught in different KLAS (See Anti-bullying Plan).

5. Related documents:

Cedars Christian College Anti-Bullying Action Plan

Cedars Christian College Student Welfare Policy
Cedars Christian College Discipline Policy

Civil Liability Act 2002

Cyber Survivor. Choicez Media. ACT Australia. (DVD Resource with student, teacher and parent modules)


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Anti-Bullying Plan

Bullying is totally counter to the mission, vision and values of Cedars Christian College. The College is committed to providing an educational environment in which students feel safe and supported. To achieve this end, the College will seek to create a school-wide culture that:

- Allows students to flourish in an environment that is free from harassment and discrimination
- Does not condone, tolerate or trivialise bullying behaviours
- Is aware of what constitutes bullying behaviour
- Responds promptly to allegations of bullying
- Provides support to the victims of bullying
- Applies consequences and interventions for students that exhibit bullying behaviour

Strategies to Prevent Bullying

The methods used by the College to discourage bullying will vary to allow for the range of age groups of our students. New approaches will be introduced as appropriate. The effectiveness of these strategies rests with all members of the College community.

Whole School Strategies

- Communicating the College Bullying and Cyber bullying Policy by making this available to members of the school community via student diaries, the College website, during assemblies, meetings and in newsletters as appropriate.
- Communicating procedures and protocols for investigating and dealing with allegations of bullying and cyber bullying.
- Promoting a bully-free environment in the staff code of conduct and in other documentation and policies as appropriate.
- Educating students on what constitutes bullying, how to prevent and respond to bullying and cyber bullying through PDHPE lessons.
- Employing a Chaplain and School Counsellor/Psychologist who have specialist skills in helping both victims of bullying and identified bullies.
- Instituting a Welfare Team comprised of relevant staff members to monitor the wellbeing of students and implement intervention strategies as appropriate. The team will also be responsible for reviewing anti-bullying measures and making recommendations to amend these with the aim of reducing instances of bullying.
- Entering incidents of student bullying in the Behaviour module of the School Pro database. A report on bullying incidence will be prepared by the Welfare team each term and made available to the Principal.
- Training staff to detect bullying behaviours and how to effectively respond to allegations of bullying.
- Encouraging staff to adopt classroom management techniques that discourage opportunities for bullying behaviours.
- Employing staff who model tolerance, empathy and acceptance of individual student differences.
- Encouraging staff to be active in their supervision duties so that there is a pervasive sense of staff presence during breaks times.
- Provide visible reminders to students that deliver the anti-bullying message through promotional tools such as posters, information regarding helplines and support personnel.
• Giving consideration to the physical environment and making changes where possible to promote an open, positive environment to minimise the opportunity for covert bullying to take place.
• Periodically reviewing the College Bullying and Cyber bullying policy to ensure that it remains effective and relevant.

Junior School
• The classroom teacher monitors each student in the classroom, supporting, encouraging, guiding and correcting their peer interactions. This time in Junior School is seen as an opportunity to develop appropriate friendship skills. This encouragement continues in the playground at recess and lunch. Our aim is the development of the whole child.
• Teachers respond immediately to reports of bullying with appropriate consequences or referral to the Director of Primary.
• The Director of Primary works with the School Counsellor and classroom teacher to put in place appropriate strategies if the behaviour is ongoing. Time out in the playground or in the office area where they can be supervised.
• Parent Contact is made whenever a student has time out with the Director of Primary.
• Any ongoing concerns are raised with the parents and School Counsellor is involved in recommendations as well as working with the students and the family.
• Students are encouraged through proactive strategies in classroom through our PD/H programs and Biblical studies and Devotions.

Middle School
• Through the Homeroom Teacher, student welfare is closely monitored, promoting the physical, psychological, emotional and academic growth of all students.
• Teachers take allegations of bullying seriously and respond in a timely manner, with the intervention of the Middle School coordinator and School Counsellor to ensure appropriate follow up measures are put in place for both victim, the perpetrator and the bystander including support, discipline, parent communication, education, preventative strategies and restorative justice.
• Use of behaviour management cards to monitor ongoing or repetitive issues.
• Look at cyber safety and cyber bullying through iPad education programs and Chapel sessions.
• Proactive sessions to raise awareness of the consequences of bullying for the bully, victim and bystander in PDHPE lessons and programs such as REACH and the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

Senior College
• The pastoral care system is used to promote the physical, psychological and emotional safety of all students.
• All allegations of bullying are responded to in a timely manner with appropriate follow up, support, discipline, communication, education and preventive strategies.
• Students are encouraged to reflect on the nature of bullying from the perspective of the bully, the bullied and the bystander through programs such as REACH, in PDHPE classes and in Pastoral Care discussions.
• Pastoral support to deal with the consequences of bullying, including year advisors, counsellor, chaplain, the Director of Secondary and the Welfare Assistant.
• Involvement in various Anti-Bullying campaigns such as the No Way! program to raise awareness of preventative measures.
• Use of behaviour card to monitor ongoing behavioural issues for students.
Student Responsibilities
Each student at Cedars has the right to learn and develop in a safe and supportive environment. In order to achieve this, it is an expectation that students demonstrate care and respect for others through their daily interactions. Students are encouraged to:

- Actively seek opportunities to encourage and affirm other students.
- Model kindness, thoughtfulness and respect through their interactions with others.
- Demonstrate inclusiveness and acceptance of others when forming groups and playing in the playground.
- Speak up when you feel unsafe or threatened by promptly telling a trusted adult such as teacher or parent.
- Speak up when you witness another student being bullied by promptly telling a trusted adult such as teacher or parent.
- Actively engage in lessons and other programs to develop skills such as resilience, assertiveness and empathy.
- Choose friends wisely and surround yourself with people who make you feel good about yourself.
- Remain calm and not retaliate physically or with verbal abuse when being bullied.

Parent Responsibilities

- Partner with the College in encouraging a culture of inclusiveness and acceptance of others at all times.
- Take allegations of bullying seriously and contact the College in a timely manner if their child reports alleged bullying at school.
- Cooperate with any investigations that are deemed necessary by the College to address bullying issues.
- Avoid premature judgement when allegations of bullying are disclosed and demonstrate patience during the investigation process.
- Understand that the College is committed to investigating bullying in a manner that protects the rights of all those involved, including the alleged bully.
- To encourage their children not to fight back as this only confuses the clear consequences of the bully’s actions.
- Institute good management systems at home that monitor their child’s use of technology to minimise and detect any incidents of cyber bullying.
- Take screen shots or keep printed copies of information that may indicate cyber bullying and report it to the College and/or proper authorities.

Responding to Allegations of Bullying

The College is committed to responding in a timely manner to allegations of bullying from students. Each allegation will be investigated and opportunity provided for both parties to respond. Parents will be informed if their child has made an allegation of bullying or is the subject of an allegation of bullying behaviour. Responses must follow the procedural fairness guidelines outlined in the College Student Discipline policy.

The flow chart below summaries the steps and processes involved when an allegation of bullying is received.
Bullying Incident Flowchart

Alleged Bullying Incident

Investigated by Class, Homeroom or Pastoral Care Teacher in consultation with Sub-School Coordinator

Bullying not substantiated
(Class, Homeroom, Pastoral Care Teacher)

First Offence
(Class, Homeroom, Pastoral Care Teacher, Sub-School Coordinator)
SchoolPro recording

Victim:
- Parents informed
- Counselling support offered

Offender:
- Parents informed
- Compulsory education
- Appropriate consequence applied *

Supervised mediation if required

Bullying substantiated
(Class, Homeroom, Pastoral Care Teacher)

Second Offence
(DP, Sub-School Coordinator)
SchoolPro recording

Victim:
- Parents informed

Offender:
- 1 day suspension
- Compulsory counselling program
- Meeting with student, parents, Sub-School Coordinator, DP

Supervised mediation if required

Third Offence
(Principal, DP, Sub-School Coordinator)
SchoolPro recording

Victim:
- Parents informed

Offender:
- Enrolment review

Supervised mediation if required

*Consequence applied will take into consideration student's age and the nature of the bullying incident.