Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy
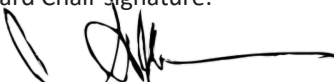
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Introduction

Southern Christian College does not tolerate bullying, harassment or discrimination in any form. All members of the Southern Christian College community have the right to be in an environment free from fear, intimidation, harassment and discrimination.

The College community works to create a safe, caring and nurturing environment where students are encouraged to pursue their own growth and development. By following Christ's example of compassion and self-control, students and staff create an atmosphere of support, trust and encouragement. The College community acknowledges that each person is a unique being created in the image of God and loved by God. Therefore, as a College community, we refuse to accept actions or words which demean that image.

Purpose

This policy and accompanying set of procedures seeks to provide a transparent process for educating all members of the College community, identifying bullying and working towards minimising it in the College community.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, students and volunteers of the Southern Christian College community during the normal operational hours of the College. The policy also extends to various College activities that may be conducted offsite and/or out of hours (e.g. school camps, weekend sporting events and intra / interstate school trips).

Background

Southern Christian College recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the College are respected and accepted. All students have the right to feel safe and comfortable at College and to be treated with understanding and respect by others. Bullying, harassment and discrimination in any of its forms will not be tolerated in our College community, and will be treated seriously.

Aims

This policy acknowledges and addresses the problems of teasing and bullying, and harassment and discrimination, and provides a framework for positive and proactive approaches to effectively deal with these.

Policy

All members of the College community have a responsibility to respond to incidents of bullying, harassment and discrimination (from here referred to as 'bullying')**.** The College

recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the College are respected and accepted.

It is our policy that:

- Bullying be managed through a 'whole of College community' approach involving students, staff and parents / carers;
- Bullying prevention strategies be implemented within the College on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents / carers to recognise bullying and respond appropriately;
- Bullying response strategies be tailored to the circumstances of each incident;
- Staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture; and
- Bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice.

The College undertakes to**:**

- Provide a supportive environment which encourages positive relationships between students, staff and parents;
- Provide curriculum material which will help develop appropriate social skills, positive relationships and resilience; and
- Provide counselling to students in dealing with conflict resolution; to those on both the giving and receiving ends of bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Bullying Prevention Strategies

The College recognises that the implementation of whole College prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising the incidence of, bullying within our community.

The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a 'no bullying' culture within the College:

- A structured curriculum and peer group support system, that provides age appropriate information and skills relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year;
- Education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies;
- Regular provision of information to parents/carers, to raise awareness of bullying as a College community issue to equip them to recognise signs of bullying, as well as to provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns they may have relating to bullying directly with the College;
- Promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/carers;

- Promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/carers;
- Reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/carers and staff is encouraged, and made easy through the establishment of multiple reporting channels (as specified below);
- Records of reported bullying incidents are maintained and analysed, in order to identify persistent bullying behaviour and/or victims and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate;
- Statements supporting bullying prevention are included in students' College diaries;
- Anti-bullying posters are displayed strategically within the College;
- Promotion of student awareness and a 'no bullying' environment by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence

Reporting Bullying

Students and their parents/carers are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying incidents, for fear that it will only make matters worse. A key part of the College's bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well providing assurance to students who experience bullying (and parents/carers) that:

- Bullying is not tolerated within the College
- Their concerns will be taken seriously
- The College has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues

Bullying incidents can be advised to the College verbally (or in writing) through any of the following avenues:

- Informing a trusted teacher / Pastoral Carer;
- Informing the Head of Pastoral Care; and
- Informing the Head of School, and/or Principal

Responding to Bullying

Bullying behaviours vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts. In all circumstances the College:

- Takes bullying incidents seriously;
- Provides assurance to the victim that they are not at fault, and that wherever possible their confidentiality will be respected within the constraints of confidentiality guidelines;
- Takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the victim, the alleged bully and any bystanders;
- Takes time to understand any concerns of individuals involved;
- Maintains records of reported bullying incidents; and
- Will escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullying behaviour and/or severe incidents.

Actions that may be taken when responding to bullying include:

- Notification of/Consultation with parents/carers;
- Offering counselling to persistent perpetrators of bullying behaviour/victims;
- Implementing effective follow up strategies for both the perpetrator of bullying behaviour and victim; and
- Disciplinary action at the Principal's discretion including suspension and expulsion of persistent bullying behaviour, or in cases of severe incidents.

Discouraging Bullying

The methods used by the College to discourage bullying will vary from time-to-time with new initiatives being introduced when thought appropriate. These include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging students across all year levels in anti-bullying programs with specific emphasis on bystander and responsible reporting programs;
- Including anti-bullying messages in the Wellbeing & Health curriculum;
- Promoting a bully-free environment in assemblies, Pastoral Care periods, and Year-level meetings;
- Printing Anti-bullying policies on the College Website, in Student Record Books; on the IB Managebac Portal;
- Periodically undertaking confidential Year-level surveys of student wellbeing and bullying behaviour and where possible following up on identified perpetrators of bullying behaviour and targets;
- Employing a College Chaplain who has specialist skills in helping both targets and perpetrators of bullying;
- Ensuring effective pastoral support for students through the appointment of Pastoral Carers / Mentors, Head of Pastoral Care, and Heads of School;
- Engaging Student Groups (Doulos) to instigate anti-bullying initiatives;
- Having a team of recognised student leaders who support the College's *Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy* and who students feel free and comfortable to inform about bullying;
- Using an appropriate range of interventions and sanctions applicable to the age group and the situation to deal with and discourage bullying behaviour;
- Sanctioning students who repeatedly use inappropriate and discriminatory language and gestures even if it's meant in a friendly jovial manner;
- Monitoring staff and parent use of language whilst engaged in College activities to ensure that inappropriate and discriminatory language is not used;
- Educating Parents and Staff on the differences between anti-social or negative behaviours and bullying;
- Encouraging staff to adopt classroom management techniques that discourage opportunities for bullying behaviours;
- Training staff to detect bullying behaviours;
- Encouraging staff to actively supervise whilst on duty so that there is a pervasive sense of staff presence;

- Emphasising anti-bullying guidelines during staff inductions and re-inductions;
- Conducting exit interviews; and
- Reviewing the College's *Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy* periodically, and at a minimum every 2 years in order to ensure it remains effective and relevant.

To assess the success or otherwise of the College's anti-bullying strategies, an 'Annual Bullying Report' will be prepared by each Head of School summarising the data drawn from incident records and surveys undertaken at the College. The Report will be reviewed by the Executive Leadership / Senior Leadership Team at the end of each calendar year.

The College cannot be responsible for acts of bullying that occur outside normal College hours in students' own family time; this is the responsibility of parents/carers. Such incidents of cyber or traditional bullying should be dealt with and will be referred to parents. However, Southern Christian College does recognise that any bullying can affect the academic progress and the emotional wellbeing of an individual. If bullying occurs outside College, parents are encouraged to inform the College. Southern Christian College will not take responsibility for these acts but will take note for discipline and pastoral purposes and provide support as required. **Ultimately, discipline in this instance remains the family's responsibility.**

Staff Responsibility

All staff are responsible to:

- Model appropriate behaviour at all times
- Deal with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy
- Ensure that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them, is recorded appropriately
- Be vigilant in monitoring students that have been identified as either persistent perpetrators of bullying behaviours or victims
- Acknowledge the right of parents / carers to speak with College authorities if they believe their child is being bullied, harassed or discriminated against.

Signage

Anti-bullying posters may be posted in strategic locations in the College to promote appropriate behaviour and encourage students to respect individual differences and diversity.

Implementation

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- Staff training
- Student and parent / carer education and information
- Effective incident reporting procedures
- Effective management of bullying incidents when reported
- The creation of a 'no bullying, harassment and discrimination' culture within the College community
- Effective record keeping procedures
- Initiation of corrective actions where necessary

Discipline for Staff Breach of Policy

Where a staff member breaches this policy Southern Christian College will take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal by the Principal.

Other relevant reference documents
- SCC Student Code of Conduct Policy 2022
- SCC Staff Professional Code of Conduct Policy 2022
- SCC Student Safeguarding and Protective Practices Policy 2022
- SCC ICT Policy 2022
- SCC CyberSafety Policy 2022