

Harassment/bullying is a behaviour that is unwelcome, unwanted, unsolicited and usually persistent. It embarrasses, hurts, humiliates, compromises or frightens people. It can be done by an individual, or a group, and whilst usually deliberate, it can be thoughtless or careless. Harassment / bullying can only grow when ignored, denied or tolerated. The best weapon against harassment / bullying is awareness.

The following policy applies to all members of the College community - staff, students and parents.

## **Biblical Perspective**

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The Bible is very clear about:

1. The way others should be treated.

“Love one another” John 13:34-35

“How wonderful it is, how pleasant when brothers live in harmony” Psalms 133:1

“Honour one another above yourselves. ... Live in harmony with one another.” Romans 12:10-16

2. Handling a grievance.

“If your brother sins against you, go and show Him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.” Matthew 18:15-17

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. ... As far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Romans 12:17-21

## **Types of Harassment & Bullying**

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### Physical

- Fighting, pushing, shoving, gesturing or invading of personal space.
- Using stand-over tactics, picking on others, threatening to ‘get’ people, ‘paying out’ people.
- Damaging, ‘borrowing’ or ‘hiding’ other people’s possessions.

### Verbal

- Name calling, using offensive language.

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- Offensive notes or graffiti about others including using text or picture messaging on mobile phones.
- Hurtful comments about someone's appearance or ability.

### Spiritual/Racial

- Picking on people because of their race, religious or cultural beliefs.

### Emotional/Indirect

- Staring, using dirty looks, making gestures and faces.
- Deliberately excluding someone from activities or social groups
- Spreading rumours, slandering (putting people down behind their backs)
- Using other people to threaten, intimidate or humiliate someone.

### Sexual

- Touching or brushing against someone in a sexual manner.
- Sexually oriented jokes, drawings and literature.
- Commenting on the size and shape of someone's body.
- Calling someone rude names or making comments about someone's morals.
- Invitations of a sexual nature.
- Asking unwanted questions about someone's private life.

## Cyber Bullying

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Cyber bullying is a term used to describe bullying behaviours through email, chat rooms, mobile phones, text messages, mobile phone cameras and websites. The following behaviours are considered cyber-bullying:

- Sending of inappropriate, demeaning or threatening emails, text messages or twitter to or about another person.
- Creating or posting inappropriate, demeaning or threatening information or pictures / photos on websites (eg Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, internet chat rooms).

The best weapon against cyber bullying is awareness. To this end, cyber bullying resources and information will be made available to teachers, parents and students of the college.

## Preventative Action and Strategies

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The intent of Seaview Christian College is to

- Reflect the love of Christ in all relationships with all people.
- Provide a happy, safe and secure learning environment for all students.
- Ensure a climate of openness and trust exists in the college.
- Incorporate anti-bullying lessons into the college curriculum at all levels.

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- Have bullying situations dealt with as soon as they occur.

Any form of Harassment is wrong and will not be tolerated at Seaview Christian College. Every member of the College community is responsible for assisting in its prevention.

Staff will be in-serviced on forms of bullying/harassment and on appropriate responses.

Staff will educate students on what bullying and harassment are, and will make it clear that bullying only thrives when others do nothing to stop it. (See below for specific personal strategies.)

The Harassment and Bullying Policy will be clearly communicated and available to teachers, parents, students and all other stakeholders (eg via student diary, parent and staff handbooks, College website).

Staff will foster a positive community spirit that prevents the growth of harassment.

Staff will seek to assist students to develop positive relationships with one another.

Staff will conduct devotions and lessons aimed at preventing harassment and building a culture of dignity and respect.

Staff will seek input from students (eg via surveys) and from student leaders (eg class captains) to ascertain whether there are any undisclosed issues.

## **Students with Special Needs**

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Staff will take preventative measures to protect students, parents, volunteers and staff who have disabilities, from harassment and bullying. These preventative measures extend to associates of people with disabilities/special needs.

Harassment and bullying may take many forms and may be directed because of physical, mental or emotional disability or may be due to an association with a person with a disability or need.

Personal harassment may include:

- Insults or bullying based on personal circumstances, appearance, disability or learning need.
- Teasing and pranks about disability or physical/mental/emotional difference.
- Hostility based on disability.
- Using a person's known ill health or disability to deskill, depower or demoralise them.

Behaviour which makes direct or indirect reference to disability or impairment and which patronises, causes discomfort, insults or offends people with a physical, sensory, emotional or mental disability or their associates will not be tolerated by Seaview Christian College.

## Response to Being Harassed /Bullied - What Can I Do About It?

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Step 1: Ignore the behaviour. By not reacting, the harasser is not rewarded and the harassment may stop.

*If it does not stop or if it is too serious to ignore*

Step 2: Confront the person who is harassing you and tell her or him that the actions are unwanted. It may stop.

*If harassment continues*

Step 3: Talk it over openly with an adult, parent or a trusted friend, who can help with the decision about what to do.

*If harassment continues*

Step 4: Report the matter directly to the pastoral group teacher or subject teacher who will listen to you and help you decide the best way to handle the situation, which may include discussion with parents and confronting the harasser. This is not dobbing.

*If the harassment does not stop*

Step 5: The student or teacher speak to the Head of School and allow him/her to take the action they deem necessary. Parents will be informed.

## Response By Teacher

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All complaints will be investigated and documented. Staff will support and protect students who make a complaint. Consequences will only take effect after an incident has been thoroughly investigated and can be corroborated by independent sources or eyewitnesses. Where such evidence exists, disciplinary consequences will occur.

The normal consequences for bullying / harassment will be as follows, although the College administration reserves the right to treat any single act of bullying / harassment as severe enough to skip a step, or indeed to warrant immediate suspension, exclusion or dismissal from the college. Any bullying / harassment offence will be communicated to parents.

First offence: Discussion / counselling / apology.

Second offence: Detention / behaviour contract / privileges withdrawn.

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Third offence: One day in-school suspension / further counselling / parent involvement.

Fourth offence: Minimum two days out of school suspension / round table conference with parent present before student is reinstated into class.

Fifth offence: Student may be recommended for long-term exclusion.

In serious cases, teachers are mandated by law to report instances or suspected instances of sexual or physical child abuse to the Family and Youth Services Department.

## **Inappropriate Parental Discipline**

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Parents may not approach children other than their own to discipline them on College property or during College activities.

It is neither appropriate nor acceptable for parents to approach other students in an attempt to discipline them for behaviour that occurred either inside or outside of the College.

If parents have a student-related issue that has occurred during College hours, the correct procedure is to direct the concern to a staff member and not to reprimand or confront the student. The staff member will then follow through with whatever discipline is needed. Obvious exceptions to this might be for parents who take on certain roles such as sports coaching.

If the issue has occurred outside College hours, the responsibility for the behaviour of the student belongs with the parent of that child. In such instances, contact should be made with that parent and not the child in question.

We understand that students will sometimes harass one another outside school hours. There are examples of bullying behaviour using technology such as the internet and mobile phones. It is difficult for us to apply consequences for these things when they happen at home. From a relational viewpoint and wherever possible, we will attempt to mediate issues that might occur, but we cannot discipline a student unless their behaviour in some way brings the College into disrepute.

Our number one priority is the safety of each child and if an adult is threatening them in any way we will need to respond immediately.