Anti-Bullying Policy (Students)

The Hazard – Bullying

Bullying is the repeated and intentional behaviour of causing fear, distress or harm towards another person that involves an imbalance of power. It can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and harassment. In any bullying incident there are likely to be three parties involved: the bully, the person being bullied, and bystanders.

Bullying can take many forms including:

Physical bullying
- Pushing, hitting, punching, bumping, kicking.
- Obstructing / Confining.
- Stealing / hiding property.
- Damage or interference to personal belongings.

Verbal/Written
- Name calling/teasing/picking on.
- Mocking/taunting.
- Making put down comments/belittling
- Threatening violence/physical aggression
- Insulting/shouting/swearing at.
- Homophobic comments.
- Racial/minority group comments.
- Writing abusive notes
- Talking about people inappropriately behind their backs or within earshot
Social/Psychological:
- Visual: stare at threateningly, giving 'evils'
- Standing close to a person and acting in a threatening manner
- Pulling faces.
- Excluding from activities, groups or events
- Ignoring
- Saving seats.
- Creating paranoia - whispering, stopping activities when target student enters room

Cyber bullying:
- Cyber bullying is when an individual or group uses the internet, mobile phones or other technology to hurt another person or group of people (refer to Cyber-Bullying Policy).
- Initiating inappropriate emails.
- Sending abusive or malicious emails and text messages, including unwanted text messages that contain sexually explicit content - ie sexting.
- Accessing, altering or deleting others work or folders.
- Writing harmful/hurtful comments about any member of the College community on social networking websites such as Facebook.
- Unauthorized recording, taking or publishing of photos.

What Bullying is Not
There are many negative situations which, whilst being potentially distressing for students, are not bullying. These include:

Mutual Conflict Situations which arise where there is disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation; or

One Off Acts (of aggression or meanness) including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do not normally constitute bullying.

Signs of Bullying
Major behaviour changes in a student may be indicative of bullying. Such behavioural changes may include:
Crying at night and having nightmares;

Refusing to talk when asked “What’s wrong?”;

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; and

Acting unreasonably.

Parents/carers are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the College through a trusted staff member immediately (such as a class teacher, Head of School, College Psychologist, Year Co-ordinator, etc), if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

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

Bullying is not tolerated at Presbyterian Ladies’ College.

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.
Presbyterian Ladies' College recognises that the implementation of whole College prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising incidents 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 are encouraged, and made easy through the establishment of multiple reporting channels (as specified below);

- Regular risk assessments of bullying within the College are undertaken by surveying students to identify bullying issues that may ordinarily go unnoticed by staff;

- Records of reported bullying incidents are maintained and analysed, in order to identify persistent bullies and/or victims and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate;

- Distribution of anti-bullying policy brochure to parents.

- Outlining anti-bullying policy to parents at Support your Daughter evenings.

- Monitoring of all students laptops during the school day in term time using eSafe monitoring.

Students and their parents/carers are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying incidents, for fear that it will only make matters worse.

Early intervention is more likely to result in a favourable outcome.

A key part of Presbyterian Ladies' 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; and
- The College has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.

Students are advised to report incidents of bullying to a staff member as soon as possible.

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

- Informing a trusted teacher;
- Informing the College psychologist;
- Informing a student’s class teacher in the Junior School, Year Co-ordinator or Head of School in the Middle and Senior Schools;

**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 their confidentiality will be respected;
- Takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the victim, the bully and any bystanders without the involvement of parents;
- Takes time to understand any concerns of individuals involved;
- Maintains records of reported bullying incidents; and
- Will escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents.

**Bullying Intervention Process**

**1st Incident**

- Student interview
- Bullying incident documented on record keeping database
2nd Incident

Student interview

Bullying incident documented on record keeping data base

Consultation with Head of School

Parent contacted and consequences outlined

Follow-up written communication with letter sent to parents from the Head of School

3rd Incident

Student interview

Bullying incident documented record keeping data base

Parent and student interview with Head of School and Principal. Suspension from school may be a consequence.

Support put in place for the student when she returns to School.

4th Incident

Student and parent interview with Principal - consideration of student's expulsion

Severity Clause - for severe incidents of bullying, these steps may be fast tracked.

The “Method of Shared Concern” Approach (Pikas)

Key principles include:

Bullying occurs in the context of group behaviours.

Approach aims to develop empathy and concern for others.

Developing a sense of shared concern by the whole community for bullied individuals.

By involving both the students engaged in the bullying behaviour and the bystanders, the group dynamics can be altered.

Bullied students may be at risk of revenge attacks if punitive measures are used to discipline bullies as they reinforce the idea that power can be used to meet needs.
The following steps from Coosje Griffiths, 2000, Friendly Schools Project has been modified to suit the specific needs of Presbyterian Ladies' College.

**Steps in the Pikas Method of Shared Concern**

- Staff member receives information about the incident.
- Gain the confidence and agreement of the targeted student to proceed with process.
- Inform the Year Co-Ordinator or School Counsellor of the situation and action planned. Inform parents if applicable.
- Meet with the individual 'suspected' bullies. Meetings should be brief and students should be seen without a break in between. Discussion of issue and appropriate behaviour change.
- Counselling sessions with the target student.
- Group or individual meetings with the 'former' bullies approximately a week later.
- Meeting with former target student.
- Resolution meeting with former target student and bullies (if deemed appropriate).
- Further follow up or monitoring.

*These approaches may be used to intervene in group or relational bullying situations. They are only appropriate during the initial stages. They are not appropriate for persistent or severe bullying incidents.*

In cases of severe or persistent bullying, disciplinary action such as suspension and expulsion may be taken at the Principal's discretion.

**Process to Handle School Bullying Flowchart**

**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 bullies or victims; and

Acknowledge the right of parents/carers to speak with College authorities if they believe their child is being bullied.

**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’ culture within the College community;
- Effective record keeping procedures; and
- Initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

**Related Policies**

- Assault (Student against Student) Policy
- Cyber Safety Policy