



Our Lady's College

Safe and Supportive Environment Policy

Rationale

In our Mission Statement we state that we aim to:

- encourage in students a willingness to be responsible for their own actions and decisions
- nurture the growth of relationships so that all members experience a sense of belonging in a supportive and inclusive community

As such, we have a responsibility to provide an environment that protects the emotional, psychological and physical wellbeing of all members of our College community. The College seeks to continue building a pro-active and supportive environment in which all members of the College community understand that bullying, harassment and violence are wrong and that individuals have the responsibility to report such incidents when they become aware of them.

Introduction

Everyone at Our Lady's College has the right to feel safe and supported. Bullying, harassment and violence of any form will not be tolerated by any members of our community – students, parents, visitors or staff.

This policy sets out our approach to help the College and our community address issues of bullying, harassment, and violence to ensure the provision of a safe and supportive learning environment for all.

Guidelines

Rights and Responsibilities of members of our College community

All members have the right to:

- feel safe, secure and valued within the community
- experience positive and respectful relationships between all members of the community
- learn and socialise in a supportive, caring and inclusive environment

All members share the responsibility to:

- maintain a safe school environment
- promote a positive culture and uphold the dignity of others
- respect differences between peoples and promote tolerance and inclusion of all
- to refrain from bullying, harassing and violent behaviours
- respond to bullying, harassing and violent behaviours and report the actions or situation to an adult

Definitions of bullying, harassment and violence

Bullying:

- is a repeated and unreasonable behaviour that causes distress to another.

Repeated behaviour refers to the persistent nature of the behaviour and can involve a range of behaviours over time. Unreasonable behaviour means behaviour that a reasonable person, having considered the circumstances, would see as unreasonable including behaviour that is victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening.

- this distress may be physical, psychological or social or involve damage to reputation or property
- is directed towards a specific person or group
- is evident where there is a repeated pattern of attacks
- is evident where there is an imbalance of power between those bullying and the recipient
- is evident where behaviour is unreasonable and unjustifiable
- is evident when the recipient usually finds it difficult to leave or avoid the bullying situation without personal cost
- can be done by one person or a group
- can be done in person, by manipulating others to take part, or by electronic means such as e-mail, SMS messages or chat rooms

Bullying behaviours:

Include:

- direct physical attacks
- name calling, belittling, insulting someone
- making racist remarks
- trying to damage someone's reputation by spreading rumours
- using verbal or non-verbal put downs
- playing practical jokes
- damaging or hiding property
- using physical intimidation such as blocking the walk or bumping someone
- encouraging others to socially exclude the recipient
- cyber bullying
- accusing someone of things they haven't done

Bullying is not

- a disagreement between students where both have the same power
- mutual conflict where both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem
- social rejection where someone decides not to be friends with someone anymore.

Only when social rejection involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause a specific student distress is it categorised as bullying.

Harassment

- unwanted and one-sided words or actions towards another that demean, annoy, alarm or abuse
- name calling, belittling, insulting someone
- making racist remarks
- threatening violence

- trying to damage someone's reputation by spreading rumours
- using verbal or non-verbal put downs
- may be deliberate or unintentional
- may involve a single incident or an ongoing pattern of behaviour
- where harassment is part of an ongoing pattern of behaviour where intentional acts are repeated over time and there is a power imbalance between the perpetrator and the recipient this may also be defined as bullying
- may be verbal, written or via electronic media

Violence

- includes hitting, slapping, pinching, biting, punching, pushing, hair pulling, thumping, tripping, kicking, wrestling, throwing etc.
- where such acts are repeated over time and there is a power imbalance between the perpetrator and the recipient this may also be defined as bullying

Actions to be taken

Acts of bullying, harassment and violence by staff against students are incorporated in the BCE Student Protection Policy.

Acts of bullying, harassment and violence by staff against staff are incorporated in the BCE Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy.

Acts of bullying, harassment and violence by student against staff are incorporated in the BCE Student Behaviour Support Policy and the Our Lady's College Supporting Documentation.

Acts of bullying, harassment and violence by student against student are to be acted on as per the flowchart below.

Date of Endorsement: 7 March, 2017

Date of Review: 2022

Action to be taken in response to bullying, harassment and violence of students towards students

