

# Bullying and Unacceptable Behaviour

## 1. Purpose

Cornish College is a community where the individual is respected and relationships valued. Staff and students are expected to behave in a manner that is consistent with college values. All members of the Cornish College community are expected to refrain from bullying or unacceptable or inappropriate behaviours. Unacceptable behaviour including bullying, harassment, discrimination and threats or acts of violence will not be tolerated.

The IB learner profile applies and all members of the community are encouraged to strive to be:

- Inquirers:* developing their natural curiosity and actively enjoying learning
- Knowledgeable:* exploring concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance.
- Thinkers:* exercising initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively
- Communicators:* understanding and expressing ideas and information confidently and creatively and working effectively and willingly in collaboration with others
- Principled:* acting with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities; taking responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.
- Open-minded:* understanding personal cultures and personal histories and open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities
- Caring:* showing empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others; having a personal commitment to service and to making a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment
- Risk-takers:* approaching unfamiliar situations with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies; being brave and articulate in defending beliefs
- Balanced:* understanding the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others
- Reflective:* giving thoughtful consideration to personal learning and experience and understanding their strengths and limitations

Within the restorative practice framework, the College works to nurture socially responsible students so that bullying and other unacceptable behaviours occur less frequently and are stopped more often by bystanders. All members of the College community are involved so that Cornish College is an emotionally and physically safe place for all.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to the entire Cornish College community.

## 3. Key Responsibilities

Position/Roles	Responsibilities
Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure strategies and programs exist to foster an inclusive and anti-bullying culture at the College</li> <li>review the Bullying and Unacceptable Behaviour policy annually</li> </ul>
Principal and Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure there is a specific policy that addresses bullying and unacceptable behaviour</li> <li>act in accordance with the College's Bullying and unacceptable behaviour policy</li> <li>develop and implement strategies for responding to incidents of bullying and unacceptable behaviour.</li> <li>ensure ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the College's policy to enable reflective practice and improvement</li> <li>provide staff with access to professional learning opportunities to assist with prevention and effective handling of incidents.</li> <li>ensure that support is provided to any student who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour</li> </ul>
All staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>act in accordance with the College's Bullying and Unacceptable Behaviour policy and suggest improvements where necessary</li> <li>create and maintain a safe learning environment</li> <li>support the health and wellbeing of their students and colleagues</li> </ul>
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>act in accordance with the College's Bullying and Unacceptable Behaviour policy and provide input to the policy's review</li> <li>show respect to all members of the College community</li> <li>not hinder or harm the learning of others</li> </ul>
Parents and Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>act in accordance with College policy</li> <li>support the College in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment</li> </ul>

## **4. Key Elements of the Policy**

### **4.1 Guiding Principles**

Cornish College does not tolerate bullying or unacceptable behaviour. Students and staff have a right to a safe environment which promotes respect and acceptance.

This policy aims to:

- reduce the incidence of bullying and other unacceptable behaviours such as harassment, discrimination, threats or acts of violence
- increase the incidence of standing up against bullying : "If you see something, say something"
- treat all incidents of bullying and unacceptable behaviour seriously
- create a safe and supportive environment
- provide all members of the school community with options to respond to bullying and unacceptable behaviour.

### **4.2 Unacceptable Behaviours**

#### **4.2.1 Bullying**

Bullying occurs when an individual (or a group of individuals) uses physical, verbal or psychological behaviour that deliberately and repeatedly harms another individual. Bullying behaviour causes someone to feel fearful, threatened, unsafe, excluded or in pain within an isolated period of time or repeatedly for an extended period of time. Bullying behaviour is a misuse of power that hurts, controls, silences and belittles another person. There is a power imbalance when bullying behaviour occurs.

An aggressive act is a one off incident. Bullying however is a behaviour that is repeated over a period of time.

#### **Behaviours that may constitute bullying include:**

- Verbal bullying: The use of language to threaten or hurt including name-calling and put-downs
- Physical bullying: Any intentional and unwelcome use of physical contact or deliberate property damage
- Gesture bullying: The use of non-verbal signals to cause intimidation or fear
- Exclusion bullying: Leaving someone out on purpose in order to cause feelings of non-acceptance and hurt
- Extortion bullying: The use of threat and power to obtain favour and goods
- Sexual bullying: Any unwelcome and uninvited comment, attention, contact or behaviour of a sexual nature that is found to be humiliating, offensive or intimidating
- Cyberbullying: Any bullying that is carried out through information and communication and/or social networking technologies (refer also to ICT User Agreement and Policy).

Bullying can occur when antagonism or prejudice is directed towards someone on the basis of their race, religion, sexual preference and gender orientation, perceived academic prowess, disability, health, socio-economic status, cultural practice or sporting ability.

**POLICY NUMBER:** SWPOL - 080  
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Behaviours that do not constitute bullying but still require follow up and resolution include:

- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)
- not liking someone or a single act of social rejection
- one-off acts of meanness or spite
- isolated incident of aggression, intimidation or violence.

#### **4.2.2 Harassment**

Harassment is behaviour intended to annoy, disturb, threaten or upset another person. Harassment and bullying may involve similar behaviours as both usually involve a person or group of people who have, or are perceived to have, more power deliberately upsetting someone on more than one occasion.

Harassment may also occur because of perceived differences such as culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, identity or religion.

#### **4.2.3 Discrimination**

Discrimination is treating a person or group less fairly or well because of a particular characteristic such as culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or identity, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, age; or marital, parenting, or economic status. Discrimination commonly involves exclusion or rejection.

Conduct which causes someone to suffer a detriment or to be treated less favourably than someone else because of their race can be racial discrimination. The term detriment is very broad and includes emotional and physical detriment. Racial discrimination means any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race which has the effect of impairing a person's enjoyment, recognition or ability to exercise a human right.

#### **4.2.4 Violence**

Violence is the damaging and destructive use of force by a person or group towards another person, group or property. This force can be physical, verbal, sexual or another action or behaviour and can involve an ongoing relationship between the parties. Violence may involve provoked or unprovoked acts and can be a one off incident or can occur over time. Violence may be used by those targeted by bullying or other unacceptable behaviour to try to redress the imbalance of power.

A threat of violence is words or gestures expressing intent to use an act of force against a person.

Definitions and examples of harassment, bullying, violence and discrimination can be found at <http://bullyingnoway.gov.au/teachers/facts/definition.html>

#### **4.2.5 Other acts of criminal behaviour**

This includes but is not limited to theft, graffiti, damage to property, physical assault, sexual assault, use of or selling drugs and/or alcohol.

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### **4.3 Prevention**

The College will undertake a number of the following activities to prevent and address bullying and other unacceptable behaviours:

- include bullying prevention programs in the curriculum
- refresh students' knowledge of the policy
- reinforce school values and expectations of the way in which we treat one another in the school community, for example, through role model discussion in assemblies
- make available policy and procedures to all members of school community on the website
- provide parent/student/teacher support to increase knowledge of bullying and how to implement effective anti-bullying strategies
- conduct bullying audits and safe school surveys
- provide counselling support as required
- implement restorative practices

#### **4.3.1 Response to Bullying and Unacceptable Behaviour**

Cornish College is committed to dealing with bullying and other unacceptable behaviours using preventative, pro-active and reactive processes.

If bullying behaviour occurs it must not be ignored, and action should be taken by students, teachers or parents. Reports of bullying behaviour will be treated seriously and appropriate action will be taken.

#### **4.3.2 Student's Response**

If a student feels that she or he has been bullied or has witnessed bullying behaviour she/he should:

- tell the person that s/he is being a bully and to stop the behaviour (if safe to do so)
- support the person being bullied and ask an adult for help
- report the behaviour to a teacher
- talk to a trusted student or student leader
- talk to a trusted adult with whom you feel comfortable, including:
  - ♦ class teacher/ form teacher
  - ♦ Team leader
  - ♦ Assistant Team Leader
  - ♦ Counsellor
  - ♦ Chaplain
  - ♦ Trusted parent or other adult

It is very important that witnesses to bullying speak out and report instances of bullying.

#### **4.3.3 Teacher's Response**

If a student or colleague reports a bullying incident or a teacher or other employee witnesses incidents of bullying, s/he should:

- listen and provide support to the target of the bullying by acknowledging the nature and seriousness of bullying behaviour
- attempt to resolve the incident
- document and report the incident to relevant staff
- relevant staff to contact the student's parent
- advise the form teacher/Team Leader/Assistant Team Leader/ Deputy Principal of the incident

**POLICY NUMBER:** SWPOL - 080  
**VERSION:** FINAL  
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Teachers with leadership responsibilities:

- investigate the allegation, collect and document the facts
- contact the parents/carers of the offender, and of the victim
- document the incident using incident report protocols
- arrange counselling support to targets of bullying
- put in place anti-bullying procedures as appropriate, e.g. ask the offender to acknowledge the behaviour and agree to stop it; arrange a restorative practice session
- advise the victim on strategies to deal with incidents
- encourage the victim to report similar behaviour if repeated
- involve the students' class teachers where appropriate
- record and monitor any incidents of bullying on college register

#### **4.3.4 Parents**

The following actions are recommended to parents:

- encourage children to discuss the effects and consequences of bullying
- encourage children to report any incidents of bullying to a teacher
- watch for signs of distress in your child (eg. unwillingness to attend school, missing equipment without explanation, a pattern of repeated headaches or unexpected abdominal pain)
- contact the school if you believe any child is being bullied and you feel the matter is not being addressed
- support the College in its actions if your child has been bullying others
- report any incidents of bullying witnessed while in the College

#### **4.4 Intervention**

Cornish College is committed to dealing with bullying or unacceptable behaviour using preventative, reactive and restorative processes. It will take all reports of bullying or unacceptable behaviour seriously, tailoring interventions to the individual student while consistently applying the policy to all students.

A restorative practice approach can be used as a first step in responding to many incidences of bullying. Restorative practice is the recommended first course of action. An approach that engages students who are bullying and attempts to enhance their feelings of empathy and understanding for the student they are harming is more likely to bring about a change in behaviour. A punitive response by the school may be implemented in some circumstances.

##### **A restorative practice example:**

**Step 1:** Interview the students involved. This involves fact-finding, building their awareness, reassurance, the result desired and preparation for the final interview.

**Step 2:** Interview the alleged perpetrator/s. This involves clarifying their involvement, advising that there is a situation that needs to be sorted out, encouraging them to take responsibility for their own actions, building their awareness and preparation for the final interview.

**Step 3:** The two parties and sometimes, appropriate supporters, are brought together for a restorative practice interview.

**Step 4:** An action plan is developed.

**Step 5:** Arrangements are made for follow up.

**POLICY NUMBER:** SWPOL - 080  
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Other intervention approaches include:

- consultations with parents
- consultations with the peer group
- further education about bullying
- referral to the College Counsellor
- referral to external party eg. law enforcement or health service
- punitive response which may include loss of any office held, community service, suspension, being placed on a behaviour contract, exclusion from selected activities or expulsion in extreme or repeated cases.

The Principal will determine the consequences for extreme instances of bullying or unacceptable behaviour.

Any concerns or complaints associated with the College's handling of bullying or unacceptable behaviour will be addressed in accordance with the Concerns and Complaints Policy.

#### **4.5 Incident Reporting and Follow-up**

All incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour should be recorded on a Cornish College Behaviour Management form. This records the nature of the incident and the agreed actions. A summary of all reported incidents will be reported to the College Executive each month. This provides the opportunity to consider whole of school responses if necessary.

### **5. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with the College community.

### **6. References**

- Behaviour Management Policy
- ICT User Agreement and Policy
- Concerns and Complaints Policy
- Social Media Policy