



Faith Lutheran College, Redlands

Faith in Christ ... prepared for life.

Mission Statement

Faith Lutheran College is committed to providing quality learning opportunities while nurturing the development of all students in a Christ-centred community.

SAFE COMMUNITY POLICY

This policy applies to all members of the School community, including teachers, students, sports coaches, instructors, work experience supervisors, parents, ancillary staff, voluntary workers and student teachers.

This policy is to be applied in alignment with the Lutheran Education Australia Valuing Safe Communities Policy and Faith Lutheran College, Redlands Child Protection Policy. All issues pertaining to sexual abuse must be dealt with as specified in the Child Protection Policy.

The Lutheran Education Australia document, Code of Conduct for safe and professional relationships provides further elaboration on the behavioural expectations of all in our community.

STOPPING BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION IS IMPORTANT

Faith Lutheran College, Redlands affirms the worth and dignity of all individuals in its community. We uphold this belief on the basis that all are created in the image of God and that all are embraced by God's love evidenced in Christ's life, death and resurrection. The ministry of Jesus Christ gave respect to all people irrespective of class, race, gender or status.

Faith Lutheran College, Redlands is committed to enabling each person to reach their potential, and to uphold each other in caring, supporting, encouraging and forgiving relationships. We, therefore, believe all members of the School community have an equal right:

1. to be treated fairly by fellow students and staff *(and therefore we show respect for each other)*
2. to feel safe and secure *(and therefore we treat each other with kindness and support)*
3. to learn, and grow towards their full *potential (and therefore we will support and encourage each other in our work)*
4. to feel valued, accepted and cared for as unique individuals *(and therefore we will listen to each other, encouraging self expression, and we will accept each other as we are)*
5. to have their own property *(and therefore we will respect and protect the property of others)*

Because bullying, harassment and discrimination affect a person's well being, self-confidence, work and relationships with others, it is contrary to the values of a Christian Community and totally against the College's ethos. It may also be against the law.

WHAT IS BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION?

If a particular behaviour repeatedly embarrasses, upsets or hurts another person, then it can be classified as harassment or bullying.

The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provide the following definition:

"Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, upset or create a risk to another person's health and safety – either psychologically or physically – or their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion."

Research also suggests that bullying in schools usually involves a student having more power, deliberately bullying another.

Bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour and can be differentiated from teasing and violence in three ways:

1. Bullying is often a deliberate hurtful action directed towards another person or persons, by one or more persons.
2. Bullying is repetitious in nature, where incidents occur more than once and are not random acts. However, severe 'one-off' bullying also occurs and is recognised as potentially very harmful.
3. Bullying usually involves a person having more power or strength at the time. As distinct from playful teasing, bullying is a mean action intended to hurt the target and create subordination as well as a feeling of superiority for the bully.

Types of Bullying

There are a variety of categories and examples of bullying behaviour including:

Direct Physical Bullying:

Hits, trips, pushes, pokes, damages property, physically threatens, gives intimidating looks, steals property, touching and brushing up against (sexual nature).

Direct Verbal Bullying:

Calls names, insults, makes homophobic remarks, makes racist remarks, verbally abuses name, family, religion, disability, or other individual characteristic of "target," laughs at, puts down, threatens, sexual joking and innuendo.

Indirect Bullying:

(Sometimes referred to as 'Social Bullying')

This form of bullying is harder to recognise and is often carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation): lies and spreads rumours, plays nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimics, deliberately leaves "target" out of activities, encourages others to socially exclude someone, damages someone's social reputation and social acceptance.

Cyber bullying:

Cyber bullying involves being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of social aggression using the Internet or other digital technologies including phones. Some of the main forms of cyberbullying include:

- Flaming: online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages
- Harassment: Repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages
- Denigration: Posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
- Outing: Sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online
- Exclusion: Intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
- Cyberstalking: Repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear.

Racial discrimination includes:

☞ deliberate or repeated racist comments, gestures, or any other conduct which hurts people based on their nationality, country of origin, colour of skin, ancestry or any related beliefs or behaviours.

Faith discrimination includes:

☞ belittling another's religion, putting down or ridiculing another's faith and/or practice of their beliefs.

Sex-based discrimination includes:

- *Sexist discrimination* - behaviour which insists that gender stereotypes be maintained.
- *Sexual Harassment* - sexual behaviour which is deliberate, uninvited, unwelcome and which is perceived by the recipient to be embarrassing, offensive, demeaning or compromising.
- *Sexual Assault* - a term which covers a number of criminal offences, such as indecent assault, aggravated sexual assault, sexual intercourse with a young person under seventeen years of age and rape. ***The Child Protection Policy and Procedures must be applied to all issues relating to sexual abuse.***

Disability discrimination includes:

- *Disability discrimination* - treating a person with a disability less favourably merely because they have that particular disability.
- *Disability harassment* - embarrassing, hurtful, offensive and demeaning treatment of a person merely on the basis that that person has a disability.

Harassment of any kind is unwanted and unwelcome.

YOU CAN ACT AGAINST BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

If **you** are guilty of bullying, harassment and discrimination, stop now!
Consider speaking with any of the people listed below in "What can I do?"

If **you** witness bullying, harassment and discrimination you **can** do something about it and thereby protect others.

- ☞ Change your friendship group if it becomes involved in bullying or hurting others.
- ☞ Report bullying, harassment and discrimination so that both the bullies and victims can receive help.

If **you** are being bullied, harassed and discriminated against, **you can** take action.

The aim of the following procedure is to stop bullying, harassment and discrimination by helping you to resolve the situation with the other person(s). It is best if the bullying, harassment and discrimination can be stopped by working it out, through discussion, repentance, forgiveness and acceptance to restore positive relations.

WHAT CAN I DO ?

Act Alone:

- Approach the person who is harassing you and request that the offending behaviour stops.
- You may choose to do nothing. However, bullying, harassment and discrimination could continue.

Share the Problem:

- Discuss the situation with a friend, parent, brother, sister, teacher, principal or anyone with whom you feel comfortable.
- Discuss the situation with a Chaplain.
- Refer the situation to any one of the **contact people listed below:**
 - Class Teacher (P-6) or your Pastoral Care Group Teacher (7-12)
 - Head of House, College Pastor or School Counsellor
 - Deputy Head of Junior School (P-6), Director of Students (7-12)
 - Head of Junior School, Head of Middle School, Head of Senior School.
 - Principal

Action for staff is to be consistent with the Grievance Procedures for the College.

WHAT NEXT ?

- You may simply wish to discuss the situation with one of the **contact people** listed above.
- If you wish, they will help you consider appropriate action.
- You may approach the person who is harassing you with one of these people.

OR

They will approach the person(s) on your behalf.

OR

A “no blame” mediation interview can be set up.

OR

A “community accountability” conference can be organised.

REMEMBER

- (i) Confidentiality will be respected at all times unless you say otherwise.
- (ii) You may stop or start at any point in the grievance procedure. In all cases the person dealing with the complaint will not take any action without your permission.
- (iii) Students may involve parents at any stage.

Students should also be aware that, in regard to points (i) and (ii), teachers are legally required to notify Child Protection agencies if they believe on reasonable grounds, that a child suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child’s parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from such harm.

OUTCOMES OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

- The School views bullying, harassment and discrimination as a serious matter and offenders may ultimately be dealt with under the school’s Behaviour Management Policy. However, the primary aim of any intervention will be to restore positive relationships, to heal hurt and to establish a renewed understanding of our life together in a Christian community.
- In very general terms, after thorough investigation, the College will deal with student bullying, harassment and discrimination issues in a 3 level manner:
 - Level 1: First instance: no blame counselling
 - Level 2 Continued instances: Continued no blame counselling/shared concern plus parents contacted and informed of instances and that continued instances will necessitate sanctions
 - Level 3 Further instances or instances of a most serious nature. Parents informed and sanctions in place.
- ❖ *In all instances support must be provided for the victim as well as action in regard to the perpetrator.*
- The school will treat very seriously any case of retaliation against a person for reporting harassment.
- Repeated acts of student bullying, harassment and discrimination will result in suspension and finally the withdrawal of enrolment if unacceptable behaviour continues.
- Acts of harassment between staff will be dealt with according to the Faith Lutheran College Grievance Procedures.

Adopted by College Council 3-6-09