

# Statement on Bullying and Harassment

## (from College Diary)



The following statement on bullying and harassment emphasises the intention of Living Waters Lutheran College to make our community a safe place to be. The College is concerned with relationships and continues to develop practical measures to develop and preserve positive relationships.

Through this statement we provide a common understanding of what the school considers as bullying and harassment to enable us to work with students who are bullied or harassed and those who are bullying and harassing.

### **Making Our Community a Safe Place -Statement on Bullying and Harassment**

Living Waters strives to be a community where each person is valued and cared for as God values and cares for us. We strive to care, encourage, support and forgive each other as Jesus does us. Our community cares for, encourages, supports and forgives each other in the way Jesus showed us. All members of our community - teachers, students, parents, ancillary staff, voluntary workers and student teachers - have the right to feel safe and protected and free from bullying, harassment and discrimination.

We all have a responsibility to build and maintain a community in which we:

- are treated fairly by fellow students and staff (*and therefore show respect for each other*)
- feel safe and secure (*and therefore treat each other with kindness and support*)
- learn and grow to our full potential (*and therefore support, encourage and serve each other in our work*)
- feel valued, accepted and cared for as unique individuals (*and therefore listen to each other, encouraging sensitive self-expression and acceptance of each other as we are*)
- have our own property (*and therefore respect and protect the property of others*)

### **Bullying**

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyberbullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying.

### **Harassment**

Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; marital, parenting or economic status; age; ability or disability and that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment.

Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour, or it may be a single act. It may be directed randomly or towards the same person/s. It may be intentional or unintentional (ie words or actions that offend and distress one person may be genuinely regarded by the person doing them as minor or harmless).

Harassment is unacceptable, but it would not be considered bullying if any one or more of the following three features were present.

- It occurred only once and was not part of a repeated pattern.
- It (genuinely) was not intended to offend, demean, annoy, alarm or abuse.
- It was not directed towards the same person/s each time.

(Safe Schools Hub –Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Education)

**Examples of Religious Harassment Includes:**

- Belittling another's religion, putting down or ridiculing another's faith and/or practice of their beliefs
- Hindering of others from expressing their faith freely and openly e.g. by subtle intimidation or deliberate distraction in worship, devotions, Quiet Time and discussions
- Using language which shows disrespect of God's name

**Examples of Behavioural Harassment Includes:**

- Physical: e.g. pushing, hitting, spitting, damaging the property of others
- Verbal: either spoken or written; e.g. repeated 'put downs', calling names, ridiculing, threatening, spreading rumours or offensive comments
- Exclusion: e.g. deliberately leaving others out of friendship groups, discussions, team situations
- Graphic: e.g. defacing of diaries, pencil cases, school bags, property, graffiti
- Extortion: e.g. demanding money, food or other belongings

**Examples of Racial Harassment Includes:**

- Deliberate or repeated racist comments, gestures, or any other conduct which hurts people, based on their nationality, colour of skin, ancestry or any other related cultural practices.

**Examples of Intellectual Harassment Includes:**

- Discrimination against those of exceptional talents and abilities
- Discrimination against those with limited talents and abilities and those with specific learning difficulties

**Examples of Disability Harassment Includes:**

- Demeaning a person on the basis of physical attributes, e.g. appearance or physical disability
- Treating a person with a disability less favourably merely because they have that particular disability

**Examples of Sex -Based Harassment Includes:**

- Sexist harassment: behaviours which insist that gender stereotypes be maintained and exercised in the school or workplace.
- Sexual Harassment: sexual behaviour which is deliberate, uninvited, threatening and which is perceived by the recipient to be embarrassing, offensive, demeaning or compromising. E.g. unwelcome touching or closeness.
- 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 17 years of age (or in specific circumstances under 18 years of age) and rape
- Sexual orientation: harassment based on sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status

**Bullying and Harassment of any kind is unwanted, unwelcome and unacceptable. It destroys relationships and hurts the community.**

**Outcomes of Bullying and Harassment:**

- The College views bullying and harassment as a serious matter and offenders may ultimately be dealt with as a matter of school discipline.
- The College will treat very seriously any case of retaliation against a person for reporting bullying and harassment.
- Serious repeated acts of bullying and harassment could result in suspension or your enrolment being seriously reviewed.

- By law the College is legally required to be a mandatory reporter. If the school believes on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer significant harm from physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from such harm, the relevant authorities and in some cases the police must become involved.

**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 as a Christian community.**

I have read, understand and agree to abide by the College's Statement on Bullying and Harassment.

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Student name

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Student signature

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Parent name

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Parent signature