



# **BUILDING A SAFE AND CARING COMMUNITY**

## **Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedures for Students**

### **Introduction**

1. St Andrews Lutheran College has a legal and moral responsibility to ensure that staff, students, volunteers and visitors are not subject to behaviours, practices or processes that may constitute harassment, discrimination, vilification, or victimisation and is therefore committed to developing an environment which promotes respect for persons, integrity, equitable treatment and natural justice.
2. **Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at St Andrews Lutheran College**
3. **St Andrews is committed to using Restorative Practices (see attached) to resolve conflict, repair harm and restore relationships.** Through these practices we seek to educate our staff, students and parent community in the skills of peace-making and conflict resolution.

### **Underlying Principles**

We recognize that conflict and misuse of power can occur in any community. In the light of this it is our intention that our policies and associated procedures:

- Seek to minimize the occurrence of conflicts and misuse of power by staff and students
- Seek to minimize the harm caused by conflicts and misuses of power that occur.
- Encourage a culture of transformation and restoration rather than a culture of blame and punishment.
- Be educative for staff, students and our parent community in the skills of peace-making and conflict resolution.
- Encourage personal values such as respect, compassion, responsibility etc
- Reflect best-practice as indicated by current research in relevant fields.
- Provide clear guidelines and sufficient support for staff, students, and parents to implement appropriate procedures that will provide community-building experiences, and also reinforce the ethos of St Andrews that embraces both the Law and the Gospel.



## Definition

**Harassment (or bullying)** is unwelcome conduct or language which makes a person or group feel hurt, humiliated (put down) or threatened.

If the person *feels* hurt, put down or threatened by the action then *it is harassment*, even if the person doing the action thinks it is “only a little thing” or just a joke.

Harassment includes:

- Physical actions e.g. pushing, hitting, spitting, damaging the property of others
- Verbal actions e.g. repeated put-downs, name-calling, ridiculing and threatening
- Non-verbal behaviour e.g. reference to physical appearance, making rude or threatening signs or faces
- Extortion e.g. demanding money, food or other belongings
- Exclusion e.g. hurting others by ignoring or isolating them or spreading rumours about them
- Racial, cultural, religious or disability discrimination
- Offensive electronic communication e.g. via email, SMS or website
- Sexual harassment e.g. sexual behaviour
- Sexual harassment: unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature and includes patting, pinching or touching in a sexual way, unnecessary familiarity such as deliberately brushing against a person, sexual propositions, suggestive comments about a person’s appearance or body, unwelcome remarks about a person’s sex or private life.

Note: Bullying by a group, by someone who is stronger or larger or bullying that targets persons with an impairment or disability is particularly serious and will be dealt with accordingly.

## PROCEDURES: ADVICE TO STUDENTS

### What to do if you are being bullied or harassed

#### (ICR – Ignore, Challenge, Report)

1. **Name it:**  
Name your feelings to yourself e.g. I feel hurt or put down.
2. **IGNORE it:**  
If it is very minor - try to ignore it in the first instance. If it is very hurtful, proceed to one of the steps below.
3. **CHALLENGE it: Speak to the person harassing you**  
Tell him or her “When you do A, B, C, I feel..... This is harassment. Please stop it.”
4. **Share it:**  
Discuss the problem with a friend, parents or teacher.
5. **REPORT it: If it doesn’t stop**  
Speak to your Care Group teacher, Counsellor, Dean of Students or Deputy Principal.

## What the school will do if you report bullying or harassment

1. Staff will discuss with you how you want the matter handled.
2. If staff are to speak to the person they will speak to them first in a counselling way, directing them to stop the behaviour and warning them of disciplinary consequences if it continues.
3. Where appropriate, school staff may make use of No Blame strategies that involve peer support (such as Shared Concern and Support Group) to help solve the problem.
4. Depending on the circumstances staff may encourage you to be involved in a Round Table (mediation session) with the other person involved. You would only be involved in this if you feel comfortable with the idea and if an experienced staff member manages the discussion. Sometimes your parents may be invited to be involved as well.
5. In their support of you, staff will focus on what can be done to repair harm that may have occurred and how to restore relationships.
6. If the behaviour continues the person will be disciplined. This will depend on the severity of the problem and how long it has continued. Discipline may include community service, detentions, suspension from school or even exclusion.

**If you feel you may be subject to sexual harassment by a staff member, school volunteer or student you should report the matter immediately to your parents or a trusted staff member. Counsellor Steve Brady and Pastor Terry Unger are the appointed Child Protection Officers for the College, and you could approach one of them. If you prefer, you may contact 1800 644 628.** This number has been set up by the Lutheran Church of Australia to allow any person to have access to an outside, independent and confidential agency to assess situations, offer advice and, if necessary, institute proceedings.

## What you should do to prevent harassment

When you see someone having a hard time:

- Don't join in
- Don't smile or laugh to show that you agree with what is going on
- Tell your classmates and others you don't like what is going on
- Report what is going on to a teacher straight away
- Go up to the student to see if they are OK.
- Take the person to a safe place and make sure they are doing fine.
- Be aware of the consequences of bullying behaviour
- Be courageous – Stand up for others

.....see attachment over

## Attachment: RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

**(“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” Romans 12:18 NIV.)**

Restorative Practices (RP) is a philosophy and continuum of processes that is based on the premise that repairing harm done to people and relationships is a very effective way to resolve conflict, influence positive behaviour and build a safe, productive and caring community). A core belief is that the wrongdoings and misbehaviors that bring disruptions to classrooms, and the hurtful behaviours that are so often associated with conflict, are primarily not just “breaking rules”, but actually result in harm to individuals, groups and the whole school community.

In a school setting, restoration of relationships for effective learning is the ultimate goal of restorative practices.

In response to this, RP encourages a profound fairness, and a culture of listening across our school community to bring about resolution to conflict and healing. It is based on core values that build an ethos of respect, inclusion, accountability, taking responsibility, commitment to relationships and the development of social and emotional competencies. People involved utilize and learn lifelong skills such as active listening, facilitating dialogue and problem-solving, listening to and expressing emotion and developing personal awareness and responsibility.

RP is also based on the belief that the people involved in a conflict, wrongdoing, or misbehaviour, need to be actively involved in the process of resolution. Imposed (and purely punitive) solutions can be less effective and less educative.

The RP continuum of interventions and processes is applicable across all levels of our school community: from more formal responses such as our Round Tables to more informal Restorative Chats. It is the cornerstone of our anti-bullying, behaviour management and pastoral care procedures and policies. Staff, students, and parents are all encouraged to participate in a “restorative pedagogy” that builds a school culture that is fair, safe, and encourages effective learning.

### References:

(Matthew 18:15-20)

*Restorative Approaches and Practices*. Retrieved May 19 2008, from [www.transformingconflict.org](http://www.transformingconflict.org)

Thorsborne, M., & Vinegrad, D. (2006) *Restorative Practices in Schools: Rethinking behaviour management* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Queenscliff, Victoria : Inyahead Press