



# Dealing with Bullying, Aggression and Violence (Students)

Version	5
Short description	As a Catholic learning community, Lumen Christi College seeks to exemplify the Gospel values by fostering a safe and supportive learning environment where each person is valued as unique and treated with absolute dignity and respect. Bullying and harassment are not acceptable in such an environment.
Relevant to	All students
Authority	This Policy has been approved by the Leadership Team
Responsible officer	Deputy Principal Pastoral Care
Responsible office	
Date introduced	2008
Date(s) modified	2010, 2013, 2014, 2018
Next scheduled review date	2021
Related College documents	Code of Conduct Behaviour Management Policy
Other Related documents	Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying Policy Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Child Abuse Policy Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Management of Confidential Information in Schools Policy Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Exclusion of Students for Disciplinary Reasons Policy Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, Framework for the Development of Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools (2007) Framework for Schools Dealing with Bullying Available on request: Friendly Schools and Families (Acerpress) The National Safe Schools Framework
References	Rigby, K (2001). Stop the Bullying. A Handbook for Schools. ACER, Australia Curriculum Corporation (2000), Mind Matters, Commonwealth of Australia National Safe Schools Framework (2003, revised 2011. Education Services Australia as the legal entity for the Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs [MCEECDYA]).

## **Lumen Christi College Dealing with Bullying, Aggression and Violence (Students)**

### **Introduction:**

Catholic education is central to the formation of a just and caring civil society. In keeping with Catholic education, the mission at Lumen Christi College is to provide a Christian community environment, which will nurture the development of each student's intellectual, physical, social, emotional and spiritual development.

As a Catholic learning community, Lumen Christi College seeks to exemplify the Gospel values by fostering a safe and supportive learning environment where each person is valued as unique and treated with absolute dignity and respect. Bullying and harassment are not acceptable in such an environment.

The College is committed to eliminating bullying in all its forms and providing help through teaching skills which show respect for self and others to those who are bullied and who bully. Each student at Lumen Christi College is expected to develop a high standard of courtesy, and concern for others and a sense of cooperation. To this end we designate the whole College environment a '*Bully Free – No Put Down Zone*' and state our ongoing commitment to developing a culture that demonstrates:

- The practice of settling differences through mediation and problem-solving approaches.
- The eradication of power imbalances that foster bullying type behaviours.
- The involvement and commitment of every member of the school community in challenging witnessed or known incidents of bullying.
- A climate where asking for help with bullying issues is encouraged and accepted as normal.

School behaviour must demonstrate respect for self and others in order that school may be a safe place for all students. This includes interactions whilst at the College and away from the College, including out of school hours. At Lumen Christi College any behaviour that shows disrespect is unacceptable. It is necessary for the College to identify and to take action in regard to bullying.

All students have the right to feel safe and all members of the College community have a responsibility in relation to safety issues (including cybersafety, bullying, harassment, aggression and violence) that occur at school, outside of school hours and off College grounds, or that involve or affect students and staff.

### **Rationale:**

Catholic schools have a responsibility to provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person and, therefore, aim to encourage the development of positive relationships between students to reduce all forms of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. The policies and practices that a school employs should enhance the dignity of the human person and reflect the Principles of Pastoral Care as espoused in the Pastoral Care Framework (2007).

Learning outcomes, physical health, emotional, psychological and spiritual wellbeing can be adversely affected by bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. Students who are bullied, subject to aggression or harassed tend to have poorer health, lower self-esteem, more interpersonal difficulties, higher levels of loneliness, depression, suicidal ideation and increased anxiety. They are also more likely to have a dislike of and want to avoid school, higher absenteeism and lower academic competence. The effects of bullying can begin early in life and, for some, last a lifetime.

The Australian Government's National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) adopts a whole school approach to safety and wellbeing. It provides a comprehensive range of evidence-informed practices to guide schools in preventing and responding to incidents of harassment, aggression, violence and bullying and to implement their responsibilities in relation to child protection issues.

The National Safe Schools Framework is based on the following overarching vision:

*All Australian schools are safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote student wellbeing.*

In the NSSF, a safe and supportive school is described in the following way:

*In a safe and supportive school, the risk from all types of harm is minimised, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel respected and included and can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety or wellbeing.*

The Guiding Principles of the National Safe Schools framework

This Framework is underpinned by the following guiding principles that represent fundamental beliefs about safe, supportive and respectful school communities. These guiding principles emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a pre-requisite for effective learning in all school settings.

Lumen Christi College:

- Affirms the rights of all members of the College community to feel safe and be safe at school.
- Acknowledges that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing and effective learning.
- Accepts responsibility for developing and sustaining safe and supportive learning and teaching communities that also fulfil the College's child protection responsibilities.
- Encourages the active participation of all College community members in developing and maintaining a safe school community where diversity is valued.
- Actively supports young people to develop understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe.
- Commits to developing a safe College community through a whole-school and evidence-based approach.

To implement the NSSF, Lumen Christi College has established the following nine key elements as described in the Framework:

1. Leadership commitment to a safe school.
2. A supportive and connected school culture.
3. Policies and procedures.
4. Professional learning.
5. Positive behaviour management.
6. Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum.
7. A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership.
8. Early intervention and targeted support.
9. Partnerships with families and community.

### **Definitions:**

*Bullying* is when; over a period of time, an individual or a group intentionally harm a person, who finds it hard to stop this behaviour from continuing.

*Bullying* can be characterised as behaviour that causes distress, not only at the time of the attack, but also by the threat of future attacks and hurts, threatens, embarrasses or intimidates someone – an imbalance of power (that is inappropriate and where there is intention to hurt). When a group or an individual uses their power to target or hurt another person repeatedly, this is bullying. There is an intention to cause fear, distress and/or harm. Bullying can occur between adults, between students, adult(s) to student(s) and vice-versa.

Bullying has the following characteristics:

- It is repetitive.
- It causes distress, not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks.
- It involves an imbalance of power (that is inappropriate and where there is an intention to hurt).
- It is defined by the effects on the victim, not the intent of the person(s) doing the bullying.
- It may be verbal, physical, social or psychological and includes all electronic forms.

The nature of bullying may be:

- Verbal - name-calling, put-downs, threats (spoken, written, electronic or cyber which may also apply to the following points), etc.
- Physical - hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects, stealing, etc.
- Social – ignoring, hiding, ostracising, etc.
- Psychological – stalking, threatening looks, spreading rumours, damaging possessions, etc.

Some Examples of Bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Using 'put-downs', belittling other's abilities and/or achievements.
- Any form of physical violence such as hitting, shoving, pushing or spitting on others.
- Using offensive names, teasing or spreading rumours about others or members of their families.
- Interfering with another person's property by stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying it.
- Hurtfully excluding others from a group.
- Making denigrating comments about a person's cultural, social or religious background or their appearance.
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about others.
- Using email, text messages, or other electronic forms against others, e.g. cyberbullying, cyber harassment and sexting.
- Stalking, dirty looks, threatening gestures or words.
- Forcing others to act against their will.

Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. (Adapted from Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy, Harassment in School, 1998). Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying.

Bullying and harassment are often thought of separately, however, both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on the grounds of 'difference'. These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, personality, age, marital status, parenting status, economic status, etc. (Bullying. No Way! website cited in the National Safe Schools Framework, 2003).

Unlike bullying and harassment, violence is not necessarily associated with an imbalance of power. It can occur between people of equal power. It implies extreme forcefulness, usually (but not always) of a physical kind. (Rigby, cited in the NSSF, 2003).

The term 'Bullying' used throughout this document encompasses any or all of the above characteristics, including acts of aggression and violence, whether incidents occur during school hours or out of school hours.

### **Principles:**

Lumen Christi College aims to provide a safe and supportive environment where the 6 guiding principles and 9 key elements of the National Safe Schools Framework are practiced.

Lumen Christi College has a duty of care to its students and aims to:

- Act to prevent instances of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence, encourage socially appropriate behaviour using positive behaviour management and direct teaching of curriculum in areas such as interpersonal and self-management skills.
- Promote respect for self and others.
- Develop physical/emotional well-being and resiliency.
- Develop interpersonal skills and positive mental health.

Through quality leadership and role modelling, Lumen Christi College has implemented strategies to respond to all allegations of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence to find resolution to facilitate strategy implementations and sustained change, together with a whole-school community approach that is consistent with the Pastoral Care Framework, the College's pastoral care practices and Evangelisation plan, and with partners with parents and other agencies. This includes involving those who bully or aggress and those who are bullied or subject to aggression and which includes the early and appropriate involvement of parents. When bullying, harassment, aggression and violence occurs outside of school hours and impact on a student's learning and behaviour at school, the College will take action to support the continued wellbeing of those involved.

All bullying, harassment, aggression and violence shall be responded to. When bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are ignored or overlooked, it serves to condone or reinforce the behaviour. Bystanders, (those who observe bullying) can encourage or assist those who bully simply by doing nothing.

While the aim of the College is to promote and encourage positive behaviour, the College's policy and procedures contain clear statements regarding the range of appropriate consequences that may be applicable for unacceptable behaviour. In looking at consequences relating to specific issues, consideration is given to other circumstances which may have bearing such as family or mental health matters.

All parties to incidents of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence will be offered appropriate support.

### **Procedures:**

Lumen Christi College has a 'Whole School Approach' to Bullying, harassment, aggression and violence , based on a comprehensive risk and needs assessment, which includes:

- Raise student awareness of the abusive nature of bullying and promote understanding of the potential seriousness of its effects.
- Encourage student bystanders and staff to break the code of silence that fosters bullying by challenging harassment in all its forms and reporting witnessed or known incidents of bullying.
- Deal with individuals who bully others in order to help them take responsibility for their behaviour and make a commitment to changing it. This can be done with the help of counselling available through the College. If behaviour is resistant and ongoing, strong action for the protection of other students will be implemented. Repeat offenders may face a period of suspension from the College and/or have an interview with the Deputy Principal Pastoral Care or Deputy Principal. Such an interview will also include the student's parents and may involve discussions about the continued enrolment of the student at the College.
- Support group members involved in bullying by teaching skills to counter peer pressure.
- Teach vulnerable students assertiveness skills and self-protective behaviours to reduce victimisation.

The College considers that a supportive environment and positive relationships are key elements of maintaining connectedness to the College for all students, staff and parents. The College will address the resolution of bullying incidents involving those who bully or aggress and those who are bullied or subject to aggression and will include the early and appropriate involvement of parents. The College will facilitate the support and restoration to wellbeing of students who have been harmed by hurtful behaviour. This includes working with parents and families to assist in retaining a connectedness to College and facilitating reintegration for those whose attendance may have lapsed as a consequence of bullying, harassment, aggression or violence. It also includes the amelioration of the behaviour and attitudes of students who bully.

Lumen Christi College does not tolerate bullying, harassment, aggression or violence. Staff, students and parents all have a role to play in taking a proactive stance to promote safety and well-being of all students by being aware of the signs and symptoms of bullying, aggression and/or violence.

Signs of Bullying - For the victim, bullying can result in any number of the following effects:

- Social withdrawal.
- Mood swings.
- Sleep disturbance.
- Disruptive behaviour.

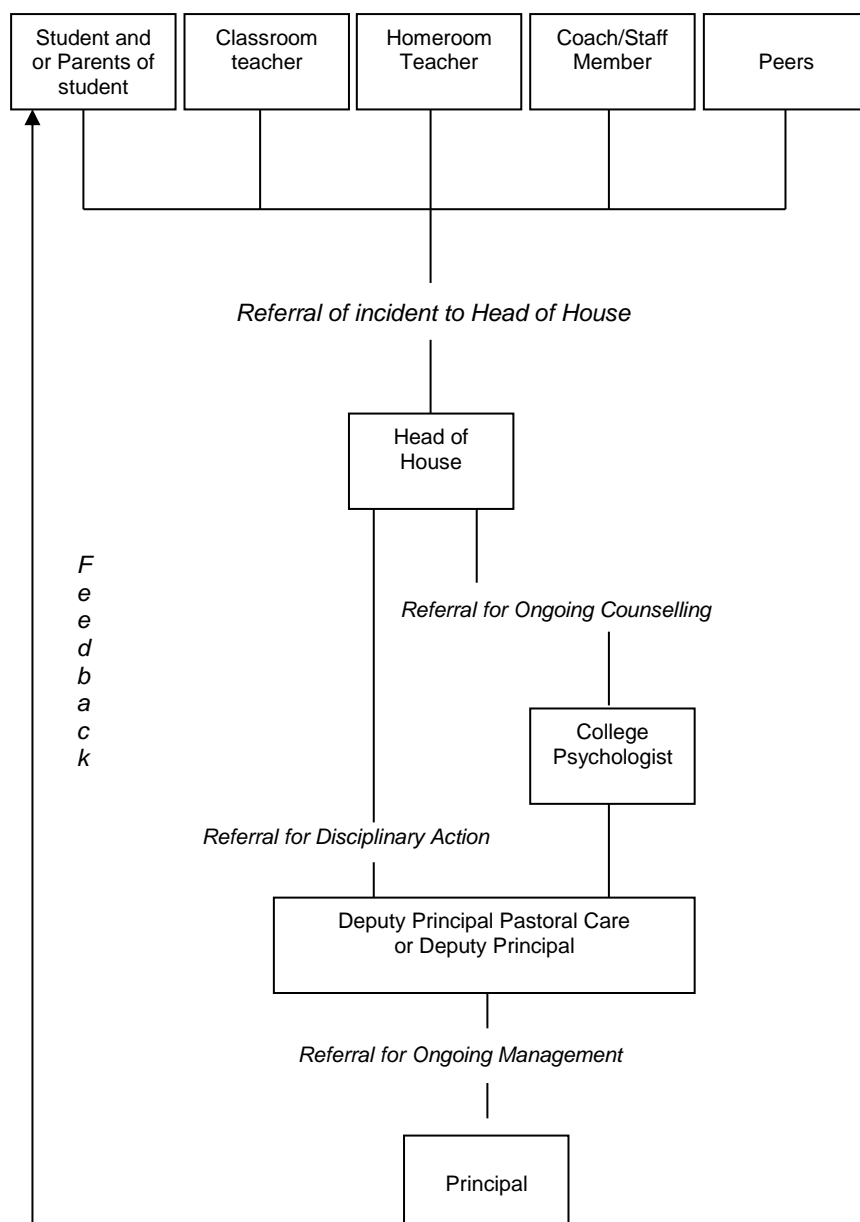
- Truancy and/or lateness.
- Unwillingness to go to school.
- Anxiety.
- A pattern of headaches and stomach aches.
- Damaged clothing or bruising.
- Requests for money.
- Decline in work standards or output.

Assistance with bullying issues can be raised through the respective Head of House, the Deputy Principal of Pastoral or the Principal. Appropriate and confidential records of all parties will be maintained when collecting data for investigation into an allegation of bullying and will be used as a basis to facilitate evaluation and resolution of the report of bullying.

As staff, students and parents work together to create a 'Bully Free Zone', the holistic and optimal development of each student will be enhanced.

Incidents of bullying will be dealt with in accordance to the *Procedure for Dealing with Issues of Bullying* as laid out below.

#### Referral Process



#### Suggested Actions

- Active listening an affirmation.
- Management of initial incident.
- Strategy of 'Shared Concern'.
- Feedback to initial person/s.

- Active listening an affirmation.
- Management of initial incident.
- Strategy of 'Shared Concern'.
- Feedback to initial person/s.
- Regular follow up.
- Recording of relevant data.

- Active listening an affirmation.
- Management of initial incident.
- Strategy of 'Shared Concern'.
- Feedback to initial person/s.
- Regular follow up.
- Recording of relevant data.

- Management and resolution.
- Feedback to initial person/s.
- Regular follow up.
- Parent notification.