



**WILLIAM CAREY
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**

Anti-Bullying Policy

Version 1.2

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APPROVED BY	Senior Executive
DATE APPROVED	December 2025
MONITORED BY	Senior Executive
REVIEWED BY	Senior Executive
DATE FOR NEXT REVIEW	December 2026
STATUS	Active

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1. Purpose

To guide William Carey Christian School staff to ensure a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment for all students, and to manage instances of harassment, discrimination and bullying amongst students in an effective and consistent manner.

2. Biblical Doctrinal Statement

Each human being has been created in God's image as a unique person valuable to him. Even though our rebellion against God marred every aspect of our being so that we fall short of what he intends us to be, we are still image-bearers precious to him. This is shown most clearly in Jesus Christ giving his life for us when we couldn't help ourselves, satisfying God's justice so we could be reconciled to him. Every individual human being is worthy of respect and compassion, particularly those more vulnerable than others.

Human sinfulness affects the way we treat one another. Part of this is the rise of bullying as people give expression to their desire to exert power over and control others for their own benefit or pleasure. Bullying is a violation of God's will for us to love our neighbours as ourselves and a disrespect of someone valuable and precious to him.

As we seek to live God's way in his world, our desire is to protect people from bullying as far as we are able. Where bullying has occurred, we show God's love to the victim by supporting them to voice the problem and by providing care, compassion and justice. Sometimes the person may also need to be supported in repentance if they have been involved in any provocation.

The student who bullies must be treated with respect and appropriately supported by the School without minimising the seriousness of their actions or consequences. Those working with the student who bullies seek, with humility, to bring about repentance, forgiveness and remediation. They also seek to ensure the student who bullies learns and grows through the experience, committing to avoiding bullying behaviours for their own good and the good of the community.

All our policies and procedures to deal with bullying seek to uphold both compassion and justice in keeping with God's character shown to us through the gospel. Although we will be limited by human imperfection, we seek processes and outcomes which are reasonable and just, without perception of bias or favouritism, and which are accepted as such by the parties involved including the aggrieved victim and family.

Although we recognise that we will be limited in our efforts to bring perfect peace in human relationships, we strive for this as we long for the day when Christ will return to establish his kingdom where his people will live in perfect peace with him and with one another.

3. Overview

William Carey Christian School exists to transform lives by the proclamation of the gospel and the delivery of an excellent Christian education; accessible to the whole community. This mission statement informs the current policy in several ways.

Since the School is accessible to the whole community, the School community should be representative of the surrounding local community. As such, students enrolled will likely represent a diversity of different backgrounds, beliefs, and abilities. In this context of diversity, the current policy is designed to contribute

towards ensuring a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment for all students, and particularly for those from minority or disempowered groups who are more likely to experience forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying.

The School's mission to transform lives by the proclamation of the gospel and the delivery of an excellent Christian education is enhanced or diminished by the relationships that exist between students. For the gospel to transform lives, the gospel must be proclaimed frequently and accurately; however, the gospel must also be promoted in our community by being embedded in its practices and culture. A community which permits or ignores harassment, discrimination and bullying, fails to promote the gospel as it discounts the inherent value of people created in God's image and is an instance of injustice which may undermine the integrity of the gospel being proclaimed. For an excellent Christian education to transform lives, it is necessary to ensure a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment for all students. This does not only involve attempting to eliminate all forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying amongst students; it also involves helping students to value and establish respectful and compassionate relationships with their peers, as per the William Carey Christian School Community Attributes. It also involves helping students resolve instances of harassment, discrimination and bullying by applying appropriate consequences and restoring relationships where possible, whilst adhering to the principles of procedural fairness and restorative justice.

This current policy endeavours to outline William Carey Christian School's proactive practices to create a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment for all students, and reactive responses to instances of harassment, discrimination and bullying.

4. Policy Statement

This policy is structured by the following headings involved in the School's responses to allegations and instances of bullying: defining; preventing; identifying and reporting; investigating; resolving and restoring; monitoring and supporting; communicating; and recording

4.1 Defining

a) Harassment

- Harassment is defined as any form of behaviour that:
 - Is unwanted,
 - Offends, disrespects, humiliates or intimidates,
 - Creates a hostile environment (adapted from NSW Government, 2021).
- Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour, or it may be just a single act.
- Harassment may take a variety of forms, including:
 - Physical,
 - Verbal,
 - Sexual,
 - Disability,
 - Racial,
 - Intellectual,
 - Exclusion,
 - Interfering with property,
 - Socio-emotional (e.g. spreading rumours, sharing information to impact social acceptance or reputation),

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- Cyber.
- Cyber harassment is the use of technology to hurt an individual or group socially, psychologically or even physically. Cyber harassment can occur in many ways, including:
 - Pranking,
 - Image sharing,
 - Sharing sexually explicit images,
 - Texting and emailing (e.g. sending insulting or threatening text messages or emails)
 - Sharing personal information (e.g. publishing online someone's private, personal or embarrassing information without permission, or spreading rumours online),
 - Assuming someone else's identity online (e.g. Assuming someone's identity online and negatively representing them in a way that damages their reputation or relationships),
 - Creating hate sites (e.g. creating hate sites, or messaging groups targeting a particular student, or implementing social exclusion campaigns on social networking sites),
 - Liking, sharing or linking to an offensive, derogatory or insulting post, comment, picture or website can be considered an instance of cyber harassment.

b) Discrimination

- Discrimination is when someone is treated unfairly because they belong to a particular group of people. Unlawful discrimination involves someone being treated unfairly on the basis of a protected characteristic (NSW Government, 2017).
- People 'discriminate', in the sense that they make choices, every day. These choices may seem unfair or even hurtful but they are not necessarily unlawfully discriminatory. Unlawful discrimination arises when someone is treated unfairly because of one of the following characteristics:
 - Age,
 - Disability,
 - Family/carer responsibilities,
 - Gender identity,
 - Sexual orientation,
 - Relationship status,
 - Race,
 - Sex (NSW Department of Education, 2020),
 - Religious belief / affiliation.

c) Bullying

- Bullying has three main features:
 - It involves a misuse of power in a relationship,
 - It is ongoing, intentional and repeated harassment,
 - It involves behaviours that can cause harm (adapted from NSW Department of Education (2021).
- Bullying can occur a variety of ways: it can be in person or online; obvious (overt) or hidden (covert); direct or indirect; or internal or external to school.
- Some behaviours, while not bullying, are conflicts that still need to be addressed and resolved. Some examples 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 incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.
- A singular incident of harassment or discrimination in most cases will not be classified as bullying. However, the School takes a strong stance against harassment and discrimination in our community. Instances of harassment or discrimination will be dealt with as outlined in the *Resolving and Restoring* section of this policy.

4.2 Preventing

School responsibilities, practices or processes

The School is responsible to ensure a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment for all students. This may include the following practices:

- Implementing bullying education programs in classrooms (e.g. Pastoral Care and PDHPE),
- Vigilant classroom, playground and transition supervision,
- Raising awareness about bullying via participation in programs and events (e.g. Bullying. No Way!), and engaging external providers to run or support activities or events.
- Ensuring relevant curricula adequately attend to issues surrounding bullying (e.g. Peer Support, Pastoral Care Program, PDHPE curriculum), including a School run timetabled Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) program in Primary and Years 7 - 8 'Second Steps'.
- Empowering students to act to stop bullying if they witness it occurring (e.g. Be upstanders!)
- Informing and collaborating with families to ensure the School community takes a unified position against bullying and for safe, respectful relationships,
- Model and promote appropriate behaviour,
- Ensuring staff, parents and students are familiar with this policy,
- Maintain a website with information and support material related to bullying,
- Encouraging students to report incidents and assist them in adopting strategies to deal with bullying,
- Consent education.

Student responsibilities

Students are ultimately responsible for their relationships, particularly the way they treat each other. Students who relate in ways that undermine a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment, will receive consequences as part of a restorative justice process and in accordance with the WCCS Wellbeing Policy.

Parent responsibilities

Parents are responsible for teaching and modelling safe, respectful and inclusive relationships to their children at home. Ultimately, the values of our community will be expressed amongst our student population. Parents also play an important role in supporting their child to develop resilience so they can navigate everyday relational conflicts without dependence on adult intervention for social cohesion. However, parents also should encourage their children to report instances of harassment, discrimination and bullying without hesitation.

4.3 Identifying and Reporting

All members of the William Carey Christian School community share a responsibility to identify and report possible instances of harassment, discrimination and bullying. Some signs that a young person may be being bullied include:

- Not wanting to go to school,
- Have falling school grades,
- Changing their route to school or become frightened of walking to school,
- Changes in sleeping or eating patterns,
- Frequent tears, anger, mood swings and anxiety,
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts and scratches,
- Missing or damaged belongings or clothes,
- Asking for extra pocket money or food,
- Arriving home hungry (NSW Department of Education, 2021).

All suspected instances of bullying should be reported to the relevant classroom teacher (Primary School) or Year Adviser (High School). This assists the classroom teacher/Year Adviser in being able to identify any patterns occurring in relationships, helping them make a better judgement as to whether it is likely bullying is taking place. Classroom teachers and Year Advisers are expected to keep appropriate records and liaise with the relevant Assistant Deputy Principal (Primary School) or Dean of Students (High School) to determine whether there is a likely case for bullying, as defined earlier in this policy. In order to make this determination, an investigation is necessary.

4.4 Investigating

School responsibilities, practices or processes

The relevant Assistant Deputy Principal (Primary School) or Dean of Students (High School) is responsible for overseeing investigations into reports of bullying. This may involve the following actions:

- Interviewing students, parents and teachers as required (ensuring adequate support for those being interviewed as necessary to the situation),
- Collecting written statements from students, parents and teachers,
- Obtaining other forms of evidence (e.g. camera footage, screenshots),
- Reviewing historic records and notes related to the claims,
- Liaising with or deferring to external authorities (e.g. Police, Department of Communities and Justice).

In all investigations, the investigator must adhere to the principles of procedural fairness. This means an investigator must:

- Act fairly and without bias,
- Conduct an investigation without undue delay,
- Ensure the case is not investigated or determined by someone with a conflict of interest,
- Ensure the outcome is supported by evidence,
- Take steps to maintain the confidentiality for the sake of all parties involved in the investigation.

Student and parent responsibilities

Students and parents are expected to cooperate with investigations into bullying by being honest and transparent. Students and parents are expected to take seriously any reports of bullying their child makes to them.

If a parent or student is not satisfied with an investigation, they may take their complaint to the Deputy Principal. This may prompt another or further investigation by the Deputy Principal. If this does not resolve the issue, parents should write a formal complaint to the Principal. At any stage, parents should feel free to contact the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board, the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Police or

any other relevant authority depending on the circumstances. Despite this allowance, the best outcomes will likely occur through collaboration between the School and families in consultation with relevant external bodies where necessary.

4.5 Resolving and Restoring

It is important to note that instances of bullying will be dealt with on a case by case basis. If bullying was dealt with using a formulaic approach, it would likely do more harm to students and their ongoing relationships. Instead, this policy provides guidance for teachers, and encourages them to collaborate with staff, students and parents as they use their professional judgement to intervene in ways that acknowledge the uniqueness of each relationship, person and situation. The aim of this approach is to ensure equity and restoration of relationships, wherever possible.

School responsibilities, practices or processes

If the relevant Assistant Deputy Principal (Primary School) or Dean of Students (High School) determines there is not enough evidence to conclude that there is a likely case of bullying, making it an instance of harassment or discrimination, the following actions may be taken:

- Referral to Police or other external bodies (as necessary),
- Disciplinary action in keeping with the WCCS Wellbeing Policy,
- Mediation meetings to resolve conflict (if appropriate),
- Referral to counselling for victims, observers or perpetrators (as required),
- Informal warnings to students involved (verbal warning),
- Communication to families involved of determination and actions taken,
- Communication to relevant staff of determination and need for ongoing monitoring,
- Communication to relevant WCCS staff of determination and need for ongoing monitoring,
- Appropriate record keeping.

If the relevant Assistant Deputy Principal (Primary School) or Dean of Students (High School) determines there is enough evidence to conclude that it is likely bullying has occurred, the following actions may be taken:

- Referral to Police or other external bodies (as necessary)
- Disciplinary action in keeping with the WCCS Wellbeing Policy
- Mediation meetings to resolve conflict (if appropriate)
- Referral to counselling for victims, observers or perpetrators (as required)
- Formal warnings to students involved (written warning)
- Communication to families involved of determination and actions taken
- Communication to relevant WCCS staff of determination and need for ongoing monitoring
- Risk assessments to minimise the likelihood of further bullying (if necessary)
- Appropriate record keeping

Student responsibilities

Students are expected to participate in restorative practices, which may include accepting consequences, apologising, committing to not repeat the offence and agreeing to certain restrictions or conditions upon their involvement in the community.

Parent responsibilities

Parents are expected to encourage their child to take responsibility for their actions and seek restoration (where appropriate) whether they are the student who is bullying or being bullied.

If a parent or student is not satisfied with actions taken as a result of an investigation, they may take their complaint to the Deputy Principal. This may prompt another or further investigation by the Deputy Principal. If this does not resolve the issue, parents should write a formal complaint to the Principal. At any stage, parents should feel free to contact the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board, the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Police or any other relevant authority depending on the circumstances. Despite this allowance, the best outcomes will likely occur through collaboration between the School and families in consultation with relevant external bodies where necessary.

4.6 Monitoring and Supporting

School responsibilities, practices or processes

WCCS Staff are responsible for monitoring and supporting students when there has been an alleged or confirmed instance of bullying. WCCS Staff may monitor bullying situations by:

- Observing interactions between students,
- Checking-in with students via informal conversations,
- Counselling for possible victims, observers or perpetrators (as required),
- Monitoring students for ongoing signs of bullying (as listed in *c. Identifying and Reporting*),
- Informing the relevant classroom teacher (Primary School) or Year Adviser (High School) of incidents or patterns,
- Adhering to risk assessments to minimise the likelihood of further bullying (if available).

Student responsibilities

Students are expected to abide by any arrangements enacted by the School to avoid further instances of bullying (e.g. remaining in a designated area during Lunch).

Students are expected to keep parents and staff updated periodically as whether there has been any further instances of bullying. It is important students also update parents and staff when there has not been an incident. Students may inform their classroom teacher (Primary School) or Year Adviser (High School) of minor incidents or, for more serious incidents, students may inform the relevant Assistant Deputy Principal (Primary School) or Dean of Students (High School).

Parent responsibilities

Parents should continue to monitor their child for signs of distress resulting from being involved in an instance of bullying. Parents should seek feedback from their child periodically to ascertain whether the bullying has continued or ceased, communicating with school as necessary.

4.7 Communicating

School responsibilities, practices or processes

It is the School's responsibility to ensure communication is clear between students, staff and families. This communication should ensure all relevant stakeholders are updated as to the progress and outcome of an investigation as well as the actions taken as a result. Some mechanisms the School may use to communicate with students, staff and families include:

- Emails,
- Phone calls,
- Meetings.

Student and parent responsibilities

Students and parents are advised to communicate with each other at home to monitor a relationship after bullying. Parents are expected to communicate with staff when there are relevant updates following a case of bullying. Students and parents can communicate with staff via emails, phone calls or meetings as preferable.

4.8 Recording

School responsibilities, practices or processes

WCCS Staff are responsible for ensuring adequate records are kept following a report or investigation of bullying. Some mechanisms staff may use to record reports or investigations of bullying include:

- Compass entries under Create a Chronicle Entry,
- Compass entries marked as confidential (if possible and appropriate),
- Saving files on Compass, OneNote and/or SharePoint drives,
- Filing reports, statements, investigation findings and actions in student files.

5. Police Contact Details

Senior Constable - Alyssa BRIGGS

Youth Officer

Liverpool City Police Area Command

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02 9607 1799

Senior Constable - Daniel BEARDSHAW

Youth Officer

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Constable - Sarah STANNETT

Youth Engagement Officer

Youth Command - Liverpool PCYC

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