# COLUMBA CATHOLIC COLLEGE
# BULLYING - PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING STUDENT/STUDENT BULLYING

The procedures have four defined stages:

1. Identification of Bullying Behaviours and a Bully
2. Documenting Incidents of Bullying Behaviour
3. Responding to and Documenting Established Cases of Bullying
4. Responding to and Documenting Repeated Cases of Bullying

**STAGE ONE: IDENTIFICATION OF BULLYING BEHAVIOURS**

There are **two key criteria** that must be met to warrant an accusation of bullying:

1. There must be a power imbalance between the bully and the victim. This imbalance may take the form of:
   - Size imbalance where one student is taller, more stoic or outweighs the other student.
   - Age imbalance where one student is older or in a different year level to the victim.
   - Ability imbalance which includes academic, sporting, emotional, intellectual and physical ability to participate in school / residential related activities.
   - Social Power imbalance where popularity and status are seen to add power to the bully's presence.
2. There must be a pattern of repeated attacks on a specific student or groups of students.

If a case of bullying is found to exist, it is important to categorise the bullying into one or more of the following types:

- Physical Bullying – hair pulling, punching, kicking, uninvited touching,
- Verbal/Written Bullying – teasing, putdowns, sarcasm, verbal abuse; including swearing, written items including letters, notes and graffiti.
- Social Bullying – exclusion, purposefully leaving the student out of social groups and activities, ignoring the student
- Psychological or Emotional Bullying – false accusations, malicious teasing, name calling, remarks about the victim's sexuality or presumed sexual preference, remarks about the victim's family or cultural backgrounds.
- Cyber Bullying – email teasing, harassment, taunts and threats, internet chat rooms, mobile phone messaging, photographic imaging / messaging / manipulation

It is also important to note that bullying can be a group activity and is not always confined to one-on-one altercations.

**IDENTIFICATION OF A BULLY**

Bullies come in all shapes and sizes and while the assumption exists that these students have low self-esteem, research indicates that bullies are more likely to have 'inflated self-esteem'. There are three core groups that bullies generally fit into:

- Naturally Arrogant – These bullies generally present with low levels of empathy and sympathy, they see bullying as a game and take pleasure in the pain they inflict on the victim.
- Desire Social Power – They may not initiate the bullying but they allow themselves to be caught up in it as a way of maintaining status in their peer group.
- Bystanders – These students do not actively participate, however they don't move to stop the bullying either. Their lack of action serves as peer approval for the bully's behaviour.

**STAGE TWO: DOCUMENTING INCIDENTS AND INITIAL RESPONSE TO BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**

- Step 1: Staff who observe incidents or receive reports of bullying or bullying behaviour must promptly document the incident/report in the appropriate Compass Chronicle or Reach Pastoral Report. Particular attention should be paid to the accuracy of information pertaining to the student(s) involved, including bystanders. Staff should also provide details as to their response to the incident/report.
- Step 2: The Pastoral Leader (PL)/Head of Boarding (HOB)/Classroom Teacher (Primary) (CT) will inspect the behaviour notes and follow-up with students who have been involved in bullying behaviours,

including if practicable bystanders. The PL/HOB/CT will speak with both victim and offending student, emphasising the seriousness of the issue. The PL/HOB/CT will issue appropriate consequences to students.

- Step 3: The PL/HOB/CT will record the details of the follow-up in the applicable Compass Chronicle notes/Reach Pastoral notes.
- Step 4: The DPPR or DP-SMC will monitor Compass Chronicle notes/Reach Pastoral notes.
- Step 5: The DPPR or DP-SMC will keep the Principal informed.

**STAGE THREE: RESPONDING TO AND DOCUMENTING ESTABLISHED CASES OF BULLYING**

- Step 1: The PL/HOB/CT will inform the DP-P&R of their concerns regarding a pattern of bullying behaviour with explicit reference to the documentation.
- Step 2: The DPPR or DP-SMC will investigate the report and conduct interviews with all parties.
- Step 3: The offending student – The DPPR will arrange a meeting with the parent(s) / guardian(s) / caregiver(s) of the offending student. The offending student will be issued with a two (2) day internal suspension. The students may be referred to the College Counsellor.
- Step 4: VICTIM – The DPPR will make contact with the parent(s) / guardian(s) / caregiver(s) of the victim to inform them of the action(s) taken. The student will be offered to consult with the College counsellor.

**STAGE FOUR: RESPONDING TO AND DOCUMENTING REPEATED CASES OF BULLYING**

- Step 1: The DPPR or DP-SMC will investigate the report and conduct interviews with all parties, including bystanders.
- Step 2: All documentation will be made available to the Principal for consideration.
- Step 3: A meeting will be arranged with the Principal and the parent(s) / guardian(s) / caregiver(s) of the offending student. The Principal will make the final decision regarding the College response to the incident, which will be in accordance with the College document Suspension & Expulsion: Procedures (2006). The Principal will make any necessary notification to TCEO and/or the Queensland Police.
- Step 4: The Principal (or delegate) will make contact with the victim's parent(s) / guardian(s) / caregiver(s) in order to notify them of the outcome. The student will be offered to consult with the College Counsellor.

This procedure for addressing student / student bullying need to be read in conjunction with the TCEO Anti-Bullying Policy.

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