

 CREST EDUCATION POLICY	TITLE	CREST ANTI- BULLYING & HARASSMENT – STUDENTS POLICY		
	VERSION	13/2021		
	LOCATION	STUDENT		
	ISSUE DATE	OCTOBER 2021		
	REVIEW DATE	OCTOBER 2023		
	REVIEWED BY	EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL	RATIFIED	BOARD
PURPOSE:	To provide policy and procedure direction to all staff, students, parents and volunteers of the Educational Precinct.			
BACKGROUND:	Crest Education seeks to establish and maintain high level professional standards in relation to all activities within the Educational Precinct. This policy is in accord with the Crest Education 'Vision', 'Mission', 'Philosophy' and 'Key Commitments' documents as published and in line with Board Policy.			
RELATED DOCUMENTS:	Crest Child Safe Policy & Procedure Crest E-Smart Policy The law of the Commonwealth and Victoria including but not limited to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. <i>Education and Training Reform Act (2006)</i> ii. <i>Crimes Act 1958</i> iii. <i>Working with Children Act 2005</i> Crest Discipline Policy Crest Student Suspensions and Expulsions Policy			

ISSUES/COMMENT:

1. Preamble:

Crest Education Limited does not tolerate bullying or harassment in any form. All members of the Crest Education precinct, i.e. Hillcrest Christian College and Rivercrest Christian College (referred to individually and collectively as 'the College'), have the right to a safe and nurturing environment that promotes personal growth and positive self-esteem for all.

2. Definitions

For definition of terms including what is and is not considered bullying and harassment, refer to Appendix 1

3. Preventing bullying and harassment at Crest

Responsibilities of the College

The following measures will be taken to ensure a safe and positive environment for all Crest students:

- Adopting a zero-tolerance stance towards bullying and harassment
- Ongoing professional learning for staff on responding to bullying and harassment allegations.
- Increase the school community's awareness on the characteristics of bullying and harassment and suggested strategies for responding to any incidents that occur.
- The provision of an online bullying helpline and other useful anti bullying resources through Crest Connect.
- Providing programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Ensuring that classroom teachers communicate to students the school policy on bullying.
- Ensuring that the taught curriculum includes anti-bullying messages and strategies.
- Enabling student leadership teams to empower students to exercise a positive influence and be positive role models.
- The provision of structured activities to students during lunch breaks.
- Giving recognition to students who demonstrate positive behaviours towards their peers.
- Training staff in the use of restorative framework where appropriate.
- Support Structures eg. College Chaplains.

Responsibilities of students

- Refuse to be involved in any bullying situation. If you are present when bullying occurs:
 - If appropriate take some form of preventative action
 - Report the incident or suspected incident to staff and/or parents and help break down the code of secrecy

If students who are being bullied have the courage to speak out, they may help to reduce the pain for themselves and other potential victims.

Recommendations for parents

- Watch for signs of distress in their children, e.g. an unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches, missing equipment, requests for extra money, damaged clothing, or bruising
- Take an active interest in your child's social life and acquaintances, including online networks
- Advise your child to tell a staff member about the incident. If possible allow the child to report and deal with the situation themselves. The child can gain much respect through taking the initiative and dealing with the problem and reporting the incident without parental involvement
- Inform the College if bullying is suspected or if your child is reluctant to speak with staff
- Keep a written record (who, what, when, where, why, how). In cyber bullying cases, keep copies of any offensive emails or messages
- Do not encourage your child to retaliate
- Communicate to your child that parental involvement, if necessary, will only be appropriate for the situation
- Be willing to attend interviews at the College if their child is involved in any bullying incident
- Be willing to inform the College of any cases of suspected bullying – even if their child is directly/indirectly involved
- Work directly with staff to find effective solutions

4. Early Identification

- Staff should be observant of signs of bullying and, if observed, take appropriate action to address the behaviours observed, minimizing further risk to the victim. Staff should also report all observed bullying incidents involving students or student-reported bullying incidents to Heads of School who will maintain a register of bullying incidents and for any repeated examples.
- Students and staff are encouraged to report bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- Students can report to their teacher or a member of the College Wellbeing team, Year Level Coordinator or Head of School.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school directly if they become aware of a problem. Bullying and harassment concerns and complaints can be made informally, by telephone, face to face with relevant member of staff or formally in writing.
- Appropriate spaces will be available for students to discuss their concerns with a teacher at recess and lunchbreaks.
- If allegations involve students previously subject to formal disciplinary measures, then the allegation will immediately be escalated to the Head of School who will manage the response.

5. Formal Intervention

Where formal intervention is required, the College will uphold the following in its procedural fairness:

- i. The right to be heard
- ii. The right to know the purpose of the process, that the process will be followed, and that the procedures and its consequences will be undertaken with integrity.
- iii. The right to be fully informed of the allegations and to have an opportunity to respond.
- iv. The right to appeal
- v. The right for support through the intervention process, which may include a member of the College wellbeing team
- vi. Commit to ensure dispute resolution is treated fairly, confidentially and with transparency
- vii. Commit to endeavour to resolve as simply and quickly as possible

Responding to claims of Bullying

For specific details on processes and procedures when responding to bullying, please refer to the Crest Discipline Policy. In summary, responding to claims of bullying will involve the following actions:

- All incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented using the Case Notes template and records uploaded to individual student files.
- Students identified by others as alleged bullies will be informed of the allegations and have opportunity to respond.
- Both alleged bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support.
- Parents of all students involved will be contacted.
- Where deemed necessary, Level Four Discipline procedures, including Positive Behaviour Support Plans, may be implemented as per the CREST Discipline policy.
- In the case of cyberbullying, the College will assist to remove inappropriate content from all websites or digital technologies used for the purposes of bullying as per the CREST eSmart Policy
- In cases where bullying has persisted regardless of interventions, Level Five Discipline procedures, including suspension and expulsion, may be implemented. Please see the CREST Discipline Policy and External Suspensions and Expulsions policy for further information.
- Cases of bullying may trigger a Mandatory Report (see *Crest Child Safe Policy & Procedure*), a report to Victoria Police, a notification to the Victorian Institute of Teachers or other regulatory body.
- In the case of repeated bullying incidents, the allegations will be managed by the Head of School.

Responding to claims of Sexual Harassment

Allegations of sexual harassment are serious and will be treated as such by the College.

An allegation of sexual harassment will be deemed as requiring investigation when at least one of the following conditions is satisfied:

- A written complaint is received by an Executive leader.
- A staff member receives a direct and clearly articulated complaint of harassment, naming either the alleged perpetrator or the victim.
- A College staff member witnesses a situation, or hears reliable and verifiable information, naming either the alleged perpetrator or the victim, which strongly suggests a possible sexual harassment. The staff member, on witnessing or hearing such strongly suggestive evidence, is obliged to report what he or she has seen or heard to an Executive member.
- Procedures for investigating claims of sexual harassment will follow College procedures. Serious cases of sexual harassment may trigger a Mandatory Report (see *Crest Child Safe Policy & Procedure*), a report to Victoria Police, a notification to the Victorian Institute of Teachers or other regulatory body.

DIRECTION:

That all staff and volunteers follow this policy.

EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL

APPENDIX 1 – DEFINITION OF TERMS

Harassment can include behaviour such as:

- telling insulting jokes about particular racial groups
- sending explicit or sexually suggestive emails or text messages
- displaying racially offensive or pornographic posters or images
- making derogatory comments or taunts about someone's race
- asking intrusive questions about someone's personal life, including his or her sex life.

Bullying is a clear form of harassment and an abuse of power. Bullying refers to deliberate and repeated acts which intimidate others or which impact the safety and well-being of others.

Bullying and harassment can take many forms:

- **Physical:** Unnecessary physical contact against a person's will e.g. fighting, pushing, spitting, hitting, shoving, gestures, standing over or invading someone's personal space, forcing others to act against their will pinching, patting, brushing up against a person, touching, kissing or hugging, pushing, shoving or jostling including putting your hand or an object into someone's pocket. Physical harassment may be defined as unnecessary rough handling or physical force that may result in bodily injury, pain, intimidation or impairment. Unnecessarily confining someone is another example of physical harassment.
- **Verbal:** Verbal harassment or abuse involves words that attack or injure an individual, words that cause one to believe an untrue statement, or words that speak falsely of an individual. It includes name calling, offensive language, putting others or their family down directly or behind their backs, picking on people because of their culture, gender, social background or religion and humiliating someone through sarcasm or insults.
- **Victimisation:** Includes intimidation, including stand-over tactics, picking on others, threats to get people, repeated exclusion, rumours, interfering with another's property by stealing, damaging or destroying it, writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, extortion of money or food by force. In relation to sexual harassment it is against the law to victimise a person who:
 - has made a complaint or intends to make a complaint;
 - acts as a witness or intends to act as a witness; or
 - Supports a victim or intends to support a victim.
- **Sexual:** Any form of unwelcome sexual attention that either is intended to be humiliating, intimidating or offensive or occurs in circumstances where a reasonable person would have apprehended (understood) that it would have had that effect. This may occur in and across gender, age groups, nationalities and power structures. Sexual harassment has nothing to do with mutual attraction or consenting friendships. Sexual harassment can be verbal, physical, written or visual. Examples of sexual harassment may include:
 - the distribution or display of offensive pictures or written material;
 - repeated unwelcome requests for social outings or dates;
 - offensive comments about a person's physical appearance, dress or private life;
 - jokes, intrusive questioning, messages or telephone calls of a sexual nature;
 - direct propositioning, or subtle pressure for sexual favours;
 - unwelcome familiarity or physical contact such as patting, pinching, touching or staring; or
 - indecent exposure, sexual assault or rape
- **Exclusion bullying:** leaving people out of activities on purpose.

- **Racial discrimination:** of any kind is a form of bullying.
- **Emotional:** Emotional harassment is defined as emotional abuse which is acts or omissions that have caused or could cause serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional or mental disorders. This can take many forms such as belittling, domination, criticism, coldness, corrupting, cruelty, extreme inconsistency, repeated exposure to fear through harassment, ignoring, inappropriate control such as lack, over or inconsistent control, rejecting, isolating and terrorizing
- **Cyber bullying:** Bullying that takes place over digital devices such as mobile phones or computers. It can occur through sms, social media, or other online forums where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, sharing negative, harmful, false or embarrassing content about somebody else. It can include sharing personal or private information without consent. Some forms of cyberbullying can be considered as criminal or unlawful behaviour. (Refer to Crest E-Smart Policy)

What is not bullying

Note: Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management.

Mutual conflict: involves an argument or disagreement between people but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

Social rejection or dislike: is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Single- episode acts: of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours

Single-episode acts: of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards