Son Centre Christian College

Anti-Bullying and Harassment (including cyber-bullying)
Policy & Procedures

A. Rationale
Son Centre Christian College is committed to maintaining a work and student environment that reflects Christian relational values and practices. We expect every member of the school, from the youngest to oldest student and all our staff, board and parents, both to give and receive respect.

Our goal is for a school community where people feel safe from all kinds of harassment whether implied, or actual, physical or verbal. It is designed to define unacceptable behaviours, outline preventative strategies, and to prescribe procedures for dealing with perceived or alleged occurrences of those behaviours.

B. Definitions
Bullying is defined as an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying. Behaviours that do not constitute bullying 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.
However, these conflicts still need to be addressed and resolved.
Harassment is defined as any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) that is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.
Cyber-bullying is defined as bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as mobile phones, computers, tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages and websites.

Any bullying or harassment and misuse of power are both un-Christian and unacceptable in the Son Centre Christian College community. Leadership and working relationships are to be constrained by the Christian imperatives of respecting, caring for and serving others.

C. Forms of Bullying and Harassment
1. Physical
   Examples:
   • Pushing, hitting, fighting, punching, poking, spitting
• Hiding, damaging or destroying property
• Touching in sexually suggestive or offensive ways

2. Verbal
Examples:
• Comments about appearance, race, cultural beliefs, disability, weaknesses, family, etc.
• Put-downs, offensive names/sounds, teasing, taunting, rude comments, joking, mocking, mimicking, threats and shouting
• Public criticism or ridicule of another’s actions or appearance, particularly without having first given the person the dignity of discussing the issue personally and privately
• Malicious gossip, rumours or words to cause embarrassment

3. Non-verbal
Examples:
• Rude gestures
• Taunting looks or body language used to intimidate others

4. Extortion
Examples:
• Forcing students to hand over lunches/money
• Forcing students to do acts of service

5. Exclusion
Example:
• Excluding others from activities for the purpose to hurt, frighten, embarrass or humiliate

6. Pictures and Written Material
Examples:
• Insulting or vilifying notes or electronic messages (also see Internet Usage Policy) about or to a person
• The display or presentation of sexually suggestive or offensive pictures or materials with views to embarrass or give unwanted attention to a person
• Graffiti about others, including crude words or drawings

7. Cyberbullying
Examples:
• abusive texts and emails
• hurtful messages, images or videos
• imitating others online
• excluding others online
• humiliating others online
• nasty online gossip and chat

D. Preventative Strategies
1. Creating a healthy and positive school culture based on Christian love and respect for one another
Son Centre Christian College will aim to provide a caring school community in which students and staff feel cared about and are encouraged to care about each other. This is to be based on Christ's instruction for Christian community which is “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34 NIV)
It is also important that there are clear behavioural standards and codes of conduct for both staff and students. It is also the aim of the College to apply the Biblical principle for dealing with conflict and offence (Matthew 18:15-17). It is also our aim that students will learn to develop skills and attitudes for developing healthy and Godly relationships throughout the rest of their lives.

2. **Staff training and support**
   Teaching and non-teaching staff will undertake professional development in the areas of:
   - Having increased awareness and understanding of the College’s anti-bullying and harassment policy
   - Understanding their responsibility in adhering to the College policy and being behavioural role-models to the students
   - Identifying signs and symptoms of bullying and harassment, recognising severity and nature of bullying incidents and how to manage such incidents
   - Positive behaviour management
   - Be familiar with the National Safe Schools Framework

   Teaching staff will also undertake professional development in:
   - Resiliency and wellbeing programs being used within the school, including The Young Peacemaker’s Program
   - Cooperative learning methods and activities to be used to foster Godly and appropriate social behaviours
   - Teaching and learning activities to engage students in developmentally appropriate ways to address bullying and harassment and enhance student social skills

   All staff will also be involved in completing surveys and giving feedback on the effectiveness of the College policy.

3. **Whole school curriculum initiatives**
   There will be a commitment to running resiliency/wellbeing programs within the College curriculum. It is the aim of the College to develop within the whole curriculum the explicit teaching of Christian values, attitudes and behaviours. It is hoped that these will be integrated across all curriculum domains. Regular circle time sessions are also encouraged in each grade level to help students express their thoughts and feelings and learn skills for social situations. Continuing Professional Development and resources will be provided to assist staff in this practice.

4. **Pastoral care systems**
   It is the aim of all teaching and non-teaching staff to provide pastoral care for the students and for each other. We have two part-time chaplains that can provide opportunity for emotionally/socially at-risk students to receive some pastoral care in a small group setting, learn skills for working with and problem-solving with others, learn to take responsibility and develop confidence. The chaplains are also available to meet with staff who may need advice, support and pastoral care. Pastors of churches that the students attend can be contacted should extra support be needed for an individual student or family. Regular devotion times for both staff and students provide
opportunity for pastoral care to occur in the form of sharing and prayer. There is also leadership training for Grade 6 students.

5. Physical environment
There will be a continuing analysis of the College grounds and plans for ongoing improvements to be put in place. Things to be considered are:

- Design and Layout
  - Having knowledge of trouble spots and hidden areas
  - Developing strategies and plans to reduce problems
- Supervision
  - Monitoring the effectiveness of supervision
- Lunchtime activities
  - Variety of activities available
  - Adequate equipment
  - Equitable access to space and equipment

E. Procedures for dealing with bullying behaviour and harassment
Complaints concerning bullying and harassment must be responded to and investigated in a timely manner that respects the dignity and the privacy of those involved, whilst observing due process and procedural fairness.

- All students have the right to be heard and listened to and issues are to be resolved in a calm manner with as much time as necessary given to hearing what each student feels and assisting all students to feel more able to cope.
- The class teacher will investigate and respond to initial concerns, behaviours or reports of bullying or harassment in accordance with the Student Discipline Policy & Procedures. If it occurs in the playground, outside of class time or reported to another staff member, the class teacher will be informed and is required to follow up the situation.
- If the issue is considered significant, complex or unclear, the Principal will be informed, will investigate and take appropriate action in line with the Student Discipline Policy & Procedures. Parents of all students involved will be informed at this point.
- Students with identified bullying behaviour will take responsibility for their actions.
- The Principal will record all reported acts of bullying, investigations and follow-up meetings in the Behaviour Register.
- Continuing or more significant acts of bullying/harassment by an individual or a group will result in student(s) being interviewed by the Principal. Parents will be contacted again, and the student will be disciplined in a manner appropriate to a serious misdemeanour.
- The College chaplain(s) will be available to provide follow-up support and individual programs for those with identified bullying behaviours and those who have been bullied.
- Parents may be asked to initiate some counselling processes to help their child in this situation.
- If a student continues to display bullying behaviour or harassment towards others, the Principal may require that parents withdraw him/her from the College. This action will be taken if the Principal feels that there has been no positive response from the student or from the parents to the discipline and counselling process.
F. Procedures for dealing with cyber-bullying
The College reserves the right to determine whether incidents of cyber-bullying relate to the responsibility of the College. If determined the College has a role to play, we will:

- Ensure each student is safe and arrange support, including the involvement of the College chaplain(s).
- Support from staff should be provided on an ongoing basis with the agreement of the student and parent to assist the student to work through the effects of the cyber bullying and to help them develop and implement effective coping strategies.
- The student’s parents will be contacted to alert them to the issue, and ongoing concerns regarding the welfare of the student, and discuss the issue of how best to deal with it.
- Reassure the student that the College is taking the incident seriously and that the reported bullying will be acted on.
- Gather basic facts about the suspected cyber bullying and, if possible, identify the student(s) involved.
- Provide the following strategies to the student and parent to assist in managing the issue in the future:
  - don’t respond to any further messages/postings from the bully and, if possible, block any further correspondence from them
  - report any further correspondence from the bully to the parent and an agreed school contact
  - keep evidence of any bullying to assist with tracking down the bully and potentially reporting the matter to police
  - report any concerns to the administrator of the service used, including the mobile phone provider, website provider or internet service provider
- The College will follow its established approach to its incidents of bullying as outlined in Section E.

For the procedures of addressing allegation of bullying and harassment of a student by a member of the College Staff or Other Adult and Guidelines for a Mediation Meeting, please see Appendix A.

G. An Action Plan for Students
Are you harassing or bullying others?
The message is clear: STOP NOW! Harassment and bullying will not be tolerated.

Are you being harassed or bullied? There are positive steps you can take:

- Stand up for yourself. Tell the person harassing or bullying you to stop.
- Talk about your problem with your friends, or an older buddy, and ask them to support you.
- Talk about your problem with an adult; parent, family friend, pastor, teacher or counsellor.
- Report acts of bullying against you to your class teacher or Principal. Action will be taken to protect you, and deal with the offender once your case is found to be true. (If you report harassment/bullying, be very clear
and truthful, because it is a serious thing to accuse someone of harassing or bullying you).

**Are you being cyber-bullied?**
- Talk to someone you trust straight away—like a parent, sibling, uncle/aunt, teacher, College chaplain or friend
- Don’t retaliate or respond—they might use it against you
- Block the bully and change your privacy settings
- Report the abuse to the service and get others to as well
- Collect the evidence—keep mobile phone messages, take screen shots and print emails or social networking conversations

**H. Staff, Student and Parent Orientation**
The staff will be involved in one session each year where the spirit and details of this policy are explained and discussed.

Students will be instructed at College assemblies and in classes concerning their responsibilities and support available in matters of bullying and harassment.

Parents will be given the “Bullying Information Sheet for Parents” each year (see Appendix B). The issue will also be addressed in the Prep Information session at the beginning of the year.

**I. Monitoring and Evaluation**
The Bullying and Harassment Policy will be reviewed and modified on an ongoing basis. The staff and the parent community will be asked to comment on the effectiveness of the policy implementation and this feedback will be utilised to modify the process. Procedures to assist the evaluation are:

- Staff opinion survey
- Parent opinion survey
- Student survey

The College will identify indicators to assess the effectiveness of the strategies, programs and procedures they have in place to address bullying.
Appendix A

Procedures for Addressing Allegations of Bullying and Harassment of a student by a member of the School Staff or Other Adult

The student or parent(s) on behalf of the student should report the matter to the Principal. The following steps will be taken:

1. The Principal will meet with the parent(s) and student to clarify the allegation and inform them of the procedures in place within the College for the resolution of bullying and harassment issues. Full notes need to be made of this interview.

2. The Principal should meet with the staff member or other adult to discuss the issue and prepare for a meeting with the parent(s) and student.

3. The Principal will invite the parent(s), with the student, to meet with the staff member or other adult concerned to air the complaint and seek reconciliation and restitution.

4. If this meeting resolves the issue to the parent(s) and student satisfaction, no further action need be taken. The Principal will make a report of the meeting.

5. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, the Principal will ask the parent to make a written complaint.

6. The Principal will make further investigation of the issues surrounding the complaint with view to understanding with whom the fault(s), if any, lie.

7. The Principal will meet with the staff member or other adult against whom the complaint has been made, to:
   a. Show him/her the written complaint
   b. Invite the person to make a written reply to the allegations
   c. Inform him/her of the processes which will be followed to resolve the issue.

8. The Principal will then facilitate a Mediation Meeting. By agreement between the Principal and the parents, the student may or may not be involved in the Mediation Meeting.

9. If both parties agree to a Mediation Meeting, the Principal will facilitate such a meeting within 7 days of agreement.

10. If both parties do not agree to mediation, the Principal will determine one of the following courses of action:
   a. If there appears conclusive evidence of fault, the Principal will carry out necessary discipline action.
   b. If no clear fault can be established, the Principal may require the people concerned to show cause why they are not willing to attend a Mediation Meeting.

11. If the mediation process fails to produce its objectives, the following actions may be taken:
   • The Principal may give appropriate directions to either or both parties involved in the complaint.
   • The complainant may choose to take civil court action or make complaint to the relevant Industrial relations, Sexual Discrimination or Anti-Discrimination body.
The Mediation Meeting

Generally, the aim of the mediation meeting will be to resolve the issue at stake with minimal disruption to the people concerned and the life of the school. In particular, the objectives of the meeting will be:

- To facilitate open and honest communication between the parties
- To bring an awareness of the wrongdoing and its effect on people
- To facilitate repentance and the restoration of the relationships

The following people should attend a mediation meeting:

- The parties in dispute
- A support person for each party (eg. Counsellor, pastor)
- Principal or other person decided upon to be a mediator
- Another party to record the process

In preparation for the Mediation Meeting the Principal will meet with the mediator before the Mediation Meeting to brief the mediator and give him/her copies of relevant documents.

The protocols of the Mediation Meeting will be:

- The Principal will introduce all parties to each other, briefly state the purpose and protocols of the meeting and the mediator/Principal will be in charge of the meeting.
- Participants in the meeting will speak through the mediator/Principal at all times unless asked by the mediator/Principal to address others directly.
- At the conclusion of the meeting the mediator/Principal will summarise the current position, indicate further action, then close the meeting.
- The Principal will be responsible for keeping a report on file.

To achieve the goals of mediation, several meetings may be necessary. A follow-up process and evaluation meeting may also be needed.
**Appendix B**

### Bullying (Information for Parents)

Son Centre Christian College desires to provide a safe and happy environment for young people that is free from negative and hurtful experiences. All forms of bullying are unacceptable in the school.

#### What is Bullying?

Bullying is defined as an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying. Behaviours that do not constitute bullying 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.

However, these conflicts still need to be addressed and resolved.

**Cyber-bullying** is defined as bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as mobile phones, computers, tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages and websites.

#### Forms of Bullying

1. **Physical**
   - Examples:
     - Pushing, hitting, fighting, punching, poking, spitting
     - Hiding, damaging or destroying property
     - Touching in offensive ways

2. **Verbal**
   - Examples:
     - Comments about appearance, race, cultural beliefs, disability, weaknesses, family, etc.
     - Put-downs, offensive names/sounds, teasing, taunting, rude comments, joking, mocking, mimicking, threats and shouting
     - Public criticism or ridicule of another’s actions or appearance, particularly without having first given the person the dignity of discussing the issue personally and privately
     - Malicious gossip, rumours or words to cause embarrassment

3. **Non-verbal**
   - Examples:
     - Rude gestures
     - Taunting looks or body language used to intimidate others

4. **Extortion**
   - Examples:
     - Forcing students to hand over lunches/money
     - Forcing students to do acts of service

5. **Exclusion**
Example:
- Excluding others from activities for the purpose to hurt, frighten, embarrass or humiliate

6. Cyberbullying

Examples:
- Abusive texts and emails
- Hurtful messages, images or videos
- Imitating others online
- Excluding others online
- Humiliating others online
- Nasty online gossip and chat

Guidelines for Students
If students feel that they are being bullied at school, or if they observe somebody else being bullied, they should act in the following manner:
- If the incident is happening in the playground, they should seek help from a school leader or a teacher on duty. The matter must be reported and dealt with for the sake of all concerned.
- If the incident is happening in the classroom, they should report the matter to their teacher.

Procedures for Dealing with Bullying
Complaints concerning bullying and harassment must be responded to and investigated in a timely manner that respects the dignity and the privacy of those involved, whilst observing due process and procedural fairness.
- All students have the right to be heard and listened to and issues are to be resolved in a calm manner with as much time as necessary given to hearing what each student feels and assisting all students to feel more able to cope.
- The class teacher will investigate and respond to initial concerns, behaviours or reports of bullying or harassment in accordance with the Student Discipline Policy & Procedures. If it occurs in playground, outside of class time or reported to another staff member, the class teacher will be informed and is required to follow up the situation.
- If the issue is considered significant, complex or unclear, the Principal will be informed, will investigate and take appropriate action in line with the Student Discipline Policy & Procedures. Parents of all students involved will be informed at this point.
- Students with identified bullying behaviour will take responsibility for their actions.
- The Principal will record all reported acts of bullying, investigations and follow-up meetings in the Behaviour Register.
- Continuing or more significant acts of bullying/harassment by an individual or a group will result in student(s) being interviewed by the Principal. Parents will be contacted again, and the student will be disciplined in a manner appropriate to a serious misdemeanour.
- The College chaplain(s) will be available to provide follow-up support and individual programs for those with identified bullying behaviours and those who have been bullied.
- Parents may be asked to initiate some counselling processes to help their child in this situation.
If a student continues to display bullying behaviour or harassment towards others, the Principal may require that parents withdraw him/her from the College. This action will be taken if the Principal feels that there has been no positive response from the student or from the parents to the discipline and counselling process.

Procedures for dealing with cyber-bullying

The College reserves the right to determine whether incidents of cyber-bullying relate to the responsibility of the College. If determined the College has a role to play, we will:

- Ensure each student is safe and arrange support, including the involvement of the College chaplain(s).
- Support from staff should be provided on an ongoing basis with the agreement of the student and parent to assist the student to work through the effects of the cyber bullying and to help them develop and implement effective coping strategies.
- The student’s parents will be contacted to alert them to the issue, and ongoing concerns regarding the welfare of the student, and discuss the issue of how best to deal with it.
- Reassure the student that the College is taking the incident seriously the reported bullying will be acted on.
- Gather basic facts about the suspected cyber bullying and, if possible, identify the student(s) involved.
- Provide the following strategies to the student and parent to assist in managing the issue in the future:
  - don’t respond to any further messages/postings from the bully and, if possible, block any further correspondence from them
  - report any further correspondence from the bully to the parent and an agreed school contact
  - keep evidence of any bullying to assist with tracking down the bully and potentially reporting the matter to police
  - report any concerns to the administrator of the service used, including the mobile phone provider, website provider or internet service provider
- The College will follow its established approach to its incidents of bullying as outlined in the procedures for dealing with bullying.

Parent Guidelines for Dealing with Bullying

If you feel that your child may be subject to bullying:

1. Ask your child if he/she has reported the incident to your child’s teacher. If he/she has, please make a note to see the teacher sometime soon to find out what was done about the issue.
2. If your child is afraid to see the teacher, please make an appointment to see the teacher and report the matter yourself. Please note that some students are afraid to report a matter because they are afraid that the bully will find out and carry on more bullying. Our undertaking to families is:
   - When we investigate bullying, we do not identify the sources of information we receive & endeavour to protect those who give the information.
   - A student who carries out, or threatens to carry out such reprisals will be immediately suspended pending a meeting with his/her parents to show cause why the student should not be expelled from the school.
3. If bullying continues after you have reported it to the teacher, please make an appointment with the Principal.

**Symptoms of Being a Victim of Bullying**

Some children may be unwilling or unable to identify the occurrence of bullying against them, but they may show some symptoms that will lead a parent to suspect such an activity. If a child shows the following symptoms, parents are advised to discuss the issue with the child’s teacher.

- An unusual unwillingness to go to school
- Continued unusual signs of physical/emotional distress; eg, stomach aches, loss of appetite, bad dreams, bedwetting
- An unusual loss of interest or withdrawal from aspects of life and relationships
- The development of an unusual level of frustration and anger