

HORIZONS COLLEGE – POLICY & PROCEDURE

STUDENT BULLYING POLICY



Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur.

Scope: Students, parents/carers, and staff, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements.

- References:**
- [Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Regulations 2017 \(Qld\)](#)
 - [Australian Education Act 2013 \(Cth\)](#)
 - [Australian Education Regulations 2013 \(Cth\)](#)
 - Horizons College Child Protection Policy
 - Horizons College Disability Discrimination Policy
 - Horizons College Complaints Handling Policy
 - Horizons College Complaints Handling Procedures
 - Horizons College Complaints and Incidents Register

Policy Name:	Student Bullying Policy	Version 202206_01	
Policy Type:	School Operations		
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Authorised by:	Principal	Date of Authorisation:	June 2022
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Policy Owner:	Principal		

Note: Policy types marked with asterisks as follows are:

* published on school website

** only mandatory for schools incorporated through the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth)

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Policy

Horizons College has a **zero tolerance** approach to bullying. Horizons College is committed to taking action to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur.

Horizons College takes a **proactive approach** to bullying and implements a number of strategies to prevent bullying from occurring. These strategies are outlined in the Implementation section of this Policy and include:

- Creating and maintaining inclusive and interactive learning environments to encourage active student participation to foster a sense of connectedness
- Raising awareness of the school community's shared understanding of what bullying is, how it impacts people and how bullying is responded to by the school
- Teaching and modelling effective interpersonal skills and positive relationships

In order to respond appropriately to incidences of bullying, Horizons College will:

- Educate students and parents/carers on how to report bullying
- Educate employees on how to respond appropriately to bullying either observed or reported
- Investigate and act upon all reports of bullying in a timely manner

Horizons College's **Student Bullying Reporting and Response Procedures** (Appendix 1) explains the bullying reporting mechanism for students and parent/carers, and details how employees will respond to reports, including that all reports will be investigated and acted upon, with appropriate support and consequences implemented.

Definitions

Bullying

Bullying is an **ongoing** and **deliberate misuse of power** in relationships through **repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour** that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm.

It can involve an **individual or a group** misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening. Bullying can happen **in person or online**, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be **obvious** (overt) or **hidden** (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records). Bullying of any form or for any reason can have **immediate, medium and long-term effects** on those involved, including **bystanders**.

Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Bullying behaviour

- **Verbal bullying** which includes name calling or insulting someone about physical characteristics such as their weight or height, or other attributes including race, sexuality, culture, or religion
- **Physical bullying** which includes hitting or otherwise hurting someone, shoving or intimidating another person, or damaging or stealing their belongings
- **Social bullying** which includes consistently excluding another person or sharing information or images that will have a harmful effect on the other person.

If any of these behaviours occur only once, or are part of a conflict between equals (no matter how inappropriate) they are not bullying. The behaviours alone don't define bullying.

Verbal, physical and social bullying can occur in person or online, directly or indirectly, overtly or covertly.



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Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is an alternative label for **online bullying**, and describes bullying carried out through the internet and mobile devices.

Homophobic bullying

Homophobic bullying includes repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviours directed at students because they identify as or are perceived to be homosexual.

Visibility of bullying

- **Overt bullying** involves physical actions such as punching or kicking or observable verbal actions such as name-calling and insulting.
- **Covert bullying** can be almost impossible for people outside the interpersonal interaction to identify. Covert bullying can include repeatedly using hand gestures and weird or threatening looks, whispering, excluding or turning your back on a person, restricting where a person can sit and who they can talk with.

Bystander

A bystander is someone who sees or knows about bullying, harassment or violence that is happening to someone else.

Upstander

An upstander is someone who takes action against bullying behaviour. When an upstander sees someone being bullied, they do something about it. They help to stop the bullying from happening, or they support the person being bullied.

Responsibilities

School Responsibilities

Horizons College acknowledges its responsibility to:

- Implement strategies to prevent bullying
- Ensure that all areas of the school are adequately supervised
- Raise student, parents/carers and staff awareness of bullying
- Educate students and parents/carers on how to report bullying
- Ensure systems for reporting are well understood, easy to access and confidential
- Educate employees on how to appropriately respond to bullying, either observed or reported
- Investigate and act upon all reports of bullying, including providing appropriate support, implementing intervention strategies and consequences.

Employee Responsibilities

At Horizons College employees have a responsibility to:

- Ensure they understand and consistently apply the procedures contained in this Policy
- Where bullying is observed, intervene immediately to stop the bullying
- Respond appropriately to reports of bullying in accordance with the Student Bullying Reporting and Response Procedures (Appendix 1) and the Student Code of Conduct



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Parent/Carer Responsibilities

At Horizons College parents/carers have a responsibility to:

- Encourage their child to NOT:
 - bully others
 - hit back or respond verbally to the bully
 - respond to cyberbullying messages as this is only likely to encourage the bully
- Encourage their child to report incidents of bullying to the Principal or other staff member
- Report to the Principal or other member of staff if they know, or think, their child is being bullied
- Ensure they do not model bullying behaviour in interactions they have with the college staff and administration

Student Responsibilities

At Horizons College students have a responsibility to:

- Treat everyone with kindness and respect
- Abide by this Policy and the school's anti-bullying procedures
- Refuse to become involved in bullying including as a bystander
- Report all incidents of bullying to the Principal or other staff member

Implementation

Prevention of Bullying

Horizons College strives to create and maintain a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment and adopts a whole-school approach to positive behaviour so that all forms of bullying, aggression and violence can be prevented.

Some of the strategies that Horizons College implements to prevent bullying include:

- Teaching, modelling and promoting values and behaviours to create and maintain safe and supportive learning environments and how to be respectful and responsible member of the school community
- Creating and maintaining inclusive and interactive learning environments to encourage active student participation to foster a sense of connectedness
- Collaborating with students to develop strategies to enhance wellbeing, promote safety and counter violence, bullying and abuse in all online and physical spaces
- Explicitly teaching social and emotional skills for managing emotions
- Talking about bullying with students at school assemblies and reminding them about this Policy and the school's procedures in responding to reports of bullying
- Encouraging and valuing upstander behaviour
- Participating in preventative initiatives such as The National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence (NDA) to raise awareness and find workable solutions to bullying and violence

Responding to Bullying

The flowchart in the **Student Bullying Reporting and Response Procedures** (Appendix 1) explains the process Horizons College staff will follow when they receive a report about student bullying, including bullying which may have occurred online or outside of the school setting.

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When responding to reports of bullying, the Principal and other staff will:

- Provide the student with a safe, quiet space to talk
- Reassure the student that they are being listened to
- Let the student share their experience and feelings without interruption
- Ask the student for examples they have of the alleged bullying (e.g. handwritten notes or screenshots)
- Write a record of the communication with the student in TASS
- Check back with the student to ensure they have the facts correct
- Notify the parents/carers that the issue of concern is being investigated
- Gather additional information from other students, staff or parents/carers
- Make sure they can answer who, what, where, when and how
- Clarify information with the student and check on their wellbeing
- Evaluate the information to determine if bullying has occurred or if another disciplinary matter is at issue
- Ask the student what they believe will help address the situation
- Engage the student as part of the solution
- Monitor the student and check in regularly on their wellbeing
- Continue to check-in with the student on a regular basis until concerns have been mitigated
- Look for opportunities to improve school wellbeing for all students

Compliance and Monitoring

Horizons College keeps central records of all reported incidents of bullying in the college's Complaints and Incidents Register. Notes are also made in individual student files on TASS.

Bullying reports are analysed on a regular basis to:

- ascertain major areas where bullying occurs, i.e. the age and gender of victims and bullies
- determine which strategies have been successful in overcoming the bullying
- identify opportunities to improve school wellbeing for all students

A review of this Policy is undertaken every 12 months, taking into account this annual data.

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Appendix 1: Student Bullying Reporting and Response Procedures

