



HORIZONS COLLEGE – POLICY & PROCEDURE

STUDENT ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to prevent and address bullying and other harmful behaviours and ensure appropriate responses where bullying occurs.

Scope: The school community, that is students, parents/carers/guardians and employees, 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:

- [*National Framework for Addressing Bullying in Australian Schools*](#)
- [*The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework*](#)
- [*Bullying No Way*](#)
- [*eSafety Commissioner*](#)
- [*Final Report from the Anti-Bullying Rapid Review*](#)
- [*Child Safe Organisations Act 2024*](#)
- [*Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Regulations 2017 \(Qld\)*](#)
- [*Australian Education Act 2013 \(Cth\)*](#)
- [*Australian Education Regulations 2013 \(Cth\)*](#)

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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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Definitions

Bullying and other harmful behaviours are a range of negative interpersonal behaviours, whether physical or psychosocial, that may threaten a young person's right to a safe learning environment or the rights of the school workforce to a safe work environment. This includes bullying, cyberbullying and other online harms, violence and aggression, harassment (including sexual and gender-based harassment, homophobia, transphobia, racism, ableism, misogyny and ageism), discrimination, emotional abuse, conflict, or poor relationships and interactions.¹

Continuums of prevention and intervention refers to the range of strategies required over time to prevent bullying and harm from occurring, or reoccurring. The continuum encompasses prevention, early intervention, help-seeking/reporting pathways, responses, recovery and escalation.²

Escalation pathways are clear protocols and tiered models for continuing to address situations such as bullying and harmful behaviours with graduated responses, aligned with inclusive and trauma-informed practices.³

¹ Final Report from the Anti-Bullying Rapid Review, Australian Government, p.95

² Final Report from the Anti-Bullying Rapid Review, Australian Government, p.95

³ Final Report from the Anti-Bullying Rapid Review, Australian Government, p.97

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Policy Statement

Horizons College is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment in which bullying and other harmful behaviours are prevented, promptly addressed, and not tolerated

Statement of Commitment to Student Safety and Wellbeing **Board of Horizons College of Learning and Enrichment**

The Board of Horizons College of Learning and Enrichment is unequivocally committed to ensuring that every student is safe, respected, supported and able to thrive. We recognise that student safety and wellbeing are fundamental to learning, belonging and positive life outcomes, and we accept our responsibility to provide an environment where every young person feels valued, protected and empowered.

Horizons College exists to serve young people who have often experienced significant challenge, trauma, disengagement or exclusion. Our Vision is for schooling to be a happy and inspiring experience, where every student develops intellectually, personally and socially and is nurtured and challenged to discover their potential, passion and purpose. Our Mission is to deliver an exceptional student experience that motivates and inspires young people to achieve their highest potential and prepare them for a meaningful and successful life after school. These commitments guide every decision we make as a governing body.

We commit to embedding student safety and wellbeing into the leadership, governance, culture and daily practice of the College. We uphold and implement the Child Safe Standards and the Universal Principle under the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld), ensuring that the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to cultural safety is actively protected, respected and promoted. We recognise that cultural identity, connection to Country and community, and lived experience must be honoured in the way we care for and support students.

We affirm that all students have the right to be safe from harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination. This includes students with disability, students who identify as LGBTQIA+, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and students experiencing vulnerability. We are committed to equity, inclusion and dignity, and we work actively to remove barriers that may prevent any student from feeling safe, heard and respected.

We place student voice at the centre of our approach. Students are encouraged and supported to speak up, to participate in decisions that affect them, and to raise concerns in ways that are safe, accessible and developmentally appropriate. We listen to students, take their views seriously, and respond with care, transparency and accountability.

We commit to building strong, respectful partnerships with parents, carers, families, Elders and community organisations, recognising that student safety and wellbeing are strengthened when schools and communities work together. We value open communication, shared responsibility and collaborative problem-solving.

We ensure that all people working with students at Horizons College are suitable, well-trained and supported to uphold our child-safe values in practice. We maintain high standards for recruitment, induction, professional learning and conduct, and we respond decisively to any concerns, allegations or risks to student safety.

We commit to continuous improvement. We regularly review our policies, procedures, data and practices to identify risks, learn from experience and strengthen our systems of protection and support. We hold ourselves accountable to students, families, regulators and the wider community for the effectiveness of our safeguarding culture.

This Statement of Commitment reflects our PRIDE values — Participation, Respect, Integrity, Determination, Empathy, Kindness, Inclusivity, Resilience, Collaboration, Responsibility, Gratitude, Authenticity and Imagination — and expresses our unwavering belief that every young person deserves to feel safe, belong and be supported to become the best version of themselves.

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Horizons College acknowledges the significant harmful effects bullying and other harmful behaviours have on students, their families and communities, and the wider Australian society. The college recognises bullying as part of a continuum of harmful behaviours and negative interpersonal behaviours, whether physical or psychosocial, that are counter to creating a safe learning environment.

Horizons College embeds the *National Framework for Addressing Bullying in Australian Schools* (the National Framework) which establishes shared national expectations and actions and provides confidence that bullying and other harmful behaviours are addressed appropriately and in a timely manner.

In developing its policies and support systems promoting student wellbeing, safety and positive relationships, Horizons College is guided by *The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework's* key principles: leadership, inclusion, student voice and partnerships.

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.

Types of bullying

Cyberbullying or online bullying can involve social bullying, verbal bullying and threats of physical bullying. Technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), social media, email, messaging apps, texting, online platforms, forums and gaming communities are used for cyberbullying.

Physical bullying can involve hitting, hurting, shoving or intimidation, or damaging, stealing or hiding belongings.

Verbal bullying includes using threatening language, name-calling and insulting someone about their physical characteristics such as weight or height, or other attributes including race, sexuality, culture or religion.

Social bullying or relational bullying aims to harm someone's reputation or self-esteem, or to cause humiliation. It includes ongoing exclusion, spreading rumours or untrue stories, sharing images or other digital content.

Obvious and hidden bullying

Bullying behaviour can be both obvious and hidden. How visible bullying is affects our ability to identify when bullying happens and who is involved.

Bullying you can see

Obvious bullying involves actions that are easy to see. These actions can be physical, social, verbal or online. It is often known who is doing the obvious bullying, or it's easy to find out. Obvious bullying can cause immediate physical, psychological and emotional harm (as well as a fear of future harm).

Bullying you can't see

Hidden bullying involves behaviour that is intentionally hidden from others, which makes it hard to see for people who are not directly involved. It often takes the form of social, verbal or online bullying, though it can also be physical.

What Bullying is not

Horizons College acknowledges that while the following behaviours are often upsetting to those involved, they do not constitute bullying:

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- Social bantering with minor insults and jokes
- 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

While these behaviours would not be considered bullying because they do not involve deliberate and repeated harm and a power imbalance, they need to be addressed in the same way as other inappropriate student behaviours.

Implementation

Horizons College is committed to embedding and applying the principles of the *National Framework for Addressing Bullying in Australian Schools* [the principles].

Principle 1: Consistent anti-bullying requirements⁴

Horizons College is committed to implementing the interconnected elements of the National Framework in a way that is appropriate for the unique context in which the school operates.

Horizons College will:

- implement explicit and dedicated action to build a positive and respectful culture to ensure bullying and other harmful behaviours are not accepted
- ensure that appropriate and timely action is taken
- uphold students' right to education and a safe learning environment.

Principle 2: Whole-of-school and locally tailored approaches⁵

Horizons College is committed to implementing a whole of school approach to preventing and addressing bullying and other harmful behaviours, involving the whole school community including students, parents and carers, the school workforce and wider school.

Horizons College will:

- develop and implement anti-bullying policies and processes in partnership with students, parents, and the school workforce, including this policy and the Horizons College Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Positive Behaviour Support Policy, Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy, Complaints Handling Policy, Complaints Register, Acceptable Use of ICT Policy and Acceptable Use of Personal Electronic Devices Policy
- make information and opportunities available to the school community to support and contribute to anti-bullying actions by:
 - 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
 - encouraging and valuing upstander behaviour
 - participating in preventative initiatives such as Bullying No Way week to raise awareness and find workable solutions to bullying and violence
- ensure school leaders drive and embed anti-bullying and behavioural expectations throughout the school operations and culture

⁴ National Framework for Addressing Bullying in Australian Schools

⁵ National Framework for Addressing Bullying in Australian Schools

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- embed clear behavioural expectations aligned with the College’s PRIDE ethos, explicitly teaching and modelling respectful relationships, help-seeking and upstander behaviours
- use a tiered model of wellbeing and engagement (universal, targeted and intensive) to identify, support and respond to students who are at increased risk of being harmed by, or engaging in, bullying and other harmful behaviours
- ensure reporting pathways are accessible and developmentally appropriate, including options for students to disclose concerns to any trusted staff member and/or Student Services
- implement practical supervision and environmental strategies to reduce risk, including identifying locations and times that require increased adult visibility (e.g., transitions, breaks and arrival/departure times)
- apply culturally safe and inclusive practices, including recognising intersecting vulnerabilities (e.g., Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with disability, LGBTQIA+ students and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds), and ensuring students can access support in ways that are safe, respectful and responsive.

Principle 3: Create clarity and confidence in school anti-bullying action⁶

Horizons College is committed to having visible and transparent anti-bullying policies and processes in place and being accountable for timely and appropriate actions.

Horizons College will:

- make anti-bullying policies and processes publicly available on the college website, including how to report an incident, how actions are managed and communicated, what supports are available, and what escalation steps can be taken - refer to Reporting Process and Escalation Pathways sections below.
- communicate the actions taken via face-to-face meetings, phone calls and/or email to those involved or impacted, while maintaining privacy responsibilities
- retain records outlining the steps taken against the school’s anti-bullying policy and procedures
- review anti-bullying policies and processes annually

Principle 4: Intervening early and appropriately⁷

Horizons College is committed to implementing an evidence-based continuum of prevention, early proactive intervention and response action on bullying and other harmful behaviours.

Horizons College will:

- prioritise primary prevention and proactive early intervention action to stop bullying and other harmful behaviours from occurring and escalating
- ensure response actions are trauma-informed, relationship-focused, justifiable and tailored to the unique circumstances involved
- ensure that all those involved, or affected by, an incident are supported
- support students to understand the cause and impacts of their behaviour with a view to ending the cycle of bullying and other harmful behaviours
- provide clear and fair escalation pathways where interventions have not effectively resolved an incident
- prioritise early, proactive responses that focus on safety, regulation and relationship repair, and do not unnecessarily escalate student distress

⁶ National Framework for Addressing Bullying in Australian Schools

⁷ National Framework for Addressing Bullying in Australian Schools

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- provide structured check-ins and wellbeing supports for students who report bullying, witness bullying, and/or are alleged to have engaged in bullying
- use restorative and repair-focused processes where appropriate, while ensuring participation is voluntary for students who have been harmed and that restorative processes are only used when it is safe and suitable to do so
- implement individualised support planning (including behaviour support plans and/or safety plans) for students where bullying and other harmful behaviours are persistent, complex or high risk
- document and monitor incidents and responses to identify patterns, manage recurrence risk, and inform escalation decisions.

Principle 5: Support the school workforce⁸

Horizons College is committed to ensuring school leaders, educators and non-teaching staff are empowered and equipped to effectively prevent and address bullying and other harmful behaviours and to support a positive and safe learning and working environment.

Horizons College will:

- provide trauma-informed professional development on bullying and other harmful behaviours, risk and protective factors, and appropriate prevention and response action
- ensure the school workforce is given sufficient time and access to undertake professional development and contribute to prevention and response activities, including through staff induction, scheduled staff meetings and targeted refresher training as required
- ensure all staff are inducted and periodically refreshed in this policy and associated procedures, including recognising bullying (including cyberbullying), responding in a trauma-informed manner, reporting and escalation pathways, and recording requirements
- ensure the school workforce has access to resources and guidance (including templates, checklists and support from Student Services and campus leadership) to support consistent practice, accountability and timely action
- provide support and debriefing for staff impacted by or responding to, bullying and other harmful behaviours
- participate in the eSafety Champions Network.

Principle 6: Reducing risks and fostering safe, inclusive and respectful communities⁹

Horizons College is committed to taking action to:

- address the broader risk and protective factors influencing bullying and other harmful behaviours, including through age; diversity; culturally and developmentally appropriate education on respectful relationships; social and emotional skills; digital safety and citizenship; and explicit teaching on bullying and other harmful behaviours
- ensure continual improvement, including through data collection and analysis, evaluation and research to ensure Australia's anti-bullying actions remain suitably targeted to achieve change and adapt to emerging issues.

Horizons College will use data to strengthen prevention and response by:

- maintaining records of bullying and other harmful behaviour incidents and responses in the College's student management and incident recording systems

⁸ National Framework for Addressing Bullying in Australian Schools

⁹ National Framework for Addressing Bullying in Australian Schools

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- reviewing incident data to identify patterns (including repeat behaviours, high-risk times/locations and emerging online harms)
- using review findings to inform supervision planning, targeted wellbeing supports, classroom learning and staff professional learning
- monitoring the effectiveness of interventions and making adjustments where behaviours persist or risks increase.

Intervention

Preventative Strategies

Horizons College adopts a positive and proactive strategy to create an inclusive learning environment where everyone feels safe, supported and respected.

The school will refer to the following resources to achieve this:

- The 5 Principles of the [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework: Framework | Student Wellbeing Hub](#)
- The STEPS tool kit - [Steps to examine programs and approaches in schools](#)
- Be You – “What schools can do about bullying”
- Bullying. No Way! - Prevent (evidence-informed prevention strategies and guidance)
- eSafety Commissioner resources (online safety education and cyberbullying prevention)
- Friendly Schools (evidence-based whole-school approach to social and emotional wellbeing and bullying prevention)
- Restorative practice guidance (relationship repair approaches used appropriately and safely)

Reporting and Responding

If a student is experiencing or witnessing bullying or other harmful behaviours, they are strongly encouraged to report it and get support. All reports of bullying or other harmful behaviour will be investigated and responded to in accordance with the procedure set out below and available on the college website.

Horizons College will make reasonable efforts to initiate a response to any observed or reported bullying within two (2) school days of becoming aware of an incident. Immediate actions may include:

- referring to the school’s Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy and taking any required action (i.e. making reports to the police or other authorities where required)
- contacting parents/carers of student/s harmed and student/s engaging in harmful behaviour and communicating next steps
- initiating immediate safety action to prevent further harm
- providing initial wellbeing support to the student/s
- taking initial appropriate and proportional response actions.

Initiating a response within two (2) school days reduces the risk of harm escalating. While this timeframe does not require that matters be resolved within two days, it ensures that appropriate action begins promptly.

Procedure for Reporting and Responding to Bullying

Horizons College encourages students, parents/carers and staff to report bullying and other harmful behaviours. Reports may be made by a student who has experienced harm, a witness (including an upstander), a parent/carer, or a staff member.



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Horizons College will respond to all reports in a timely, trauma-informed and fair manner, prioritising student safety and wellbeing.

Step 1: Report

Bullying and other harmful behaviours can be reported in the following ways:

- to any staff member
- to Student Services and/or the Positive Behaviour Support Officer
- to the Campus Principal
- by a parent/carer contacting the College in person, by phone or in writing.

All staff who receive a report (or observe bullying or other harmful behaviours) must take the concern seriously, ensure the matter is referred promptly to Student Services/Positive Behaviour Support Officer and/or the Campus Principal, and record relevant details as soon as practicable.

Step 2: Immediate safety, support and triage

On receiving a report or observing bullying or other harmful behaviour, Horizons College will take steps to prevent further harm. This may include:

- initiating immediate safety actions (including increased supervision, structured separation and/or adjustments to transitions and activities)
- providing initial wellbeing support to the student(s) impacted
- contacting parents/carers where appropriate and advising that the matter is being responded to
- considering whether the matter meets thresholds for reporting or action under the College's Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy, and taking any required action (including contacting relevant authorities where required).

Step 3: Investigate

An investigation will be undertaken by the Positive Behaviour Support Officer and/or the Campus Principal (or delegate) and will be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the report.

The investigation may include:

- speaking separately with the student who reports being harmed, any witnesses and the student alleged to have engaged in bullying or other harmful behaviours
- gathering relevant information, including previous incident history where appropriate
- considering the impact on the student(s) harmed and the safety and wellbeing of the broader school environment
- documenting actions and outcomes.

Step 4: Right of response / natural justice

If a student is alleged to have engaged in bullying or other harmful behaviours, the College will apply principles of fairness. The student will be:

- informed of the nature of the concern
- provided with an opportunity to respond
- offered the option to be supported by a person of their choice, where appropriate
- treated respectfully and in a trauma-informed manner, consistent with the College's duty of care and privacy responsibilities.

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Step 5: Action and support

Following the investigation, Horizons College will implement actions to:

- support the student(s) harmed (including safety planning and wellbeing supports)
- support the student who has engaged in harmful behaviour to understand the impact of their behaviour and develop safer, respectful behaviours
- restore safety in the school environment and reduce the risk of recurrence.

Actions will be responsive to the circumstances and may include increased supervision, behavioural expectations and monitoring, restorative and repair-focused processes (where safe and appropriate), referral to wellbeing supports, and consequences consistent with the College's Positive Behaviour Support processes and any relevant student behaviour documentation.

Step 6: Monitor and review

Horizons College will monitor the situation to ensure the behaviour has ceased and that students feel safe. Monitoring may include scheduled check-ins, review of safety and/or behaviour support plans, and further action if concerns persist or escalate.

Consequences

Horizons College makes information about consequences for bullying and other harmful behaviours accessible to students, parents/carers and staff.

Consequences may be applied at any stage depending on the severity, frequency, impact and circumstances of the behaviour, and will be implemented in a way that is:

- trauma-informed and relationship-focused
- proportionate and aimed at restoring safety
- fair and consistent with principles of natural justice
- respectful of student dignity and inclusive of student support needs.

Consequences and corrective actions will be determined in accordance with the Horizons College Positive Behaviour Support Policy and may include one or more of the following (in addition to safety planning and wellbeing supports):

- restorative and/or repair-focused conversations and actions (where safe and appropriate)
- increased monitoring and supervision arrangements
- parent/carer contact (e.g. phone call, meeting and/or written communication)
- mediation, counselling and/or referral to external supports (where appropriate)
- development and implementation of an individual behaviour support plan
- withdrawal from activities or privileges where necessary to maintain safety
- withdrawal from class/learning area and supervised time in Student Services (as required for safety and regulation)
- suspension
- exclusion (where required to maintain the safety and wellbeing of the school community).

Where bullying or other harmful behaviours involve cyberbullying, image-based abuse, unlawful recording, threats, harassment or the misuse of devices or ICT, Horizons College may also respond in accordance with the Horizons College Acceptable Use of ICT Policy and/or the Acceptable Use of Personal Electronic Devices Policy, including restriction or removal of access to devices, networks and services where appropriate.

Where bullying or other harmful behaviours involve threats of harm, serious violence, serious online abuse, or suspected criminal conduct, Horizons College may escalate the matter to relevant external authorities (including

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Queensland Police and/or the eSafety Commissioner) in accordance with its legal obligations and related College policies.

All consequences and response actions will be documented in the College's recording systems and/or registers, and the College will communicate with parents/carers as appropriate, having regard to privacy and confidentiality obligations.

Escalation Pathways

Horizons College is committed to clear and fair escalation where bullying and other harmful behaviours persist, increase in seriousness, or are not effectively resolved through initial interventions.

Escalation may include:

- referral from staff to the Positive Behaviour Support Officer and/or Student Services for coordinated intervention and monitoring
- escalation to the Campus Principal where the behaviour is serious, repeated, complex, or requires higher-level consequences and/or safety planning
- escalation to the Executive Principal where the matter remains unresolved, involves significant risk, or requires executive oversight.

Where bullying and other harmful behaviours involve serious online conduct, complaints may be made to the eSafety Commissioner. Where there are threats, assault, stalking, extortion or other potentially criminal behaviour, Horizons College may contact Queensland Police.

If bullying or other harmful behaviours meet the definition of harm as outlined in Horizons College's Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy, the matter will be managed in accordance with that policy.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is any form of bullying that uses online communication or mobile phones, such as texts, phone calls, instant messages, blogs, chats, social media and/or web pages. Cyberbullying can also involve identity theft.¹⁰

Horizons College will ensure that:

- the school workforce and parents/carers are encouraged to complete training in identifying cyberbullying and understanding their responsibilities in promoting e-safety
- students are educated about cyberbullying and e-safety, and will be empowered to become upstanders and speak up against cyberbullying
- students are aware of staff members (e.g. Student Support Officers) they can connect with and activities they can engage in, particularly vulnerable students, to support their sense of belonging within the school community.

The e-Safety Commissioner may investigate complaints where a student is (or was) the target of cyberbullying material, and:

- the material is provided on social media service or relevant electronic service
- an ordinary reasonable person would conclude that the material was intended to have an effect on a particular student
- that the material would be likely to have a seriously threatening, seriously intimidating, seriously harassing or seriously humiliating effect on the student at whom the material is targeted.

¹⁰ [Cyberbullying | What is cyberbullying? | eSafety Commissioner](#)



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Each complaint is assessed on a case-by-case basis and action taken by the Commissioner will be determined by the circumstances of each case.

Resources & Support

- [Key topics | eSafety Commissioner](#) - provides a range of up-to-date information and resources, coupled with a complaints system to assist children who experience serious cyberbullying and image-based abuse.
- [Bullying No Way](#) - a website for Australian schools, providing evidence-informed information and resources about understanding, preventing and responding to bullying and cyberbullying. The site is a joint collaboration between all schooling sectors.
- [Student Wellbeing Hub](#) - underpinned by the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework, the Hub provides access to information and resources on strategies to build and sustain the wellbeing of the whole school community.

The following counselling services are available for 24/7 support.

- [Kids Helpline - Phone Counselling Service](#)
- [Home | Lifeline](#)
- [13 Yarn - Crisis Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander](#)

Related Policies

- Horizons College Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Horizons College Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy
- Horizons College Disability Discrimination Policy
- Horizons College Complaints Handling Policy
- Horizons College Complaints Register
- Horizons College Positive Behaviour Support Policy
- Horizons College Acceptable Use of ICT Policy
- Horizons College Acceptable Use of Personal Electronic Devices Policy