

Safe and Supportive Environment Policy

POLICY

All members of the Unity College community have the right to feel safe and supported. Bullying, harassment and violence of any form will not be tolerated by any member of our community – student, parent or staff.

This policy sets out our approach to help the College and our community address issues of bullying, harassment, and violence to ensure the provision of a safe and supportive learning environment for all.

Rationale

Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God. (Matthew 5:9)

In our Mission Statement we state that we aim to:

- Be a welcoming and supportive community of people who respect ourselves, each other and the environment.
- Provide a student-focussed education in a safe environment

As such we have a responsibility to provide an environment which protects the emotional, psychological and physical wellbeing of all members of our College community. The College seeks to continue building a pro-active and supportive environment in which all members of the College community understand that bullying, harassment and violence are wrong and that individuals have the responsibility to report such incidents when they become aware of them.

Values

It is Gospel values that enliven the community of Unity College. These values will impact on all decisions concerning the purposes, content, teaching/learning experiences, evaluation processes and structures within the community.

Recognizing learning is an active, shared, life-long journey, the following values are important signposts for our developing community:

- the integration of faith, life and culture
- a commitment to working with parents as the first educators in collaborative partnership
- being a place of opportunity for faith, hope and love
- accepting diversity
- respect and support for the individual gifts, talents and needs of each member of the school community
- provide educational opportunity to assist the holistic growth of all

Amongst the values especially commended are: **dignity, respect, compassion, justice, honesty, openness, inclusion, trust and forgiveness.** (*Education Brief*)

Guidelines

Rights and Responsibilities of members of our College community

All members have the right to:

- feel **safe, secure and valued** within the community

- experience **positive** and **respectful** relationships between all members of the community
- learn and socialise in a **supportive, caring** and **inclusive** environment

All members share the responsibility to:

- maintain a **safe** school environment
- promote a **positive** culture and uphold the **dignity** of others
- respect **differences** between people and promote **tolerance** and **inclusion** of all
- to **refrain** from **bullying, harassing** and **violent** behaviours
- **respond** to **bullying, harassing** and **violent** behaviours and **report** the actions or situation to an adult

Definitions of bullying, harassment and violence

Bullying:

- is a deliberate intention to cause distress to another
- causes distress for the recipient which may be physical, psychological or social or involve damage to reputation or property
- is directed towards a specific person or group
- is evident where there is a repeated pattern of attacks
- is evident where there is an imbalance of power between those bullying and the recipient
- is evident where behaviour is unreasonable and unjustifiable
- is evident when the recipient usually finds it difficult to leave or avoid the bullying situation without personal cost
- can be done by one person or a group
- can be done in person, by manipulating others to take part, or by electronic means such as e-mail, SMS messages or chat rooms

Bullying behaviours include:

- direct physical attacks
- name calling, belittling, insulting someone
- making racist remarks
- trying to damage someone's reputation by spreading rumours
- using verbal or non-verbal put downs
- playing practical jokes
- damaging or hiding property
- using physical intimidation such as blocking the walk or bumping someone
- encouraging other to socially exclude the recipient
- cyber bullying
- accusing someone of things they haven't done

Bullying is not

- a disagreement between students where both have the same power
- mutual conflict where both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem
- social rejection where someone decides not to be friends with someone anymore. Only when social rejection involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause a specific student distress is it categorised as bullying.

Harassment

- is unwanted and one-sided words or actions towards another that demean, annoy, alarm or abuse
- is name calling, belittling, insulting someone
- is making racist remarks
- is threatening violence

- is trying to damage someone's reputation by spreading rumours
- is using verbal or non-verbal put downs
- may be deliberate or unintentional
- may involve a single incident or an ongoing pattern of behaviour
- may be verbal, written, via SMS, email or chat rooms

Where harassment is part of an ongoing pattern of behaviour where intentional acts are repeated over time and there is a power imbalance between the perpetrator and the recipient this may also be defined as bullying.

Violence

- includes hitting, slapping, pinching, biting, punching, hair pulling, thumping, Chinese burns, tripping, kicking, wrestling, throwing, use of weapons

Where violent acts are repeated over time and there is a power imbalance between the perpetrator and the recipient this may also be defined as bullying.

Actions to be taken

Acts of bullying, harassment and violence by **staff against students** are incorporated in the **BCE Student Protection Policy**.

Acts of bullying, harassment and violence by **staff against staff** are incorporated in the **BCE Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy**.

Acts of bullying, harassment and violence by **student against staff** are incorporated in the **BCE Student Behaviour Support Policy** and the **Unity College Supporting Documentation**.

Acts of bullying, harassment and violence by **parent against staff** are incorporated in the **BCE Student Behaviour Support Policy** and the **Unity College Supporting Documentation**.

Acts of bullying, harassment and violence by **student against student** are to be acted on as per the **flowchart below**.

Action to be taken in response to bullying, harassment and violence of students towards students

