

# Strathcona Baptist Girls Grammar School

## Respectful Relationships Policy

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### Purpose:

Our five core values (Respect, Integrity, Compassion, Courage, and Empowerment) underpin all aspects of life at Strathcona and as such are at the heart of our approach to managing student behaviour and respectful relationships.

Strathcona's Academic Care educational model clearly sets out our holistic and whole school approach to education. This policy aims to ensure that relationships are consistent with and contribute to the interconnected strands of Academic Care; namely Wellbeing, Curriculum and Teaching & Learning.

Respectful relationships between students and adults within the school are an essential feature of all aspects of our approach at Strathcona. Schools should be safe places for everyone - students, teachers and other staff, families and members of the wider School community. The involvement and commitment of the whole school community is required to achieve a culture in which safe and respectful schools are everyone's concern and responsibility.

Strathcona should be a place where:

- Students feel safe and supported by teachers
- Students learn in a calm and focused environment
- There are clear and consistent behavioural and learning expectations, made explicit to all students
- Behaviours and relationships are managed in a restorative way
- Relationships are respectful and characterised by positive dialogue and active listening
- Teachers know their students and use positive education strategies in the classroom and beyond

### Scope:

This Policy applies across the School ensuring consistent principles and procedures, whilst acknowledging and reflecting that processes and its application will vary in different parts of the School.

The policy is applicable at all times when on the Schools' premises, as well as during any activities off-site at other locations. It is also relevant in relation to times when students are in school uniform, travelling to and from school as well as to and from off-site activities, or representing Strathcona in any capacity. It is also applicable on any other occasions when a student's behaviour impacts on the School domain.

**Related Policies and Procedures/Protocols:**

- Strathcona School Values
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Student Behaviour Management policy
- Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing Policy
- Use of ICT Policy
- Bullying Prevention and Intervention (Students) Policy

**Definitions:**

Respect is an important part of healthy relationships, and everyone has the right to be respected. A respectful relationship is characterised by the following:

- people make their own choices and form their own views consistent with their age and developmental level
- feelings of self-worth are fostered
- people's points of view and beliefs are valued
- the rights of a person to be safe, valued and cared for are understood
- people are accepted
- people can listen and be heard
- 'No' is accepted as an answer if someone is being disrespectful
- a person can make mistakes and still be accepted and respected
- it is never controlling, and encourages personal growth and fulfilment
- it nurtures a culture of trust, honesty and happiness

**Bullying:**

The DEECD 'Building Respectful and Safe Schools' framework defines bullying as "when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons. Bullying may occur because of perceived differences such as culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, age or economic status. Bullying may be motivated by jealousy, distrust, fear, misunderstanding or lack of knowledge. It can continue over time, is often hidden from adults and will probably continue if no action is taken."

There are four broad types of bullying:

1. Direct physical bullying: includes hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property.
2. Direct verbal bullying: includes name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.
3. Indirect bullying: is often harder to recognise and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:
  - lying and spreading rumours
  - playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
  - mimicking
  - socially excluding someone or encouraging others to socially exclude someone
  - damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance.
4. Cyber-bullying: is direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces.

### **Inappropriate behaviour:**

Many behaviours that are distressing or inappropriate are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. These inappropriate behaviours are dealt with as per the [Student Behaviour Management policy](#). There are four broad categories of inappropriate behaviour:

1. 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.
2. Social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.
3. 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 inappropriate behaviours, and must be dealt with as outlined in the [Student Behaviour Management policy](#).
4. Harassment and discrimination as outlined in legislation in Australia.

### **Policy/Protocol Statement:**

Relationships which are not respectful will not be tolerated at our School and it is the right and responsibility of every student, staff member, parent and member of the community to report behaviours which are not respectful, whether these happen to them or to someone else.

In every case, the complainant, will be supported in making the report.

We will maintain a climate in the school where students and staff feel that it is their right and responsibility to report disrespectful behaviours and ensure that the students feel that when these incidents are reported, that they are supported by staff, and that conditions will improve for all.

We provide a variety of ways in which students can safely report and discuss incidents, both single episode and repeated. Responding to bullying behaviours can be challenging for students, teachers, School leaders and parents/carers. The best outcomes will occur when all parties work together to manage these situations.

### **Procedures:**

Actions and programs must proactively promote respectful relationships and minimise bullying and its effects. Strathcona will:

- At all times foster a feeling of mutual respect and acceptance within the School community.
- Ensure the Policy for Respectful Relationships is available to the School community via the School public website and support literature.
- At a meeting of the year level or primary school early in the year, make students aware of the School Mission and Values, Policy for Respectful Relationships, and their rights and responsibilities as outlined in the policy.
- Reinforce these values at appropriate times during the year, through discussion held during classes, assemblies, Chapel and Fellowship, Pastoral periods, leadership training opportunities and in group discussions. A Newsletter home to parents each year will refer them to finding the Policy for Respectful Relationships on the portal.
- Integrate topics concerning building respectful relationships into School Curriculum and Personal development program, such as Circle Time activities and discussions.
- Develop a session in the Peer Support Program on building respectful relationships. The Peer Support Leaders with the Year 7s could discuss strategies and ideas to enhance the development of respectful relationships and combat bullying and harassment.
- Provide a clear scope and sequence of education about respectful relationships including cyber-safety and cyber-bullying.
- In-service all staff and interested parents on building respectful relationships and combatting bullying.

- Periodically ask students to complete surveys in order to gauge the extent of respectful relationships in the School, and to measure the effectiveness on students. how these manifest themselves.
- Responses to behaviours which are not based on respectful relationships will be responded to as follows:
- Students may report disrespectful and unacceptable behaviours, but request that action against the alleged offender is not immediately taken. In this instance they may seek advice about how to deal with the situation, and develop strategies to reduce the likelihood of further unhealthy relationships. The person receiving this report will inform the Head of House / Year Level Coordinator / Head of Campus who will carefully monitor the situation.
- Students may report disrespectful and unacceptable behaviours to which they have been a bystander and seek advice about how to deal with the situation, and develop strategies to reduce the likelihood of further bullying taking place. The person receiving the report will inform the Head of House / Year Level Coordinator / Head of Campus who will carefully monitor the situation.
- If any student feels that they have been treated in an unacceptable manner, they should report the incident to a member of staff with whom they feel comfortable.
- The Class teacher/House Mentor / Head of House/Year Level Coordinator and Head of Campus must be informed of any instance of bullying. A record of such reports must be maintained using the LMS Pastoral Notes.
- When an incident of bullying is reported and the student affected agrees to intervention, all students involved should be interviewed; other students and staff may also need to be interviewed. Parents must be notified of this interview.
- Depending on the nature and severity of the offence, a variety of actions may be taken by the Head of Campus or Deputy Principal including: restorative conference, a letter of apology, peer support, counselling, information sessions, detention, consequences, payment of replacement for damage to property.
- A written record of the situation and the strategies employed must be maintained, along with ongoing monitoring using the LMS Pastoral Notes.
- Parents of both parties must be contacted and kept informed of strategies and the ongoing nature of the relationship.
- If the negative behaviour is serious or repeated, the matter will be referred to the Deputy Principal. While this will usually result in a restorative conference between the Class teacher / Mentor / Head of House, Year Level Coordinator, the Head of Campus or the Deputy Principal, the victim and the alleged bully, the seriousness of the incident may result in a meeting with the alleged bully and her parents to discuss the consequences to be imposed by the School. This will be clearly recorded following this meeting using the LMS Pastoral Notes.
- While suspension and expulsion remain options, the School's response seeks to develop respectful behaviours, and manage these matters in a restorative manner in the first instance.
- Where bullying behaviours are managed and then repeated, these matters are dealt with using procedures as outlined in the *Student Behaviour Management policy*.