# Genesis Christian College
## Anti-Bullying Policy

**Policy Contact:** Head of Pastoral Care & School Counsellor

**Number:** WS- 09-003

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<th><strong>Purpose</strong></th>
<th>Genesis Christian College is implementing this policy to ensure that students and staff feel safe from bullying in all its forms. The policy sets out the requirements for dealing with bullying. For cyber bullying, refer to Genesis Cyber Bullying Policy. The basic beliefs underlying the policy are:</th>
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| | • Every individual has value in a community.  
| | • Every individual has the right to feel safe from bullying or harassment in all its forms.  
| | • Every conflict can be resolved. Victims and bullies both need help to solve conflict.  
| | • Every individual in a community is responsible for the safety of other individuals in that community.  
| | • Every individual in a community is responsible for ensuring that other individuals in that community can reach their potential in a supportive and non-threatening environment. |
| **Scope** | This policy applies to employees, volunteers, parents, carers, students, and people visiting the school site. |
| **Definitions** | **Bullying** is:  
Repeated behaviour that:  
• Is directed at an individual or group of people (or is a pattern) and  
• Is often intimidating, humiliating, undermining and  
• Is unwelcome and  
• A reasonable person, given the circumstances, would consider the behaviour to be offensive, humiliating or intimidating for the individual or group of people.  
(Note that whether or not the offender intended to offend is irrelevant.)  
Bullying can involve a desire to hurt, a hurtful action, a power imbalance, repetition, an unjust use of power, evident enjoyment by the aggressor and a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim.  
There are three broad categories of bullying.  
• Direct physical bullying e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.  
• Direct verbal bullying e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse. |
• Indirect bullying - This form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student’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
  ○ provoking a food-allergic reaction
  ○ mimicking
  ○ encouraging others to socially exclude someone
  ○ damaging someone’s social reputation and social acceptance
  ○ cyber-bullying, which involves the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress.

If bullying amounts to harm as referred to in the College’s Child Protection Policy then the matter must be dealt with under the Child Protection Policy.

What bullying is not
Bullying is different from ordinary teasing, rough-and-tumble or school yard fights. What makes it different is that the incidents are ongoing, and there is usually an imbalance of size, strength and power between the students involved. In formulating an effective approach to dealing with bullying it is helpful to note what bullying is not.

Bullying is not:
Mutual conflict where there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for ‘retaliation’ in a one-sided way.

Social rejection or dislike – It is not feasible to think that every student must like every other student. Refusing to play with a particular child or, for example, not inviting them to a birthday party is not bullying, provided social rejection is not directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation. A single episode of nastiness, physical aggression, verbal abuse or an occasional push or shove is not bullying, neither is nastiness or physical aggression directed towards many different students. The difference is that bullying is, by definition, action that happens on more than one occasion. However, since schools have a duty of care to provide a student with a safe and supportive school environment, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should not be ignored or condoned.

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<tr>
<th>Reference &amp; related</th>
<th>Child Protection Policy</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cyber Bullying Policy</td>
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<td>Policy:</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. <strong>The Position Statement at Genesis Christian College is</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1. Genesis Christian College is totally opposed to bullying in all its forms: physical, psychological and verbal.</td>
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<td>1.2. Genesis Christian College believes prevention through whole school involvement and awareness is the most effective way to combat bullying.</td>
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<td>1.3. The School community aims to create an environment of understanding and co-operation in which the victims of bullying will feel empowered to seek help and, by collaboration with staff and others, confront the influence of the bully.</td>
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<td>1.4. The attitude and response of the school community will help bullies realise their behaviour is antisocial and damaging to themselves. The bully will recognise the need to be guided towards more appropriate interpersonal skills.</td>
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<td>1.5. The College endorses the <em>Kandersteg Declaration</em> against bullying in children and youth.</td>
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<td>2. <strong>Some Facts about Bullying</strong></td>
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<td>2.1. Bullying is a learnt behaviour.</td>
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<td>2.2. For bullying to be sustained it has to be condoned by the important groups in the bully’s immediate environment: family members, peer groups, school members. The adult community offers many role models of bullying behaviour.</td>
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<td>2.3. The belief is misplaced that if bullies are ignored then bullying will stop.</td>
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<td>2.4. Bullying takes place in all schools.</td>
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<td>2.5. Bullying is related to other forms of anti-school behaviour, such as disruptive behaviour, vandalism and petty theft.</td>
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<td>2.6. It is a covert behaviour, organised by students and hidden from adult eyes.</td>
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2.7. Bullying behaviour affects the bully's adult life in employment situations, criminal activity and home brutality. The behaviour will limit the development of social skills needed for working cooperatively with others.

2.8. Aggressive behaviour is highly stable and unlikely to be altered by punishment alone. The attitudes of the whole community have to be changed by an intervention program.

2.9. There are six elements of bullying: type, intensity, duration, intentionality, numbers involved and motivation.

2.10. There are six types of bullying (adapted from Tatum 1996):

- **Gesture bullying** is intimidating for the victim and can be achieved without the teacher seeing. The gestures are often embarrassing and based on malicious rumours.

- **Verbal bullying** can be emotionally bruising, particularly when based on physical characteristics. Sexual and racial abuse is particularly damaging forms.

- **Physical bullying** can begin as horseplay but is quickly adopted by the bully in order to dominate. It occurs at all ages.

- **Extortion bullying** occurs in such areas as the tuck shop and once seen to be successful, it will recur.

- **Exclusion bullying** is covert and subtle. It can isolate and destroy a social life. It is particularly painful as it is usually done by so-called ‘friends’. It is most difficult to deal with as students and their families can argue their rights to choose their own friends.

- **Institutionalised bullying** occurs when bullying is part of the culture of an institution. It is difficult to eradicate as it appears to be normal practice to those within the institution. A whole school policy identifies bullying behaviour in all levels of the schools, such as student to student, staff to student, student to staff, administration to staff, staff to administration, parent to staff etc.

3. Prevention Strategies

3.1. A whole school approach is necessary for a number of reasons (Tatum 1996):

3.1.1. To counter the view that bullying is an inevitable or trivial part of school life.
3.1.2. To move beyond a crisis-management approach.

3.1.3. To open up discussion at all levels.

3.1.4. To involve more people in the identification and condemnation of bullying.

3.1.5. To draw up an agreed set of procedures for staff to follow when enquiring into a case of bullying.

3.1.6. To create a supportive climate and break the code of secrecy.

3.1.7. To provide a safe, secure learning environment for all students.

3.1.8. The whole school approach will necessitate all members of the community supporting the drive against bullying. The following points are addressed to various levels of the school community.

3.2. **The Board Members, Executive Staff and Heads of Department should**

3.2.1. Ensure all adults model appropriate behaviour, including an appropriate management style.

3.2.2. Distribute materials to parents, staff and students annually.

3.2.3. Organise assertiveness training workshops for all aspects of school life where bullying exists, but particularly in the Middle School years 7 - 9.

3.2.4. Regularly reinforce the school policy at assemblies etc. promoting acceptance of, and support for, individuality.

3.2.5. Clearly communicate the consequences of inappropriate behaviour and follow them through consistently while allowing for individual developmental needs.

3.2.6. Conduct 'open forum' sessions with involved groups (parents, students, staff).

3.2.7. Ensure that administration, staff, ancillary staff, school captains and other student leaders have appropriate strategies to be able to fulfil the roles expected of them without recourse to aggressive behaviour.
3.3. **Form Teachers**

3.3.1. The Form Teacher has a vital role in combating bullying through detecting, recording and reporting bullying and helping the bullies and the victims. Most potential problems emerge in the first semester of Year 8. The Form Class is where these difficulties may be identified. Some ways of monitoring Year 8 students are:

3.3.2. Year 8 students meet together to discuss problems. Older students can be invited to give advice. Topics to be discussed could include:

- What is bullying and what is acceptable behaviour.
- Areas of the school that are considered safe or unsafe.
- Bystanders’ responsibilities.
- The difficulties presented by the code of silence. Information given on who can be contacted confidentially.

3.3.3. Monitor the extra-curricular involvement of the students with the aim of developing friendships and relationship skills. Also, the confidence gained from successful involvement in extra-curricular activities is helpful to both bully and victim.

3.3.4. Observe behavioural changes (see 3.6.2).

3.3.5. Peer conflict resolution methods may prove effective with professional advice and/or assistance.

3.4. **The Classroom Teacher**

3.4.1. Establishment of classroom practices based on respect, positivity and contribution.

3.4.2. Use of co-operative learning techniques where appropriate.

3.4.3. Modelling and teaching assertiveness and showing the difference between assertiveness and aggressiveness.

3.4.4. Teachers are important non-aggressive role models. 'Put downs' should never be tolerated and all student ideas valued. Name calling should be avoided at all times as this gives tacit approval of verbal abuse by students.

3.4.5. Teachers need to be aware that bullies can dominate classroom discourse often with shallow questions and responses. They tend to inhibit the students who are quiet.
3.5. **College Captains**

3.5.1. Captains, being part of the student subculture, may be in a good position to intervene.

3.5.2. They require assistance to overcome the institutionalisation of many forms of bullying.

3.5.3. Modelling of appropriate behaviour by these student leaders is vital. They need to be guided in skills involved in resolving interpersonal conflict.

3.6. **Parents**

3.6.1. Students who are bullied very rarely tell an adult, including parents. Research suggests this is because of a feeling of decreased self-worth created during the bullying incident and the fear that reporting the incident will result in further harassment.

3.6.2. Observe behaviour changes:
   - Lack of confidence;
   - withdrawal from social activities;
   - temper flare-ups;
   - forgetfulness;
   - distractibility;
   - loss of appetite;
   - sleeplessness;
   - fear of the dark;
   - wishing to change the route to school;
   - avoidance of specific lessons.
   - Any such changes should indicate the need for a discussion with the student’s Form teacher.

3.7. **The Peer Group**

3.7.1. The Code of Silence or the student notion of not 'dobbing' must be broken down for it is through this that bullying survives.

3.7.2. Support must be given to reporters and confidentiality adhered to.

3.7.3. The message should be communicated through all avenues that reporting an incident is beneficial to the victim, the bully and the overall school climate.

3.8. **Leaders of Activities**

3.8.1. Sport may encourage bullying and aggressiveness. Coaches should
emphasise the cooperative and team building nature of sport, the striving for personal best and respect for opponents.

3.8.2. Groups of students taken on activities require special attention from supervising adults. The leaders may not be aware of the background of abusive relationships that may have occurred.

4. **Responses to Bullying Incidences**

4.1. The following is a guide for staff members when dealing with a bullying case involving students. Staff who perceives bullying at an adult level should mention it to a trusted colleague, the Head of Pastoral Care, or Executive Staff.

4.1.1. **Victim Support**

4.1.1.1. Victims are in a fragile state. They need to feel safe.

4.1.1.2. They need to feel secure that their enquiries will be taken seriously and treated confidentially.

4.1.1.3. Permission must be obtained from the victim for any action regarding his/her situation, except when his/her personal safety is at risk.

4.2. The following is a guide to be employed when a student reports a bullying incident to an adult. This person will:

4.2.1. Help the victim to describe the incident (in confidence).

4.2.2. Normal conflict resolution skills are used if the situation involves people of equal power and status.

4.2.3. A report is made to the Head of School to determine if other students have made similar reports about the bully.

4.2.4. The Heads of School or other school authority will then:

4.2.4.1. Ensure that the victim is safe from further incidents. **This may involve the bully being excluded from class or playground.**

4.2.4.2. Interview the victim, who may like to have another person of his choice present.

4.2.4.3. Notify the Form Teacher of the student(s) who has/have been complained about.
4.2.4.4. Interview the alleged bully, or ask his/her Form Teacher to interview him/her. If several students are involved the Head of School may be the appropriate interviewer. Another person may be present and this may be requested by the alleged bully.

4.2.4.5. Witnesses should be interviewed.

4.2.4.6. The versions of the incident are compared, summarised and a report is forwarded to the Head of School.

5. **Management of Bullies**

5.1. When bullies accept responsibility for their actions they usually cease to exhibit such anti-social behaviour.

5.2. Provided the victim is safe, bullies should be given every opportunity to reform.

5.3. Exclusion from class or grounds is an effective form of correction.

5.4. In the few cases where bullying continues despite action being taken to reform the behaviour, the School has no option but to expel the student. Their presence in the school is an unacceptable risk and will only cause distress to others who have a right to an educational experience free from abuse. Such students should be referred to expert help and they may benefit from the knowledge that a final point has been reached, action has been taken and a new school may see the behaviour change for the better.

6. **Counselling for Bullies**

6.1. Attempt to have all those involved recognise the part they have played.

6.2. Have the bully recognise the consequences of his/her action.

6.3. Have the bully make a firm and witnessed declaration that the practice will end and that future relationships will be positive.

6.4. The bully has to make an acceptable apology.

6.5. Parents may be requested to attend a conference at school and be involved in the solution process.

6.6. Alternatives to Aggression strategies should be employed.

6.7. Group counselling may prove to be successful.
6.8. The victim may need friendships to be developed.

7. Procedures for School Authorities Regarding Bullying

7.1. Lesser Bullying is defined as pushing or jostling, minor damage to property, name calling and similar behaviour which result in physical or mental hurt, discomfort or intimidation of another person.

7.2. The following discipline procedures will apply:

7.3. The first offence will result in:

7.3.1. A detention given by the teacher concerned or the student's Form Teacher;
or
7.3.2. Time out away from the situation where the bullying occurred given by the Head of School eg. if the bullying occurred during lunch in the grounds then the students would not be allowed in the grounds at lunch time for two days.

7.4. The Head of School is responsible for the following (Head of Pastoral Care may be asked to assist where appropriate):

7.4.1. Student will be formally cautioned for bullying.

7.4.2. The behaviour will be clearly explained to the student.

7.4.3. The legal implications of harassment will be stated.

7.4.4. The consequences of continued bullying behaviour will be stated.

7.4.5. Parents of the student will be notified in writing.

7.4.6. Counselling of the bully in behaviour ownership, respect for the rights of others, self-esteem, interpersonal relationships, consequences of behaviours and individual problems.

7.5. A second offence will result in the Head of School organising:

7.5.1. Suspension from school as appropriate (with reference to the Principal/Head of School).
or
7.5.2. Time out from class and breaks in a time out area for two days.

7.5.3. A repetition of the points 7.4.2 to 7.4.6.

7.5.4. A probationary enrolment by parents and student may be
implemented.

7.6. A repetition of the behaviour will result in:

7.6.1. Head of School interviewing the student.

7.6.2. The student being excluded from the school and returning only after negotiations with school authorities.

7.6.3. Possible termination of the students enrolment.

7.7. Serious Bullying is defined as unprovoked bodily assault upon another, deliberate substantial damage to property, ganging up by a group on an individual and similar behaviours.

7.8. Bullying which is assessed as harm caused to a student will be reported to state authorities.

7.9. The following discipline procedures will be the responsibility of the Head of School:

7.9.1. The first offence will result in a formal caution for bullying and a letter to the parents as in 7.4.

7.9.2. An agreement between victim and bully will be signed.

7.9.3. Any repetition of the behaviour will result in the student being excluded from the School and returning only after negotiations with school authorities.

7.9.4. The agreement mentioned above is drawn up between the bully and the school, where acceptable behaviour and the consequences of unacceptable behaviour are documented. The bully, his / her parents and a school administrator are signatories to the contract.

7.9.5. Some forms of bullying may be classified either as Lesser or Serious. Psychological pressure is one such type as it may be a series of so-called ‘joking put-downs’, or it may involve the serious destruction of a victim's self-esteem. The school community needs to be particularly aware of this bullying tactic.

7.9.6. Heads of School or the Principal may convene a Bullying Tribunal if the degree of seriousness is in doubt. Suitable persons to be Tribunal members would be Senior Staff and counsellors.

7.9.7. It is vital for the success of a school bullying strategy that all adults know what action should be taken when bullying is seen or
reported. While it is accepted that teachers are responsible for their own discipline, all adults who discover cases of bullying should:

7.9.7.1. Decide whether the incident is able to be dealt with on the spot. Strong disapproval of the behaviour should be an immediate adult reaction.

7.9.7.2. Report the incident with particulars to Heads of Department (10-12), Form Teacher (7-9) or Class Teacher (P-6). This is necessary if the steps for reforming behaviours are to be carried out successfully.

7.9.7.3. Discuss the course of action, punishments and counselling that needs to be undertaken.

7.9.7.4. Determine if the offender is habitual and what measures are already underway to deal with the problem before issuing punishments.

8. Bullying Register

8.1. The Head of School will keep a register of reports. The Head of School will be responsible for administering the procedures if any name recurs.

| Date approved | 2005 |
| Approval authority | College Board |
| Date for next review | Sep 2013 |
| Documents superseded by this Policy or procedure: | N/A |

Revisions / Modifications

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Summary of changes</th>
<th>Updated by</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 2011</td>
<td>V4</td>
<td>General update</td>
<td>Head of School Secondary</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2012</td>
<td>V5</td>
<td>General update, addition of Bullying Complaints Form</td>
<td>Head of Pastoral Care</td>
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