**Positive Peer Relationships Policy**

**(Formerly STUDENT BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY)**

**Purpose**

Perth College aims to create a safe and supportive learning environment where students can manage and resolve conflict in a proactive and non-aggressive manner. Bullying and harassment are not tolerated at Perth College. This policy is intended for student-to-student interaction.

**Definitions**

**Bullying** is any behaviour that is unwelcome, degrading, intrusive, intimidating, violent, abusive, or offensive to a person. It is a targeted and repeated behaviour or action, intended to cause harm (physical, social, emotional, psychological) to another person. Characterised by an imbalance of power, bullying can be defined by the impact it has on the vulnerable person. Every member of the Perth College community has the right to be treated with respect, dignity and courtesy.

**Harassment** is any behaviour that targets an individual or group for an unacceptable reason such as identity, race, culture or ethnic origin, religion, physical characteristics, gender, sexual orientation, marital, parenting or economic status, age, ability or disability. Harassment offends, intimidates or creates a hostile environment but need not be a repeated behaviour nor form a pattern.

**Violence** is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person(s) that results in psychological harm, injury or in some cases death. It may involve provoked or unprovoked acts and can be a single incident, a random act or can occur over time.

**Types of Bullying**

Bullying can by nature be verbal, emotional/psychological, physical or may occur through misuse of technology.

**Verbal bullying** includes, but is not limited to, name calling; ‘putting people down’ either to their face or behind their back; comments about appearance, culture or religion; offensive or annoying messages /phone calls; sending notes; name calling and teasing in person.

**Emotional/psychological bullying** includes, but is not limited to, deliberately ignoring or excluding others from the group or withdrawal of friendship; acts of extortion such as demanding the victim provide copies of notes/assessments; pressuring others to act against their wishes; spreading rumours; stalking.

**Physical bullying** and **property abuse** includes, but is not limited to, unwanted physical touching; physical violence such as kicking, pinching, pushing, scratching, slapping, biting, or tripping someone; stealing money; interfering with someone’s belongings; damaging personal items; hiding someone’s possessions; or throwing objects with the intent to injure or annoy.

**Cyber bullying** includes, but is not limited to, spreading gossip and rumours of a personal nature through social media, chat rooms, instant messaging programs, email, phone and internet; sending offensive text/phone and email messages including photos and video; impersonating a person’s screen name to pretend to be them; sexting; intentionally excluding others from an online group; posting personal information including photos and video on internet sites and social media without permission to cause distress and humiliate; using technology to cause harm to others.

**Sexual bullying** includes taunts about body parts and development; teasing about sexual orientation; unwanted/unsolicited sexual attention from another, notes or pictures depicting sexual content.

**Non-bullying behaviours**

There are many negative situations which, whilst being potentially distressing for students, are not bullying. These include:

* Mutual conflict situations which arise where there is disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation; or
* One-off acts (of aggression, meanness or mean on purpose behaviour) including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing.

**Perth College undertakes to:**

* promote a supportive environment which encourages the development of positive relationships between staff, students and parents;
* explore personal strengths, friendship and social dynamics, personal best philosophy through Pastoral Care programs and the *InsideOut* program;
* work proactively with students in dealing with conflict resolution;
* provide appropriate disciplinary action when warranted;
* provide appropriate counselling for students;
* promote anti-bullying messages;
* periodically undertake surveys of student wellbeing and bullying behaviour and follow up on identified perpetrators and targets;
* engage student groups (e.g. Student Representative Council) to promote anti-bullying initiatives; and
* promote responsible bystander behaviour among students, staff and parents/carers. Bystanders can encourage bullying by joining in or by colluding through remaining silent. Responsible bystanders will find ways to support the victimised student in a way which decreases the negative behaviour of the perpetrators. All members of the school community are potential bystanders.

**Perth College expects all students to:**

* contribute to the development and maintenance of a positive and supportive school environment;
* participate in pastoral care programs and the *InsideOut* program;
* refuse to be involved in any bullying behaviour or situation;
* acknowledge that one’s own behaviour impacts on others;
* actively participate in mediations to resolve bullying and take steps to change behaviour;
* be responsible bystanders and work to reduce incidents of bullying;
* report any bullying behaviour they observe, or suspect is occurring;
* encourage victims to seek help from adults; and
* use technology for learning and healthy social interactions.

**Perth College expects parents to:**

* support the School’s student bullying and harassment policy and procedures, including the ‘no blame’ approach;
* watch for signs of distress in their child such as school refusal or withdrawal from normal activities;
* encourage their child to freely discuss any incidents of bullying or harassment with them;
* inform the School if bullying is suspected. In the Junior School, contact can be made with the Class Teacher and in the Senior School contact can be made with the Kaya Teacher and/or Head of Year;
* discourage their child from retaliating to incidents of bullying;
* actively supervise their child’s use of technology including use of mobile phones, websites, social media, chat rooms, email and discussion groups; and
* consider the possibility that their child may bully other people and work with the School to modify their behaviour.

Perth College explicitly forbids the use of any form of child abuse, corporal punishment or other degrading punishment.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all members of the Perth College community.

**Associated Policies and Procedures**

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Learning Powered by Technology Code of Conduct

Mobile Communication Policy

Positive Student Behaviours Policy

Student Code of Conduct

**Relevant Legislation and Authority**

Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum

School Education Act 1999 - Sections 89 to 96, 223

School Education Act Regulations 2000 - Regulations 38 to 46

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually.

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| **Date Approved** | 2004 |
| **Date for Review** | July 2023 |
| **Policy Owner** | Director of Wellbeing; Director of Junior School |
| **Authorisation** | Leadership Team |
| **Amendment History** | |
| **Date** | **Amendment** |
| July 2022 | Rename title to Positive Peer Relationships Policy; update ownership to Director of Wellbeing and Director of Junior School; Inclusion of a statement around the non-use of any form of child abuse, corporal punishment or other degrading punishment; minor formatting amendments; update to Resolution Processes flow chart [Director of Wellbeing. Director of Junior School.] |
| December 2020 | Definition of cyber bullying broadened, addition of sexual bullying as a type of bullying, strategies added to school’s efforts to mitigate bullying [Head of Senior School] |
| February 2020 | Changing ‘daughter’ to child or student as appropriate. Minor updates to procedures. [Head of Junior School] |
| December 2019 | Minor grammatical corrections.  [Head of Senior School] |
| January 2018 | Minor amendments to definitions (inclusion of specific definitions of harassment and violence) and some elements of the policy moved to be included in procedures.  [Head of Senior School] |
| March 2013 | Additions of new protective behaviour programs (InsideOut and Pastoral Care programs) included in the policy document.  Changes to format of policy.  [Deputy Principal – Students] |

**Positive Peer Relationships Policy**

**(FORMERLY STUDENT BULLYING AND HARASSMENT PROCEDURES)**

Students are encouraged to report bullying or harassment, whether they are being bullied or harassed themselves, or have observed actions of others. Students may seek the support of any staff member to report observed incidences of bullying or to discuss their own concerns. The School Counsellor, School Psychologists and Chaplain are available to all students, staff and parents. In some cases, external counselling may be recommended. Serious issues of bullying must be reported directly to the Heads of Student Wellbeing, Director of Junior School and/or Director of Wellbeing (7 to 12) where the matter will be investigated, and appropriate disciplinary action taken. The Principal will be informed. External bodies will be contacted where necessary.

Bullying and harassment is taken seriously and the student coming forward is supported and affirmed during the process. Incidents will be investigated using the ‘no blame’ approach, where discussions with the students involved are used to ascertain the nature and extent of the problem. In many cases, a cause is identified, and actions are taken to change behaviours and attitudes of the students involved. Restorative practices including mediation is the preferred course of action and are particularly effective in dealing with bullying. For subsequent or serious incidents, parents will be informed, and further action taken as deemed appropriate in the circumstances. Disciplinary action is taken where necessary, generally in cases where mediation has not resulted in a change in behaviour, or where a serious incident occurs.

**Action to be taken by students:**

* If you are being harassed or bullied, make it known to the person that their comments, actions or behaviours are unwelcome. Ask them to stop.
* If the harassment or bullying continues, consider your own actions. Would a change in your behaviour make a difference? Do you need to seek support from an adult who can help you?
* If the harassment or bullying continues, tell someone. Talk it over with a trusted adult e.g., your parents, Kaya teacher, classroom teacher, School Counsellor / Psychologist and make a plan to deal with the problem. Follow it through. If the harassment or bullying stops, no further action is required.
* If the bullying or harassment doesn’t stop. In the Senior School, report the matter to your Head of Year, who will consult with the Head of Student Wellbeing (7 to 12) Dean of Students to resolve the issue. In the Junior School, report the matter to the class teacher who will refer this to the Head of Student Wellbeing (PK to Year 6).

**Perth College Resolution Process**

**Student**

**Parent**

**Reported to staff member**

**Involve Key Staff.** e.g., Head of Year, Heads of Student Wellbeing

**Investigate and document** findings.

**Identified by staff member**

**Recurring or Serious Incidents**

* Parent Partnership
* To involve Head of Student Wellbeing, Director of Junior School, Director of Student Wellbeing, Head of Boarding or Principal, as appropriate.
* Community Service
* Detention/Loss of privileges
* Suspension from School and/ or Boarding Community
* Extreme Case – Exclusion from Perth College and / or Boarding Community

**Plan Restorative Intervention**

Consult with Kaya Teacher, Head of Year, Head of Student Wellbeing or School Psychologist.

**Intervention Implemented**

**Monitor and Review**

**Negotiated Behavioural Change**