

Policy number	005	Last Approved by Executive	September 2021
Drafted by	Mary-Anne Revell	Scheduled review date	September 2024
Responsible person	Steven Nicholas		

Rationale:

The College seeks to provide a safe, harmonious and caring environment for the nurture of all students. Staff seek to promote an atmosphere of co-operation and encouraging one another to do and to be their best.

1. Purpose of this policy

- 1.1 Olivet Christian College rejects all forms of bullying. It is not acceptable for any student to experience bullying within the learning and social environment of the school.
- 1.2 In rejecting bullying and harassment, the school is committed to the development and the reinforcement of a culture of positive behaviour, respect, and tolerance.
- 1.3 The anti-bullying policy sets out the principles and framework governing the school's behaviours and activities that support all members of the school community in enacting a zero tolerance of bullying. The policy, together with the policy implementation documents listed in section §10, should be read and understood by all those connected to the school.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The school rejects all forms of bullying and takes a zero-tolerance stance in response to bullying wherever and whenever it occurs within the school community.
- 2.2 The school believes that, to reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour, it is essential to create a culture of positive behaviour, respect and tolerance.
- 2.3 Underpinning the school's zero tolerance stance in response to bullying is a belief that all students, no matter what their background, race, ethnicity, gender, physical and intellectual attributes, are to be valued and respected.
- 2.4 The school is committed to the importance of students both being and feeling safe within the school.
- 2.5 The school, in discharging its duty of care, understands that it has a responsibility to enable students to flourish in relation to their emotional, mental, and physical health.

3. Aims of the policy

- 3.1 To set out the school's clear expectations in relation to positive student behaviour and in so doing to define what constitutes unacceptable bullying behaviour.
- 3.2 To support the school and its employees, parents, and students themselves in creating a climate characterized by respectful and positive relationships.
- 3.3 To comply with the requirements of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.), to implement anti-bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment strategies and procedures as part of the school's responsibility to provide an environment which is safe, where the risks of harm are minimized and where students feel emotionally and physically secure.

4. Legal and regulatory basis for compliance

- 4.1 Duty of Care
- 4.2 Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- 4.3 Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)
- 4.4 Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) Minimum Standards
- 4.5 Victorian Government Department of Education and Training's (Vic DET) guidance for government schools, equally applicable to non-government schools, on bullying, cyberbullying, and the role of the school.

- 4.6 Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- 4.7 Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- 4.8 Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- 4.9 Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- 4.10 Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)

Aims: BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Any form of bullying is completely contrary to the Scriptures. Christians are to be concerned about the wellbeing of others (Philippians 2:3-4) and to act in a manner towards others that reflects love, kindness, patience, and gentleness (Galatians 5:22-23). Any acts of hatred, jealousy, discord, provocation, and intimidation are not acceptable (Galatians 5:20,21,26).

Christians are to love their neighbour as themselves (Galatians 5:14).

WHAT IS BULLYING? (In the context of the College community)

Bullying is the deliberate psychological, emotional and/or physical harassment of one student by another (or a group) occurring at the College or in transit between the College and home.

Bullying causes harm and pain to others, is systematic and repeated and involves an abuse of power.

Bullying may take many forms and can include:

- Picking on others.
- Making hurtful, sexist, and racist comments.
- Any form of physical violence such as hitting, pushing, or spitting.
- Making suggestive comments or other forms of sexual abuse/harassment.
- Forcing others to act against their will.
- Verbal threats of aggression against property or possessions.
- Using put-downs, belittling other abilities and achievements.
- Using offensive names, teasing, or spreading rumors about others or their family.
- Acts of vandalism.
- Deliberately excluding a student from college activities or other friends.
- Cyber Bullying (refer to Cyber Safety Policy)

BULLYING IS NOT TOLERATED AT OLIVET CHRISTIAN COLLEGE.

As a caring Christian community, the College

- Always expects a high standard of behaviour.
- Is committed to striving to provide a safe and caring environment for everyone.
- the right of every person to be free from all forms of bullying is observed.
- Encourages and positively reinforces behaviour which is courteous and considerate.
- Is educating the students about issues relating to bullying behaviour.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE A WITNESS TO BULLYING?

There is a risk that you can become the victim, or be labeled as a "dobber," but we need to work together if we are to be effective.

When you report acts of bullying, we know that you care enough to want to do something. If possible, you could intervene as the bullying occurs by simply saying, "Cut it out," "leave him/her alone." "Quit it." This is very useful if you have influence with the bully: e.g., are older, a friend, a House Captain or a College Captain.

If you cannot act immediately, it is important to report the incident to someone you trust as soon as you can. Alternately you may wish to make an anonymous report that will advise of a trouble spot, a bully or a victim. You need to offer support and friendship to the victim.

The person you report to could be your parents, College captain, teacher Assistant Principal or Principal. Your privacy is important, so raise this when you report the incident. We will not involve you without your permission.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE BULLIED?

- *As the victim, you are the one who should act most strongly:*
- Try not to retaliate by becoming a physical or verbal bully yourself.
- Try to ignore the bullying. If you show that you are not upset, the bully may stop.
- Tell the bully to "quit it" or "cut it out."
- Laugh it off, use humor.
- Don't be afraid to talk about it with your friends or family.
- Leave the area and go directly to a responsible adult.
- Talk to some of the other students at college. They may help you decide how to handle the situation.
- Do not gossip or backstab; seek advice from students who will offer constructive help.
- Establish a friendship network.
- Be smart about avoiding high-risk places and times.
- Always report what is happening – the bully relies on your being silent!
- There are many adults at the College who want to help you such as teachers, your Principal or Acting Principal. They can help you decide how to handle the situation, and they can act.

*Bullying is not "ok." Do not tolerate bullying - it is too important not to report.
Remember, we are on your side. We take bullying seriously and want to stop it, but we need you to report incidents otherwise we do not know and cannot help.*

A tradition of silence is a barrier to be broken down. As a member of Olivet Christian College it is not only your right to not have it happen to you, but it is your responsibility to report bullying, regardless of the circumstances. To say nothing sends a silent message to the bullies that they can get away with it.

CONSEQUENCES

There must be clear consequences for bullying, and if a student is found to be bullying, then he or she will expect some of the following responses or sanctions:

Written records being kept on the student's file on SchoolPro.

Warnings accompanied by a formal letter to the student and his/her parents.

Monitoring behaviour.

Consultation with parents.

Formal apologies to offended parties.

Reparations for any damage caused.

Detentions.

Referral to the Assistant Principal and/or the Principal.

Exclusion from privileges.

Suspension from College, resuming only on the condition that a formal contract is signed undertaking to cease all bullying behaviour.

Expulsion.

Those who bully or harass others are themselves in need of help. This could be by way of assistance with behaviour modification strategies, counseling and the provision of very clear boundaries.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

If parents are concerned that their child is being subjected to bullying, they should contact their child's teacher without delay. Remember, if we do not know about it, we cannot help.

Evaluation: This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's three-year cycle