

**Rationale**

Bullying and harassment are contrary to the Christian ethos of Tatachilla Lutheran College, which emphasises care and respect of all members of the College community (students, staff, parents and volunteers). Bullying and harassment have immediate damaging effects on the personal well-being of the victim as well as on the social and educational fabric of the College. International research also indicates that bullying can have long term damaging effects for both bullies and victims.

For these reasons, the College takes harassment and bullying very seriously and commits to programs and procedures designed to minimise their occurrence and deal effectively with them when they arise.

**Definition**

**Harassment** is any unwanted behaviour which interferes with a person's legitimate right to feel safe, secure and comfortable.

A particularly serious form of harassment is **bullying**, which is repeated, malicious and exploits the relative lack of power of the victim.

*Bullying is repeated deliberate hurtful behaviour in a situation where the victim feels a lack of power to be able to prevent the behaviour or deal with it effectively.*

Power discrepancies include:

- differences in physical size and strength;
- strength of numbers;
- relative popularity in the peer group;
- command of language; and
- positional authority.

Bullying takes many forms including:

- *physical* (eg., unwanted touching, hitting)
- *verbal* (eg., name calling, rumours, threats, racist remarks)
- *social* (eg., excluding from groups, unfair dares)
- *property* (eg., damaging or taking belongings, extortion)
- *Cyber* (eg., text messaging, interactive personal and group forums and social media)

**Procedure**

Bullying is a behaviour best dealt with when all members of the school community (staff, students, parents & volunteers) share a common concern to minimise and eliminate it and are committed to working together to that end. While all staff at Tatachilla Lutheran College are required to help prevent bullying and deal with it when it arises, the appropriate Head of sub-school and/or Director of Student Wellbeing have specific responsibility in this area.

Activities and sessions which focus on harassment and bullying will form a component of the Pastoral Care program in every Home Class and will be revisited on an annual basis. Students will be helped to define and understand harassment and bullying and empowered with strategies for dealing with it. They will also be encouraged to reflect on their own behaviour and responsibilities in relation to the respect and care of others.

All members of the College community are encouraged to deal assertively with incidents of harassment and bullying directed towards them or others. If their demands for its cessation are ignored, they should report the behaviour immediately to a member of staff. In every instance, action will be taken to eliminate the harassment and bullying with primary focus on protection of the victim. *Further repetition of harassment or bullying will be viewed very seriously by the College and may lead to review of enrolment.*

Parents are encouraged to contact the appropriate Year Level Coordinator and/or Director

Student Wellbeing immediately if they become aware of incidents of bullying or harassment.

All students are encouraged to report their concerns to their class teacher/home class teacher. The Director of Student Wellbeing and/or appropriate Head of sub-school will liaise with those involved over major harassment and bullying issues. Staff are expected to act on all reports, observations or suspicions of harassment and bullying. They may take initial action themselves or refer the incident to the Director Student Wellbeing and/or Year Level Coordinator.

The contents of this policy relate to all members of the Tatachilla Lutheran College community (staff, students, parents and volunteers).

Further information can be found in the Sub School Behaviour Support Guidelines.