Koinonia Christian Academy Inc.

Anti-Bullying – Koinonia Christian Academy Board			
NESA Code:	B8.1		
Purpose:	Koinonia Christian Academy (the school) is committed to maintaining a God-honouring, secure and caring environment where students can learn and be nurtured. (Romans 12:18). Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated (Psalm 34:12-18). Any act of bullying will be addressed appropriately in accordance with this policy and other relevant school policies (e.g. the School's Behaviour Management policy).		
Scope:	The Policy for Anti-bullying is for all students, teachers, staff and parents/carers. The behaviour management policy addresses when a student disregards rules, disobeys instructions or otherwise engages in conduct which causes or may cause harm, inconvenience or embarrassment to the school, staff members or other students.		
References:			
Associated Documents	Child Protection Policy V 3.2 Sep 2020 Updated Jan 2024.docx Behaviour Management Policy V2.3 Updated Sep 24.pdf Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Statement Updated Aug 2023.docx		
Version Number	2.1	Authorised by:	Board President
Review date:	September 2024	Authorisation date:	
Policy owner:	Koinonia Christian Academy, Bourke		
Note:	This policy may be reviewed at any time at the discretion of the Koinonia Christian Academy, Bourke Board.		

Version History

Version	Date	Notes
2.1	9/2024	Reviewed

Policy

Koinonia Christian Academy (the school) is committed to maintaining a God-honouring, secure and caring environment where students can learn and be nurtured. (Romans 12:18).

Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated (Psalm 34:12-18).

Any act of bullying will be addressed appropriately in accordance with this policy and other relevant school policies (e.g. the School's Behaviour Management policy).

Scope

The Policy for Anti-bullying is for all students, teachers, staff and parents/carers.

The behaviour management policy addresses when a student disregards rules, disobeys instructions or otherwise engages in conduct which causes or may cause harm, inconvenience or embarrassment to the school, staff members or other students.

Background

Bullying

Bullying is intentional and repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that causes fear, distress or harm and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. In any bullying incident there are likely to be three parties involved: the bully, the person being bullied, and bystanders.

Bullying behaviour can occur;

- Online: Cyber-bullying
- Directly: Visible and known by others
- Indirectly: Discreet or anonymous
- Overtly: Physical actions
- Covertly: Subtle, gestures, exclusion, restrictions

Types of Bullying

The three broad categories of bullying are:

- **Physical bullying** e.g. hitting, punching, kicking, obstructing, scratching, spitting, tripping, pushing, hurting or intimidating another person. Damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying.
- **Psychological bullying** is when words or actions are used to cause psychological harm. Examples of psychological bullying include name-calling, insults, teasing or making fun of someone because of their actions, appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background.
- **Indirect bullying** is harder to recognise and often carried out without the knowledge of the student who is being attacked. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation.

Indirect bullying behaviour can be:

- Social
    - Inappropriate Ignoring
    - Excluding – deliberately excluding others from a group, refusing to sit next to someone etc.
    - Ostracising
    - Alienating
    - Making gestures
    - Sharing harmful information or images

- Psychological
    - Lying and spreading rumours
    - Publicly revealing personal information
    - Dirty looks
    - Stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying someone's property or possessions
    - Extortion - Threatening to take someone's possessions, food or money etc.
    - Playing jokes to embarrass and humiliate
    - Mimicking
    - Encouraging others to socially exclude someone
    - Damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance

- Cyberbullying
    - Verbal, social and psychological bullying through the use of technology (such as emails, blogs, websites)
    - Sending malicious SMS and email messages
    - Sharing harmful information, images or other digital content
    - Inappropriate use of cameras on phones or other electronic devices

What Bullying is Not

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially negative situations that are often confused with bullying:

- Mutual conflict involves 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, is not bullying unless 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 are not regarded as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on only one occasion they are not being bullied.

Signs of Bullying

Behaviour changes in a student **may** be indicative of bullying. Such behavioural changes may include:

- Crying at night and having nightmares
- Refusing to talk when asked "What's wrong?"
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches
- An unwillingness or refusal to go to school
- Feeling ill in the mornings
- A decline in quality of school work
- Becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence
- Beginning to bully siblings
- Acting unreasonably

Responsibilities

When the school community work together against bullying we can build a positive learning environment where everyone feels included, safe and respected.

School Staff have a responsibility to

- Model appropriate behaviour to students
- Take positive action with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy
- Pass on information about any reported or observed bullying behaviours to the principal for further action
- Be vigilant in monitoring students that have been identified as either persistent bullies or victims
- Be aware of and respectful of confidentiality concerns

Students have a responsibility to

- Behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity
- Take some positive action to stop the bullying if they observe an incident
- Report the bullying incident to a teacher as soon as possible
- Make it clear to their peers that bullying is not accepted

Parents/Carers have a responsibility to

- Listen to their child and encourage their child to speak to their teacher at school
- Support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying
- Contact the school if they have a concern regarding bullying (e.g. Principal, Teacher or Chaplain)
- Work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur

Policy

Koinonia Christian Academy (the school) is committed to maintaining a God-honouring, secure and caring environment where students can learn and be nurtured. (Romans 12:18).

Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated (Psalm 34:12-18).

Any act of bullying will be addressed appropriately in accordance with this policy and other relevant school policies (e.g. the School's Behaviour Management policy).

Scope

The Policy for Anti-bullying is for all students, teachers, staff and parents/carers.

Prevention

The school will use a variety of methods to discourage bullying. These may vary, when thought appropriate, and new initiatives introduced. The measures that the school uses to discourage bullying as an acceptable behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- Putting up signage and posters promoting a bullying-free environment
- Rewarding students for positive behaviours at assemblies and awards night
- Promoting a bullying-free environment in assemblies and chapel sessions
- Promoting and educating students on the unacceptability of bullying and its consequences in classes
- Ensuring access to the school Chaplain who has skills in dealing with victims of bullying for student wellbeing and support
- Dedicated class lessons about anti-bullying
- Staff training to detect and deal appropriately with bullying issues
- Reviewing the schools anti-bullying policy on a regular basis to ensure it remains effective and relevant

Koinonia Christian Academy promotes a bullying-free environment by strongly encouraging students to report bullying.

Reporting

Students and their parents/carers are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying incidents, for fear that it will only make matters worse however the school encourages reporting of all bullying incidents so that they can be addressed quickly to avoid further distress to all concerned.

Parents/carers are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the school through any of the reporting avenues listed below if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

The school provides an assurance to students and their parents/carers that:

- Bullying is not tolerated within the school
- Their concerns will be taken seriously
- Action will be taken as quickly as possible in line with the schools' relevant policies
- Support will be provided if necessary

Bullying incidents can be advised to the school verbally (or in writing) through any of the following avenues:

- Informing a trusted teacher
- Informing the School Chaplain
- Informing the Principal

Responding

Preventing and responding to bullying behaviour is a shared responsibility of all staff, students, and parents.

Bullying behaviours vary vastly in their extent and intent and, as such, each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts. In all circumstances the school will:

- Take bullying incidents seriously
- Provide assurance to the victim that they are not at fault and their confidentiality will be respected
- Take time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the victim, the bully and any bystanders
- Take time to understand any concerns of individuals involved
- Maintain records of reported bullying incidents
- Escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents

Actions that may be taken when responding to bullying include:

- Offering counselling to persistent bullies/victims
- Implementing effective follow up strategies
- Disciplinary action at the principal's discretion including suspension and also expulsion of persistent bullies, or in cases of severe incidents.

Support *School Liaison Police/Youth Liaison Officers and other support available to the school community*

Youth Liaison Officers are NSW Police Force members who are responsible for administering the Young Offenders Act 1997 (NSW). They are responsible for delivering cautions, referring children to youth justice conferences, and implementing strategies to reduce crime by juveniles in the community.

School Liaison Police are NSW Police officers who work with schools to reduce crime, violence and anti-social behaviour. School Liaison Police are a point of contact for the school community and the NSW Police Force.

The school has visits from NSW Police, Youth Liaison Officers/School Liaison Police periodically in an effort to engage students with members from the NSW Police and discuss issues arising out of bullying behaviour and the importance of maintaining an environment free of bullying behaviour.

Contact details for our area, School Liaison Police and Youth Liaison Officers, are available at the school and can be obtained from the principal.

Where staff consider an incident warrants the intervention of the Police Youth Liaison Officer, they should notify the principal who will make contact.

Other Support Services - the school also provides access to the School's Chaplain for counselling services (School Community).

Review

This policy and any related procedures will be reviewed and updated as necessary on a regular basis.