Purpose of this policy

To support Flinders Christian Community College in creating safe and respectful school environments where bullying and cyberbullying are not tolerated and to provide prevention and intervention strategies to reduce and address bullying, cyberbullying and other unacceptable behaviours if they occur.

Scope

This policy relates to Flinders Christian Community College staff, its students and parent community.

Definitions

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately set out to intimidate, exclude, threaten, upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons. Bullying targets another person repeatedly and may escalate in severity over time.

Harassment is when someone chronically annoys or torments another person.

This table describes the categories of bullying.

Category	Includes
Direct physical bullying	• hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property
Direct verbal bullying	• name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.

Indirect bullying	• action designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:
	  o lying and spreading rumors
	  o playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
	  o mimicking

Category	Includes
	o encouraging others to socially exclude someone o damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance
Cyberbullying	• direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies to hurt another person socially, psychologically or even physically. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces. Cyberbullying can occur in many ways, including the sending of abusive texts and emails, hurtful messages, images or videos, imitating others online, excluding others online, humiliating others online and nasty online gossip and chat.

What bullying is not:

Note: Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management.

Mutual conflict: involves an argument or disagreement between people but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
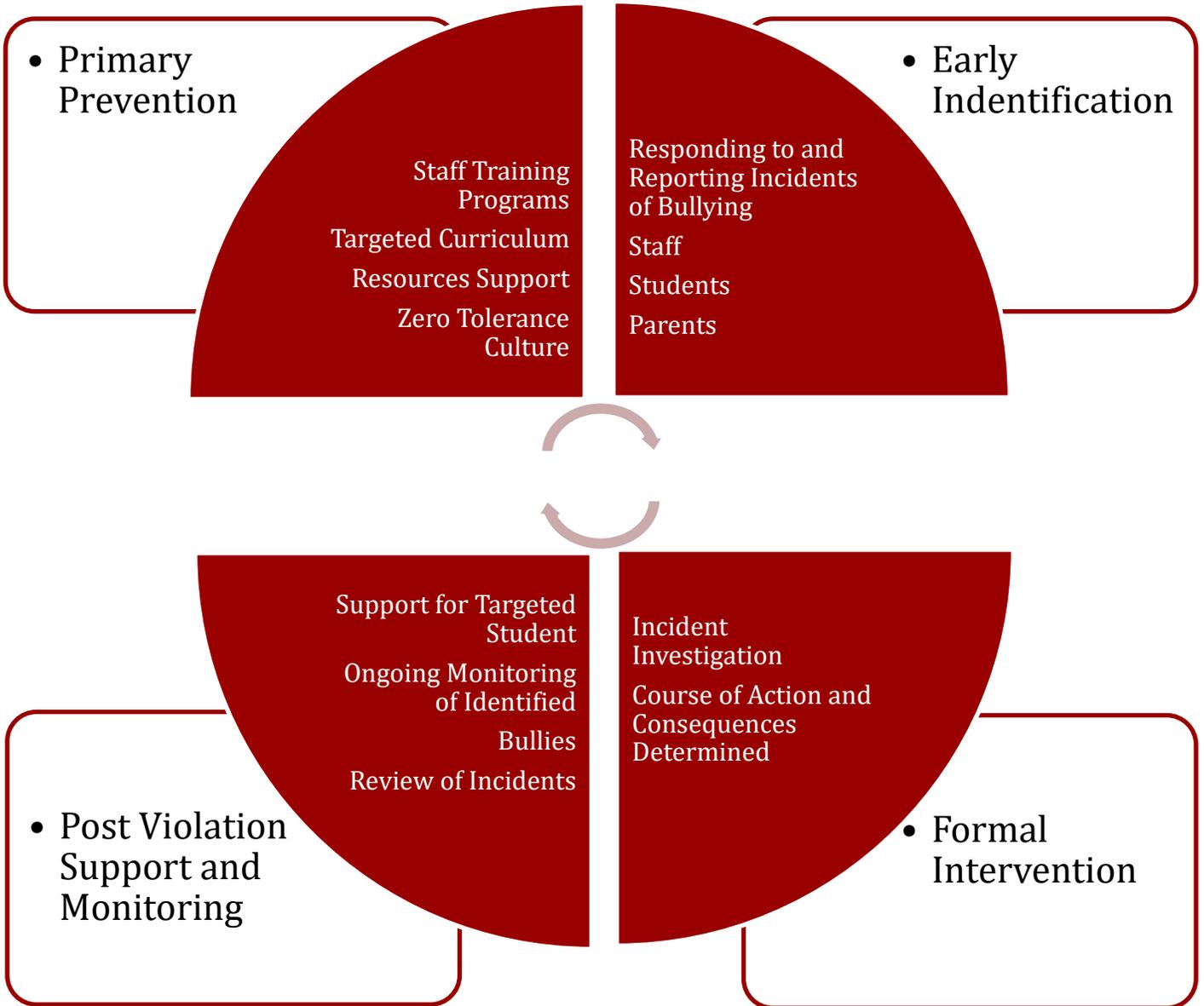
Social rejection or dislike: is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Single-episode acts: of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours.

Policy Statement

The College will adopt a whole school approach to addressing bullying and harassment and will seek to promote and support safe and respectful environments where bullying is not tolerated. The College will work in partnership with parents to reduce and manage bullying. As a college, we fully support Restorative Practices as a way of effectively confronting and reducing problems in school such as bullying by instilling a moral, ethical and social sense of fairness and justice amongst the school community.

Flinders Christian Community College

Proactive Response to Bullying Model

- Primary Prevention

- Early Indentification

Staff Training Programs

Targeted Curriculum

Resources Support

Zero Tolerance Culture

Responding to and Reporting Incidents of Bullying

Staff

Students

Parents

Support for Targeted Student

Ongoing Monitoring of Identified

Bullies

Review of Incidents

Incident Investigation

Course of Action and Consequences Determined

- Post Violation Support and Monitoring

- Formal Intervention

1. **Primary Prevention:**

- Professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and proven counter measures.
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the school's programs and response.
- Link on the College's student and staff portal and website to an online bullying helpline and other useful anti bullying resources.
- Providing programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify at the start of each year the school policy on bullying.
- The curriculum to include anti-bulling messages and strategies.
- Student leadership and SRC to empower students to exercise a positive influence and be a positive role model.
- Offering structured activities to students during lunch breaks.
- Awards at assemblies will give recognition to students who demonstrate positive behaviours towards their peers.
- Staff trained in using a Restorative Framework to conduct Circle Time, Informal Conferencing, Effective Interactions and Restorative Questions.
- The College has a 'Use of Digital Devices and Cybersafety Agreement' that parents and students agree to as a condition of entering the College. The agreement covers obligations, responsibilities and possible consequences, which underpin the Flinders Christian Community College values and mission statement.
- Reinforcement and rewards for positive behaviours.
- Classroom Meetings.
- Support Structures eg. College Chaplain.

2. **Early Identification**

- Staff should be observant of signs of bullying and, if observed, take appropriate action to address the behaviours observed, minimizing further risk to the victim. **Staff** should also report all observed bullying incidents involving students or student reported bullying incidents to **Heads of School** who will maintain a register of bullying incidents.
- Students and staff are encouraged to report bullying incidents involving themselves or others.

- **Students** can report via the 'Report a Bully' portal on the College Moodle intranet or discuss with a member of the College wellbeing team, Head of Year or Head of School.

- **Staff** can report bullying via their People and Culture campus representatives. Please refer to the Bullying Policy for staff on the People & Culture Moodle page.

- **Parents** are encouraged to contact the school directly if they become aware of a problem. Bullying and harassment concerns and complaints can be made informally, by telephone, Moodle message or face to face with relevant member of staff or formally in writing. The College Concerns and Complaints policy provides further information on this process.
- Appropriate spaces will be available for students to discuss their concerns with a teacher at recess and lunch breaks.
- Staff trained in Restorative Practice Formal Conferencing and Agreements.

3. **Formal Intervention:**

Where formal intervention is required, the College will uphold the following in its procedural fairness:

a) The right to be heard
b) The right to know the purpose of the process, that the process will be followed, and that the procedures and its consequences will be undertaken with integrity.
c) The right to be fully informed of the allegations and to have an opportunity to respond.
d) The right to appeal
e) The right for support through the intervention process, which may include a member of the College wellbeing team
f) Commit to ensure dispute resolution is treated fairly, confidentially and with transparency
g) Commit to endeavor to resolve as simply and quickly as possible.

- Once identified each bully, victim and witness will be spoken with separately and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented.
- Students identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations and have opportunity to respond.
- Both bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support.
- Parents will be contacted.
- In the case of cyberbullying, the College will assist to remove inappropriate content from all websites or digital technologies used for the purposes of bullying

4. **Post Violation:**

Consequences post violation will be implemented based on a determination of the severity of the bullying, the intended hurtfulness and degree of remorse.
If the behaviour is potentially criminal, the school may be bound by procedures deemed essential in dealing with prescribed or criminal behaviour that involves bullying.

- Consequences for students will be individually based and may involve:
  - exclusion from class
  - exclusion from school yard
  - lunch time or after school detention
  - suspension from school (internal or external)
  - withdrawal of privileges

- on-going counselling from appropriate persons for both offenders and persons being bullied.
- In the case of cyberbullying, devices may be subject to a period of withdrawal from school use.
- Ceased enrolment

Target Support

Factors involved in the bullying incident will be reviewed to best identify appropriate support for the target of bullying behaviour and monitor the behaviour of the identified bully.

The school will seek to identify, and therefore address, any triggers of bullying behaviour in students such as peer groups, environment (isolated areas in the playground), social and emotional skills, or teaching methods.

Report a Bully System

The Report a Bully system provides a way for students to report instances of bullying at our college, where it may be difficult or distressing for them to report this directly to staff. Students can elect to make their report anonymously.

The reports go to the Principals and Heads of School for the relevant campus.

Link Location

The 'Report a Bully' link is found under the 'Help' menu within Moodle.
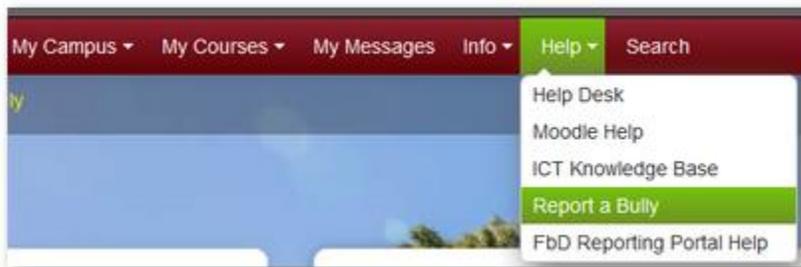
Communication of Policy

This policy will be communicated to the College community via:

- College Intranet
- Staff Handbook
- Newsletters
- Website

Implementation of Policy

This policy will be implemented through:

- Staff briefings and professional development activities
- Classroom discussions with students
- Programs facilitated by the College Chaplain
- School community information evenings.

Further Resources

Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner   www.esafety.gov.au

Kids Helpline Ph 1800 55 1800

Bullystoppers program www.education.vic.gov.au