



Harassment Policy

Specifically highlighting Racial Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Workplace Harassment and Bullying Behaviours

Rationale

St John the Apostle School fosters a climate of fairness, respect and safety. Diversity is not only accepted and tolerated but also welcomed, valued and celebrated. All staff, students, parents and visitors are able to participate and achieve in the full range of school programs and activities. It is expected that adults model appropriate communication as well as care and respect for each other at all times. Schools free of harassment are safe, happy and positive learning environments.

St John the Apostle School rejects harassment in all its forms. It is committed to structures, policies and practices that are free from harassment and contribute positively to the culture of the school. St John the Apostle Primary School is also committed to educating employees and students about the unacceptable nature of various forms of harassment and bullying behaviours.

Aims

The aims of St John the Apostle's Harassment Policy are to:

- assist in the maintenance of an environment for students and staff that is free from harassment, discrimination and bullying.
- inform members of the community what harassment is and what they can do should they encounter or observe it.
- ensure that allegations will be promptly, thoroughly, and impartially addressed.

Agreed Practice

Student to Student Harassment

- Any incident involving student to student harassment will be reported to the school Principal. When they receive a complaint they will listen, accept, legitimise, empathise and plan action. They will adopt a spirit of conciliation rather than confrontation, but ensure that the alleged harasser understands the unacceptable nature of harassment.
- Students' recollection of events are recorded, as well as the outcome of the reconciliation process and consequences or action taken.
- Parents will be informed and involved as necessary.

- School behaviour management procedures will be utilised where appropriate.
- The restoration to normal of the learning environment will be facilitated as soon as possible.
- The rights of all those involved will be respected and confidentiality maintained.
- Alleged criminal offences must be referred directly to the CEO and/or the ACT Police ph 131 444.
- Students may like to also contact the *Human Rights Office* ph 6207 0576, their immediate teacher or another member of staff.
- Note mandatory reporting requirements.
- School policies and practices will be revised regularly.
- Follow-up of students involved in serious incidents is essential. This may also involve regular monitoring for a period of time after the first reported incident.

Employee to Employee Harassment

Staff will nominate a colleague to act as Workplace Harassment Contact Officer for the school year.

The role of a Contact Officer in a school is very specific. Contact Officers should:

- Volunteer to do the job.
- Reflect the diversity of the staff within the school.
- Have appropriate knowledge and skills.
- Take discrimination and harassment seriously.
- Empathise with staff experiencing difficulties.
- Publicise their role.
- Provide **completely confidential** one-to-one support to complainants or alleged discriminators by providing information about available options.
- Assist all staff to understand their rights and responsibilities

Contact Officers should not :

- Support more than one party to a complaint.
 - Make judgements.
 - Sympathise.
 - Give advice.
 - Make decisions for the people they are supporting.
 - Investigate or attempt to resolve a complaint.
 - Advocate or represent individuals.
- In the first instance staff members may seek help and advice from the school's Workplace Harassment Contact Officer, CEO Contact Officers, the Head of Human Resources Division at the CEO, or their Union to provide information and assistance in making a complaint.

- Individuals may make a formal complaint, verbally or in writing, to their Workplace Harassment Contact Officer, the School Principal or the Head of Human Resources at the CEO who will ensure timeliness, confidentiality, fairness and protection from victimisation in responding to the complaint. Individuals may also lodge a complaint with the Commonwealth Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, ACT Human Rights Office.
- Persons who are the subject of a complaint must be fully informed of the allegations against them. This includes knowing who has made the complaint and whom the offending actions have been towards.
- Persons who are the subject of a complaint must be given full opportunity to respond to the allegations and raise any matters in their own defence.
- The allegations should be properly investigated, all parties heard and relevant submissions considered.
- Irrelevant matters should not be taken into account.
- Persons who make an allegation cannot be involved in determining the outcome.
- The decision maker must act fairly and without bias.
- It is important that the confidentiality of all parties to the complaint, i.e. complainant, respondent, witnesses and complaint handlers is maintained.
- Final responsibility for ensuring that these requirements are met rests with the Director of the Catholic Education Office.

Definitions

Bullying, harassment and discrimination can occur between students, between a student and an adult or between adults. It is acknowledged that harassment is a form of discrimination and that certain forms of harassment are unlawful. All reports of harassment will be treated seriously and investigated promptly, confidentially and impartially. It is also acknowledged that inaction may also amount to an implicit authorisation or encouragement of discrimination or harassment. This means that a teacher or principal who 'turns a blind eye' to discrimination or forms of harassment by offenders may be liable on the basis of authorising or assisting discrimination.

Bullying, harassment and discrimination includes a wide range of unwelcome and unsolicited behaviours that are largely defined by the offended person. Bullying, harassment and discrimination can be defined as the repeated less favourable treatment of a person in the workplace, which may be considered an unreasonable and inappropriate workplace practice. It includes behaviour that intimidates, offends, degrades or humiliates an employee, possibly in front of others and can involve employees/managers, contractors, visitors, parents or caregivers.

These behaviours include:

- Belittling opinions or unconstructive criticism either verbally or in a non-verbal form.
- Isolating an employee from normal work.
- Denying opportunities for interactions, training and development, or career opportunities.
- Undermining work performance, deliberately withholding work-related information or resources.
- Overwork, unnecessary pressure or impossible deadlines.
- Unexplained job changes, meaningless tasks, underwork, task beyond a person's skill and failure to give credit where credit is due.
- Teasing or regularly being made the brunt of pranks or practical jokes.
- Displaying written or pictorial material or sending emails that degrade or offend.
- Unreasonable administrative sanctions.
- Yelling, screaming, abuse, offensive language, insults, inappropriate comments about a person's appearance, life style, slandering an employee or his/her family.

Racism refers to any belief, attitude, behaviour, or practice, which reflects an assumption, stated or implied, of superiority of one cultural group over another. It is expressed through prejudice or discrimination and may take various forms. It can be overt or covert and directed against individuals or groups. Racism can also be institutionalised into policies, practices and structures. Racism is directed towards individuals or groups on the basis of their colour, race, descent, nationality and/or ethnicity. It can be based on actual or supposed features of body, culture, language, religion, history, or other attributes.

Sexual Harassment is not about sexual attention but rather power relationships. A person subjects another person to sexual harassment if he/she makes an unwelcome sexual advance, makes an unwelcome request for sexual favours or engages in other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. It is also necessary that the recipient reasonably feels offended, humiliated, or intimidated by the unwelcome conduct. In broad terms, sexual harassment in schools can be distinguished into four broad categories;

- Gender based (jokes regarding the other person's gender).
- Sexual based (sexually orientated teasing or joking, ogling or leering, gestures, displaying sexually graphic material).
- Sexuality based (homophobic comments and or behaviour).
- Criminal based (rape, sexual assault, obscene phone calls, text messages).

Resources

Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth)

Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT)

CEO Sexual Harassment Policy:

http://www.ceo.cangoul.catholic.edu.au/policies/sexual_harassment.htm

CEO Equal Opportunity (ACT) Policy:

http://www.ceo.cangoul.catholic.edu.au/policies/eeo_act.htm

CEO Disability Discrimination Policy:

<http://www.ceo.cangoul.catholic.edu.au/policies/disability.htm>

Related Policies / Agreed Practices

Complaints Resolution Policy

Grievances and Disputes Policy

Responding to Allegations Agreed Practice

Review

The St John the Harassment Policy is reviewed at least once each five years in line with current Registration practices. It may also be reviewed more often according to the need and educational trends.

Reviewed by:	Matthew Egan-Richards
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Approved by:	School Executive
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