Policy Statement

ANTI-HARASSMENT / ANTI-BULLYING

Date: June 2016

Aim
To reduce the incidence of harassment at St Martins Lutheran College and to provide a procedure for dealing with harassment, should it occur.

This policy applies to all members of the school community, including teachers, students, parents, ancillary staff, volunteers and student teachers. Please note that harassment and bullying are synonymous terms.

Rationale
Harassment affects a person’s well being, self-confidence, work and relationships with others. It is totally against the ethos of the College and may also be against the law. We believe that all members of the school community have equal right:

- To be treated fairly by fellow students and staff (and therefore we all show respect for each other).
- To feel safe and secure (and therefore we will support and encourage others in their work).
- To learn and grow towards their full potential (and therefore we will support and encourage others in their work).
- To feel valued, accepted and cared for as unique individuals (and therefore we will listen to each other, encouraging self-expression and we will accept each other as we are).
- To have their own property (and therefore we will respect and protect the property of others).

Implementation
The following grievance procedure is to be covered at the beginning of each school year in all classes. The policy and grievance procedure are an essential part of orientation of staff and students.

Acting against harassment
If you are guilty of harassment, stop now!

If you witness harassment you can do something about it and thereby protect others.

- Change your friendship group if it becomes involved in bullying or hurting others.
- Report harassment, so that both bullies and victims can receive help.
- Speak out against bullying as witnessing bullying without comment provides support for the bully.

If you are being harassed, you can take action.

The aim of the following process is to stop harassment by helping you to resolve the situation with the harasser. It is best if the harassment can be stopped by working it out, through discussions, repentance, forgiveness and acceptance to restore positive relations.
Options

Act alone:
- You may choose to do nothing, however, the harassment could continue.
- Approach the person who is harassing you and request that the offending behaviour stops.

Share the problem:
- Discuss the situation with a friend, parent, brother, sister, teacher, Principal or anyone with whom you feel comfortable.
- Discuss the situation with the Chaplain.

What next?
- You may simply wish to discuss the situation with one of the contact people listed above.
- If you wish, they will help you to consider appropriate action.
- You may wish to approach the person who is harassing you with one of these people.
- or
- They may approach the harasser on your behalf.
- It may be useful to keep a written record of the incidents that occur and give a copy to the contact person. This will help you both clarify the issue and explain to the harasser that their behaviour is unacceptable.

Remember
Confidentiality will be respected at all times unless you say otherwise.
You may stop or start at any point in the grievance procedure. In all cases the person dealing with the complaint will not take any action without your permission.

Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment is illegal and unacceptable. St Martins Lutheran College is committed to creating an environment free from sexual harassment. This policy deals with what to do if a student is sexually harassed by another student at school.

What is sexual harassment?
Sexual harassment is a form of bullying. It is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature against another person, where the other person reasonably feels offended, humiliated or intimidated. It can include:
- Sexual remarks;
- Written comments, text messages or emails with sexual content;
- Showing or sending the person pictures of a sexual nature;
- Touching another person inappropriately and
- Any other conduct of a sexual nature.

What happens if you are sexually harassed at school?
If you are sexually harassed at school you should promptly report the behaviour to the Heads of School or Principal. The school will investigate the matter, which may include:
- Asking you for detailed information about what happened. We will speak to you in private and you are welcome to have a support person with you.
- Examining any offensive material that has been shown, sent or given to you, which may also be confiscated.
- Gathering information from others at the school. We may need to speak to anyone else who saw what happened or heard what was said.
- In the case of suspected criminal behaviour, such as an assault, a report will be made to the Police.

If it appears that sexual harassment may have occurred, the school will make every attempt to resolve the matter, that is, to see that the behaviour is stopped.
Students may involve parents at any stage
Solving the problem at school level is often easier and more efficient. However it must be realised that this anti-harassment policy is not just a school-based matter. It is based on the Federal Sex Discrimination Act, 1984 and the Equal Opportunity Act (SA), 1984. Consequently, ongoing harassment may lead to the involvement of the police if the problem cannot be resolved at the school level.

Outcomes of harassment
St Martins Lutheran College views harassment as a serious matter and offenders will be dealt with under the College Behaviour Management Policy. However, the primary aim of any intervention will be to restore positive relationships, to heal hurt and to establish a renewed understanding of our life together in a Christian community.

Definitions
Harassment is ongoing and deliberate activity which negatively affects a person’s well being, self confidence, work or relationships with others. Harassment can be face to face, in writing, via a third person or through electronic means.

Harassment can include bullying, racism and sex based harassment.

Bullying includes:
- Physical bullying such as pushing, hitting, spitting or damaging the property of others.
- Verbal bullying, such as repeated ‘put downs’, name calling, ridiculing, threatening or spreading rumours.
- Gesture bullying, such as making rude or threatening signs.
- Extortion bullying, such as demanding money, food or other belongings.

Racial harassment includes:
- Deliberate or repeated racist comments, gestures, or any other conduct which hurts people based on their nationality, country of origin, colour of skin, ancestry or any related beliefs or behaviours.

Sex-based harassment includes:
- Sexist harassment – behaviour which insists that gender stereotypes be maintained and exercised in the school or work place.
- Sexual harassment – sexual behaviour which is deliberate, uninvited, unwelcome, and usually repeated and which is perceived by the recipient to be embarrassing, offensive, demeaning or compromising.
- Sexual assault – a term which covers a number of criminal offences.

Harassment of any kind is unwanted and unwelcome.

References
SMLC Behaviour Management Policy
Federal Sex Discrimination Act, 1984
Equal Opportunity Act (SA), 1984

Review Date and Specifications
To be reviewed: June 2018