



# Lake Joondalup Baptist College

## **Relationship Management Policy #: 38**

**Policy reviewed date: 2020**

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# Relationship Management Policy

## Guidelines

Lake Joondalup Baptist College respects the right for every student to obtain the best possible education they can. Through respect for ourselves and for others, we aim to create a friendly, safe and welcoming College environment. Our Charter of Goodwill is the focus for self-discipline for each student. Lake Joondalup Baptist College is committed to ensuring that the environment fosters positive relationships free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying.

## Our aims are to:

- foster positive relationships within the College
- foster an environment where all members of the College community are treated with kindness, dignity, courtesy and respect
- create an atmosphere where students, teachers and others feel safe and are safe
- promote appropriate standards of conduct at all times
- encourage the reporting of inappropriate behaviour
- provide an effective procedure for resolving complaints in a sensitive, fair and timely manner
- employ forgiveness.

## What is bullying?

There is no universally accepted definition of bullying. It is important to have a clear understanding of exactly what bullying is in order to deal with it effectively. Some behaviours which may be distressing to your child, such as mutual arguments, would not be considered as bullying.

Bullying is usually repeated behaviour and generally involves an imbalance of power between the individuals. The imbalance of power could arise from differences in age, ability, physical strength, social status or some other attribute.

Bullying is usually done with the intent to disrupt physically or emotionally, but it can also be an unintentional process, where people are insensitive to the feelings of others and the effects of their actions. It is "recipient defined", i.e. "It was only a joke" or "She/He doesn't mind" is never an acceptable excuse for bullying behaviour.

Harassment and bullying complaints rely on the perception of the complainant, rather than the respondent. This behaviour may be planned or spontaneous.

- bullying or any form of harassment is unacceptable and should not occur
- bullying and harassment result in an unhappy, unsafe and unproductive working environment
- bullying and harassment can affect students, staff and other members of the College community including parents, visitors and workplace participants at the College.

## Actions that dislocate relationships

### Verbal

- putting 'people down' through comments, jokes or mimicking
- name calling
- teasing about another's appearance or beliefs
- derogatory comments made on the basis of race, culture, sexuality, socio-economic status or any other individual difference
- intimidation or verbal abuse directed towards a person with different abilities
- intimidating or harassing telephone calls or texts
- practical jokes which may be hurtful.

### Visual/Physical

- non-verbal gestures which are designed to intimidate eg, negative body language
- displaying offensive materials, pictures or objects
- writing offensive notes, letters and graffiti

- cyberbullying: offensive use of email, mobile phone, internet or other technology
- pushing, hitting, pinching, kicking and other unwelcome physical contact used intentionally to intimidate or hurt someone
- unwelcome touching or brushing against another
- damaging, stealing, hiding or destroying another's property or possessions
- disrespect for, or invasion of, personal space and property eg, going through personal belongings eating food purchased by an individual for their own consumption, borrowing without permission, listening into phone conversations, etc.

#### Relational

- hurting others by damaging or manipulating relationships eg, spreading rumours that cause individuals to be rejected by others
- social exclusion by deliberately excluding another from a group of friends
- writing, sending or delivering harassing notes
- telling others not to associate with or like someone.

### **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, mobile phone, instant messaging, and social media, to support the repeated, harmful and negative behaviour by an individual or group towards another individual or group.

According to Bernard and Milne (2008) the main forms of cyber bullying are:

- Flaming: online fights using electronic communication with angry or vulgar messages
- Harassment: repeatedly sending nasty, mean or insulting messages
- Denigration: posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
- Outing: sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online
- Exclusion: Intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
- Cyber stalking: repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear.

### **Extortion**

Pressuring and intimidating others to act against their will eg, giving up possessions, money, buying food and drink for bribery purposes, doing work for others or committing minor offences for them.

### **Dealing with harassment and bullying**

Lake Joondalup Baptist College is committed to ensuring that all staff, students and members of the College community are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect. We therefore request that any person with a concern or complaint provides the College with an opportunity to resolve the matter. You are encouraged to take one of the following approaches:

- the student speaks directly to the person(s) causing the offence and informs them that it is unwelcome and to stop
- talk to a friend or family member who is understanding for support or advice and who will inform the College
- talk to a Connect teacher/teacher
- talk to a Head of House
- talk to one of the Chaplains

Please note: Parents should contact the relevant Head of House in all cases of alleged bullying.

### **What is not bullying?**

While it is important to understand and define what bullying is, it is also important to be clear which behaviours are NOT bullying. For some people, 'bullying' is a highly emotive term and its use may lead to a strong reaction (Rigby, 2010).

The National Centre Against Bullying acknowledges that while the following behaviours are often upsetting to those involved, they do NOT constitute bullying:

- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence
- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)
- not liking someone or a single act of social rejection
- one-off acts of meanness or spite

While these behaviours would not be considered bullying because they do not involve deliberate and repeated harm and a power imbalance, they need to be addressed in the same way as other inappropriate student behaviours. If parents are concerned about these behaviours, they should contact their child's Head of House.

### **Role of the Head of House**

- to treat all reports of bullying and harassment seriously, promptly and discreetly
- to take all reasonable steps to prevent bullying and harassment from occurring in any context directly related to the College, including behaviour that occurs while travelling to and from the College, during co-curricular activities, camps and other College functions
- to ensure that complainants and those involved in the process do not suffer further disadvantage, retaliation or threats
- to offer support/counselling to all students involved
- to raise awareness of the effects of bullying on relationships.

### **Response to alleged bullying on campus**

On the report of an incidence of alleged bullying the Head of House will interview the complainant.

1. The safety of the complainant and his/her welfare is considered at this stage. Where a child is distressed a staff member will remain with the student.
2. Witnesses and bystanders are required to write a report and are interviewed.
3. The respondent writes a report and is interviewed, allowing them to speak freely offering their perspective of the situation.
4. Where bullying is evident, this will be discussed with the bully. The bully is also warned regarding any revenge/having friends take revenge and further bullying of the complainant.
5. Parents will be called in for a meeting and the bully issued with an appropriate consequence.
6. The complainant is provided with ongoing support structures from their Head of House, keeping parents informed.
7. A record will be kept of all reported incidents on the College data base.

### **Response to bullying that has occurred off-campus**

Lake Joondalup Baptist College reserves the right to interview students and, if appropriate, impose formal discipline strategies when any act takes place on or off-campus which results in disharmony or threatens to cause a substantial and material disruption or interference with the rights of students to be safe and secure on campus.

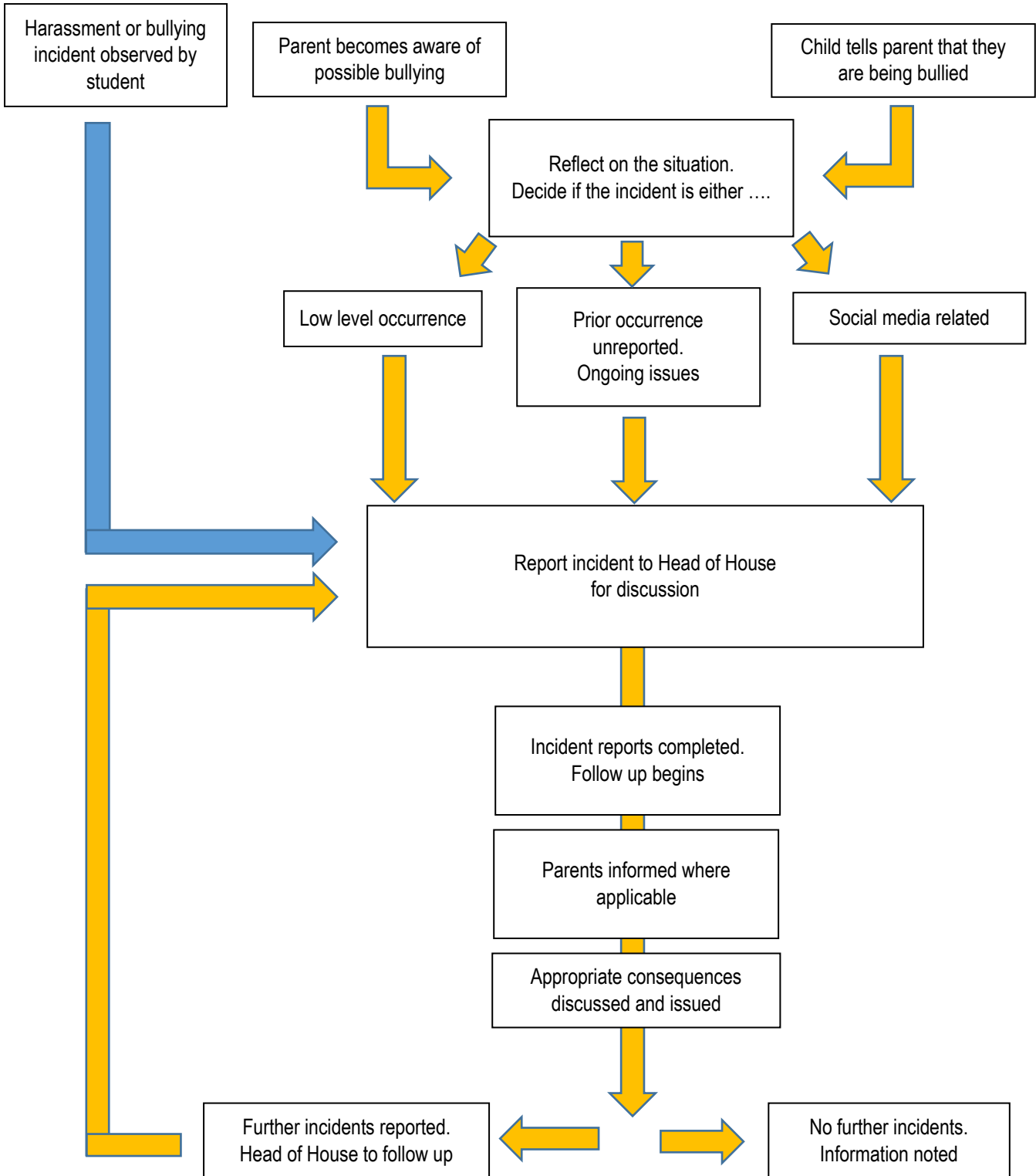
This includes, but is not limited to:

- bullying or intimidation at shopping centres, on public transport, on social media or mobile devices. Sanctions may include detention, suspension or exclusion from the College, even for once off situations.

### **Why can't the College tell me more about the consequences for the bully?**

The College cannot provide personal information about other students due to privacy laws. Therefore, parents are expected to focus on supporting their own child and trust the College will deal with the situation. The College is also unable to provide specific information about disciplinary measures, as each incident is assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking the individual students into consideration.

## Response to Behaviour Which Causes Disharmony



*This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Resolution of Parents and Students Complaints and Grievances Policy*