

Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Hazing Policy

Sancta Sophia College

1. Principles

Sancta Sophia College recognises that everyone has the right to live, study and work in a safe, respectful, inclusive and supportive environment, free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and hazing. All members of the Sancta community have a responsibility to safeguard this environment.

Any form of bullying, harassment, discrimination or hazing is a serious breach of Sancta's values and Code of Conduct and, in some cases, may be unlawful. Such behaviour will not be tolerated.

2. Scope

This policy applies to staff, students (residential and associate), Council members and guests of Sancta Sophia College. It covers behaviours that constitute bullying, harassment, discrimination and hazing.

3. Definition of terms

3.1. Bullying

Bullying is repeated and unacceptable behaviour directed towards a person or group of people that:

- belittles, intimidates or threatens
- creates a risk to health, safety or dignity
- a reasonable person, having regard for the circumstances, would see as unreasonable, victimising, offensive, humiliating or threatening.

Bullying can occur face to face, by telephone, email, text, social media, through another person or by any other means. Some examples are:

- verbal abuse, threats, intimidation
- shouting, ordering, belittling
- swearing at a person, putting down, humiliating
- deliberately excluding or isolating someone, being particularly cold or distant
- name calling, insulting jokes
- spreading misinformation, rumours, gossip, or innuendo
- pressure to change personal life, beliefs, opinions
- continually ignoring or dismissing someone's contribution
- physical abuse or intimidation

3.2. Harassment

Harassment is any type of behaviour that:

- the other person does not want, and
- offends, embarrasses, insults, humiliates, intimidates or frightens them
- targets them because of their race, gender, marital status, sexual preference or orientation, disability, illness, age, family or carer responsibility, social origin, political belief (or absence of political belief), religious belief (or absence of religious belief), and
- in the circumstances, a reasonable person would consider offensive, embarrassing, insulting, humiliating, intimidating or frightening.

Harassment can occur in the form of verbal, non-verbal and physical behaviour. Although harassment is often repeated, a single action can be enough to amount to harassment.

Examples include:

- making fun of someone because of their race, disability, age, sex, sexuality etc.
- spreading innuendo, gossip rumours, including about someone's sexual relationships or practices
- imitating someone's accent or disability
- repeated, unwanted or unwelcome invitations to go out with someone/sleep with someone etc.
- offensive jokes
- repeated, unwelcome questions about someone's personal or sexual life
- obscene, racist, sexist, homophobic etc. phone calls, emails, text messages, social media posts or other communication
- displaying or sharing pornographic, sexually suggestive, racist or other offensive, degrading or insulting materials
- unnecessary physical contact such as pinching, patting, hugging, touching, kissing or brushing up against a person against their will
- offensive hand or body gestures.

Some types of harassment, as well as being against Sancta policy, are also illegal under criminal law. For example:

- indecent, sexual or physical assault of any type
- displaying the sexual parts of one's body
- unwanted touching of the sexual parts of someone else's body
- stalking

Note: Sancta has a policy that specifically addresses sexual misconduct and sexual harassment - the *Sexual Harm and Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy*. Please refer to this policy for further information, definitions, processes and available supports in the event of an incident of this nature.

3.3. Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when a distinction is made between individuals or groups of people so as to disadvantage some and advantage others. Discrimination may be direct or indirect.

- Direct discrimination occurs when a person, or a group of people, is treated less favourably than another person, or group of people, because of one or more characteristics, such as gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion or social background.
- Indirect discrimination results when a requirement, rule, policy or practice that appears to treat everyone the same has a disproportionately unfair impact on particular people, or groups of people, when it is applied.

As well as being contrary to Sancta's values and a breach of the College's Code of College, discrimination is often illegal under criminal law.

3.4. Hazing

Hazing is defined as:

*Any action taken, or any situation created intentionally, that causes embarrassment, harassment or ridicule and risks emotional and/or physical harm to members of a group or team, whether new or not, regardless of a person's willingness to participate.*¹

and

*An activity that a high-status member orders other members to engage in, or suggests that they engage in, that in some way humbles a newcomer who lacks the power to resist, because he or she wants to gain admission into a group.*²

An activity may be deemed to be hazing even though there is willingness to participate or in the case of the giving of consent. In many situations, individuals may be told they do not have to participate in an activity; however, group dynamics and a desire to fit in can make refusal or opting out a seemingly impossible option.

To assess whether a practice is hazing, the following will be considered, noting that not all conditions have to be present for a behaviour or practice to be deemed as hazing:

- Is there a real or perceived power imbalance between those proposing the activity and the participants in the activity? Is there anything in the activity that strengthens the power or authority of one over another?
- Do participants feel a degree of pressure to go along with the activity? Does the participant have to risk their sense of belonging to say 'no'?
- Does this activity stand up to the scrutiny of a reasonable person outside the situation?
- Does the activity have a reasonable probability of causing emotional, physical, reputational or other harm to participants either in the moment or at a later point in time?

Often the word "tradition" is used to justify conduct or behaviour that would otherwise be identified as hazing. Whilst traditions have their place in any community, at Sancta this is not an acceptable excuse for hazing behaviour.

4. Sancta's response to incidents of bullying, harassment, discrimination and hazing

Sancta is committed to maintaining an environment in which bullying, harassment, discrimination or hazing do not occur. Such behaviours will not be tolerated.

Allegations of bullying, harassment, discrimination or hazing will be responded to by the College Principal or Vice Principal, or an appointed delegate, in accordance with the College's *Disclosures, Complaints and Investigations Policy*.

¹ Hazing prevention n.d., What hazing looks like, Available at <http://hazingprevention.org/home/hazing/facts-what-hazing-looks-like> Cited in Broderick & Co, *Cultural Renewal at the University of Sydney Residential Colleges*, 2017, and accessed 6 February 2019.

² Nuwer, H 2001, *Wrongs of passage: Fraternities, sororities, hazing, and binge drinking*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Cited in Broderick & Co, *Cultural Renewal at the University of Sydney Residential Colleges*, 2017.

Disciplinary action will be taken against students who have been found to have engaged in bullying, harassing, discriminatory or hazing behaviours, up to and including expulsion from the College.

5. Resources available to support students

Students are encouraged to share concerns they have with their Resident Assistant (RA), Vice Principal, Principal or any other member of staff. Staff will listen without judgement, provide support, respect any decisions for action and guide complainants towards the right services or processes.

If a student raises concerns regarding bullying, harassment, discrimination or hazing, the processes described in the *Sancta Sophia College Disclosures, Complaints and Investigations Policy* will be followed, in consultation with the student alleging the behaviour and with reference to that student's needs.

After hours, students can call the RA on duty Duty phone, Principal or Vice Principal directly, if required.

Duty RA: 0419 479 832

Vice Principal (Brigid Carrigan): 0429 030 041

Principal (Fiona Hastings): 0418 459 583

University of Sydney resources

Campus Security / Protective Services	9351 3333 1800 SYD HLP 1800 793 457	24 hours
Counselling and Psychological Services	8627 8433	9am – 5pm Monday to Friday Jane Foss Russell Building
University Health Services	9351 3484	8:30am – 5pm Monday to Friday Wentworth Building
Safer Communities Office	8627 6808 or email safer-communities.officer@sydney.edu.au	9am – 5pm Monday to Friday

Other resources

NSW Rape Crisis Centre	1800 424 017 (24 hours)
1800RESPECT www.1800respect.org.au	1800 737 732 (24 hours)
Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Sexual Assault Service (Ground Floor, KGV Building, RPAH)	9515 9040 (Monday to Friday, business hours)

	9515 6111 (after hours)
NSW Police	Emergency: dial 000
Newtown Police 222 Australia St, Newtown, 2042	9550 8199
Glebe Police 1 Talfourd St, Glebe, 2037	9522 8099

6. Links to other Policies and documents

- *Sancta Sophia College Disclosures, Complaints and Investigations Policy*
- *Sancta Sophia College Sexual Harm and Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy*