



College Harmony Guide

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Purpose

The College Harmony Guide is intended to provide all members of the College with an overview of how to commit and contribute to a culture of harmony. The Harmony Guide sits beside the existing College Policies relating to behaviour, bullying and harassment. The Guide's purpose is to:

- provide education and direction for all members of our community to live harmoniously
- outline the behaviours and practices that disrupt harmony and reflect discrimination
- identify daily practices that challenge harmony
- outline how the College community will respond to behaviours that promote discrimination and disharmony

Rationale

The College is a community committed to serving one another through compassion, tolerance, understanding and respect. This Guide also reflects the values and College Mission Statement to live true to the story of the Good Samaritan as people of hope, living compassionately and justly. The College Mission Statement asks the community to respond to the call from Jesus to be a neighbour to all. "Who is my neighbour? The one who showed mercy. Go and do likewise" (Lk 10:36-37).

Definition

A culture of harmony is when people live and work together in mutual respect and tolerance of one another, despite differences. It involves the process of sharing peace and maintaining the dignity of others.

Discrimination reflects a lack of *harmony* between people or peoples. It exists when people are intolerant of another person's background and treat them unfairly because of this. It can include but is not limited to:

- age
- disability (physical or intellectual), or
- race, including colour, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status
- sex, pregnancy, marital or relationship status, family responsibilities

- sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status.

(Australian Human Rights Commission, 2022)

Discrimination happens when a person, or a group of people, is treated less favourably than another person or group because of their background or certain personal characteristics. This is known as 'direct discrimination'. (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2022)

Indirect discrimination may occur when the processes, laws, policies or the culture of an institution may ignore the impact or existence of discrimination.

Types of Discrimination explained by the Australian Human Rights Commission (2022):

Racial discrimination: occurs when a person is treated less favourably, or not given the same opportunities, as others in a similar situation, because of their race, the country where they were born, their ethnic origin or their skin colour. It can include behaviours of exclusion, ridicule, offensive jokes, racial slurs or name-calling, and physical harassment.

Religious discrimination: is discrimination on the ground of religious belief or activity. It can include behaviours of exclusion, teasing or ridiculing comments made about a person's beliefs, way of dress or physical appearance, as well as slogans, jokes, or cartoons that target a religion or religious group or individual.

Sex discrimination: occurs when someone is treated less favourably, or not given the same opportunities as a person of a different sex, because of their sex. It can include behaviours of exclusion, ridicule, offensive jokes or comments about a person's life or body, as well as physical harassment.

Sexual orientation discrimination: happens when a person is treated less favourably than another person in a similar situation because he or she has a sexual orientation towards persons of the same sex; persons of a different sex; or persons of the same sex and persons of a different sex. It can include behaviours of exclusion, ridicule, offensive jokes or comments about a person's life or physical appearance, way of dress, as well as offensive name calling and physical harassment.

Age discrimination: occurs when a person is treated less favourably, or not given the same opportunities as others in a similar situation, because they are considered to be too old or too young. It can include behaviours of exclusion, ridicule, offensive jokes and physical harassment.

Disability discrimination: occurs when a person is treated less favourably, or not given the same opportunities as others in a similar situation, because of their disability. It can include when rules or policies are the same for everyone, but have an unfair effect on people with a particular disability, as well as mocking people, teasing them and making jokes about their disability (physical, intellectual or social).

Rights and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility and right of all students, staff and parents who are a part of the College community to:

- feels safe, supported, and treated with dignity and respect
- to use their voice to challenge disharmony and use these College processes set out to them to ensure harmony is upheld as an important aspect of College life

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF ALL COLLEGE COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- Promote respectful language towards one another.
- Ensure all interactions are positive.
- Ensure our body language is inclusive and not exclusive (e.g. deliberately and publicly avoiding being near a person).
- Be open to each other and embrace differences.
- Hold each other accountable, especially among your friends and family.
- Be mindful of what you post on social media - everything you post will have an audience.
- Be mindful of the pages you follow, and posts you share and like.
- Embrace other cultures and communities and don't put each other down.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS:

- If a student sees something they believe is harmful to the harmony of the community, - speak up, report it to an adult and seek guidance/advice on how to resolve it.
- Empower others to speak up and call out behaviours that reflect discrimination
- Be considerate of other ideas without forcing biased views on others - hear people out.
- Be respectful of others ideals, even if you do not agree with them
- Be considerate of the dignity of others and do not share the personal information of others (i.e. gender identity, sexuality).
- Be respectful of your language, conversations and content when in public, in classrooms and online in group posts and chats .
- Be considerate of things you post and 'like' and how they may be interpreted by other people and their lifestyle.

EXPECTATIONS OF STAFF:

- To model harmonious, respectful and tolerant behaviours through their daily actions.
- To review content presented and ensure safe, supportive and appropriate measures are in place when addressing sensitive topics in the context of the curriculum
- To uphold the College Policies, Mission Statement and educate students on discrimination.
- To give voice to victims and respond with compassion and justice.
- To challenge discriminatory behaviours by students and advocate tolerance and equality.
- To be culturally competent.

EXPECTATIONS OF FAMILIES:

- Be aware that their behaviours will be modelled by their children (i.e. ways of speaking about and treating others, telling jokes, prejudiced assumptions, offensive names, etc.).
- Be conscious of the values and opinions that challenge the values of the College, its Mission and this Guide.
- Maintain awareness and support of this Guide, and the processes and policies outlined by the College

COLLEGE PROCESSES FOR MANAGING ISSUES THAT ARISE:

The College will respond to matters of discrimination and harm to the culture of the community in accordance with its Policies relating to:

- Behaviour Development Policy
- SMMC Against Bullying Policy
- School Expectations for Responsible Use of Social Media
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Code of Conduct Parents and Volunteers

All members of the community are urged to report any instances of behaviour that impact the dignity of members and groups in the community. This includes but is not limited to: name-calling, offensive jokes, racial targeting, sexual harassment, exclusion, sharing offensive material online, offensive posts, or content sharing that is prejudiced and is deemed offensive in line with this Guide.

The College Leadership Team will address these matters on an individual basis in communication with the parties affected. In most instances, the College will apply appropriate disciplinary action following the Policies of the College outlined above, and aim to work with all affected parties to restore harmony and support for members impacted. Ongoing education and awareness raising will apply to individuals or groups who act against the culture and harmony of the community.

A GUIDE TO FOLLOW:

What to say,

When you experience targeted behaviour

- If comfortable, use an assertive (non-aggressive) voice to ‘call out’ the behaviour as wrong
 - “I didn’t appreciate you saying that”, “That was not okay”
 - “People shouldn’t say things like that, especially in a large group of diverse people, it is hurtful and offensive”
- Educate people about why the behaviour is wrong
 - Highlight behaviour that reflects a lack of understanding
 - Talk to people about new or alternative views
- If not comfortable speaking up:
 - Remove yourself from the situation,
 - Change the subject,
 - Talk to someone you trust to get help on how to handle the situation and the person / people.

When you witness targeted behaviour

- If comfortable, use an assertive (non-aggressive) voice to 'call out' the behaviour as wrong
 - "That was out of line and not okay", "You need to stop talking like that", "Let's move on and let it go"
- Speak to the target and offer them help. Check if they're okay, "Are you alright?", "Can I get some help for you", "Would you like to talk about what just happened?"

What to do,

When you experience targeted behaviour:

- Avoid retaliating
- Seek support from trusted individuals (family, peers, staff)
- Contact teachers if you require support in classes that you share with the offender

When you witness targeted behaviour:

- Use your body language to support the target through your eye contact or by standing beside them
- Try to ensure the situation does not escalate
- Take evidence of the behaviour and report it
- Offer to help the target seek support

Where to go if you experience or witness targeted behaviour:

1. A trusted adult
2. Report to a member of staff at school
3. A counsellor
4. A trusted friend
5. A support service for advice

SUPPORT SERVICES:

Beyond Blue: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/support-service/chat> /1300 224 636

Emergency Services: 000

Kids Helpline: <https://kidshelpline.com.au> / 1800 55 1800 (24/7)

13YARN: <https://www.13yarn.org.au> / 13 92 76 (24/7)

Headspace: <https://headspace.org.au> / 1800 650 890

Lifeline: <https://www.lifeline.org.au> / 13 11 14 (24/7)

Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network: <https://myan.org.au/>

Q Life: 1800 184 527 / Webchat: <https://qlife.org.au/> (3pm-midnight / 7)

Townsville Multicultural Support Group Inc: <https://www.tmsg.org.au/programs>

Headspace Yarn Safe: <https://headspace.org.au/yarn-safe/>

Parentline: <https://parentline.com.au/> / 1300 30 1300

DEFINITIONS

Culture

is the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time.

Dignity

is the importance and value that a person has, that makes other people respect them or makes them respect themselves.

Discrimination

is treating a person or particular group of people differently, especially in a worse way from the way in which you treat other people, because of their race, gender, sexuality, etc.

Harmony

is a situation in which people are peaceful and agree with each other, or when things seem right or suitable together.

Responsibility

is something that is your job or duty to deal with.

Right

is the fact that a person or animal can expect to be treated in a fair, morally acceptable, or legal way, or to have the things that are necessary for life.

(Definitions sourced from: Cambridge University Press & Assessment (2023). *English Dictionary* <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/>)

REFERENCES

Australian Human Rights Commission. (2022). *Discrimination* <https://humanrights.gov.au/quick-guide/12030>

Cambridge University Press & Assessment (2023). *English Dictionary* <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/>

CONSULTED

Racism is not acceptable (2023) Australian Government <https://www.australia.gov.au/helpstopracism>

