



GLENVALE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Sexual Harassment Policy

BBP-606

1. PURPOSE:

Relationships were designed to be distinguished by love, consideration and respect (1 Peter 3:7). All students and employees at Glenvale Christian School have the right to learn and work in an environment free from sexual harassment. GCS will provide a fair and safe learning and teaching environment where all students and employees have equal opportunities.

Glenvale Christian School is committed to taking action to protect students and employees from sexual harassment and to responding appropriately should such behaviour occur, including possible discipline. Any instances of sexual harassment should be reported under the Glenvale Christian School *Resolution of Issues Policy*.

In particular, and in accordance with the legislation, it is Glenvale Christian School's policy that:

- An employee at the school must not sexually harass anyone in the course of their duties, including another employee, a student at the school or someone seeking to become a student at the school, or a student at another school
- Any adult or student at the school must not sexually harass another student or employee at the school or a student or employee at another school

Central to the vision of our school is the concept of covenantal Christian *community*, where we seek to treat each other with respect and dignity, being made in God's image. To that end, we are:

- a. to encourage and uphold safe relationships through being just and fair according to Biblical principles.
- b. to be compassionate and merciful as God is to us.
- c. to nurture children to be biblically responsive (i.e. devoted to, understand and act upon scripture) and to nurture and train students to accept personal responsibility for themselves.
- d. to develop curriculum which explicitly addresses these relational issues.
- e. to develop a Christian community across all the activities of GCS.

2. SCOPE:

Students and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers, parent/carer and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements.

3. GUIDELINES:

GCS is committed to providing the whole school community with a working environment free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is unacceptable and will not be tolerated under any circumstance. The whole school community is required to honour and support this commitment.

This Policy in no way detracts from the School's requirement relating to appropriate professional conduct between staff and students. An action may not constitute sexual harassment but could still be deemed to be unprofessional.

While religious schools are exempt from most of the employment provisions of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* [Division 4; 38], they still are covered by the sexual harassment provisions of the Act in relation to both employment and education [Division 3].

Appropriate action will be taken in any instance of harassment which may include the dismissal or expulsion of proven offenders, and notification to the relevant authorities as required by law.

4. DEFINITIONS:

Sexual harassment is a specific and serious form of harassment. It is unwelcome sexual behaviour, which could be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be physical, spoken or written. It can include:

- comments about a person's private life or the way they look
- sexually suggestive behaviour, such as leering or staring
- brushing up against someone, touching, fondling or hugging
- sexually suggestive comments or jokes
- displaying offensive screen savers, photos, calendars or objects
- repeated unwanted requests to go out
- requests for sex
- sexually explicit posts on social networking sites
- insults or taunts of a sexual nature
- intrusive questions or statements about a person's private life
- sending sexually explicit emails or text messages
- inappropriate advances on social networking sites
- accessing sexually explicit internet sites
- behaviour that may also be considered to be an offence under criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications.

Just because someone does not object to inappropriate behaviour in the workplace at the time, it does not mean that they are consenting to the behaviour. A single incident is enough to constitute sexual harassment – it doesn't have to be repeated.

Some forms of sexual harassment, such as assault, physical molestation, stalking, sexual assault and indecent exposure, are also criminal offences and should be reported to the police.

Obvious difficulties can arise in determining what behaviour constitutes going beyond the boundaries of what is considered acceptable. Any behaviour must always be considered from the perspective of the person receiving it. Innocent intention is not a defence to sexual harassment.

Victimisation - It is against the law to victimise a person who;

- has made a complaint;
- intends to make a complaint;
- acts as a witness;
- intends to act as a witness;
- supports a victim; or
- intends to support a victim.

A person is victimised if harassed, threatened, harmed or subjected to any form of detrimental treatment.

A Reportable Suspicion about a child is a reasonable suspicion that the child—

- has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse; and
- may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES:

School

Glenvale Christian School acknowledges its responsibility to provide an environment free from sexual harassment. It is the legal responsibility of the School and all employees to take all reasonable steps to prevent school related sexual harassment and victimisation by enforcing this Policy and through pro-active education.

GCS will undertake the following steps to prevent and appropriately respond to any instances of sexual harassment:

- Develop and implement a sexual harassment policy to assist in preventing any instances of sexual harassment
- Educate and train relevant employees to assist in preventing any instances of sexual harassment and to appropriately respond to any instances of sexual harassment
- Establish appropriate grievance and complaints procedures via its *Resolution of Issues Policy & Procedures* to appropriately respond to any instances of sexual harassment
- Remove any discriminatory or offensive materials, rules and practices to assist in preventing any instances of sexual harassment
- Encourage employees and students to contribute to a healthy workplace culture to assist in preventing any instances of sexual harassment.

Student and Employees

All students and employees at Glenvale Christian School have a responsibility not to engage in sexual harassment against any person. Staff have a duty of care to ensure that any sexual harassment or victimisation brought to their attention or witnessed by them is dealt with in accordance with school procedures.

School Community

Any member of the school community who believes they are being or have been sexually harassed, or staff members who become aware of a student who is being sexually harassed, should make it known that the comments, attention, contact or behaviour is unwelcome and offensive. All reports of harassment will be immediately considered as to whether they fall within mandatory notification guidelines (per government law).

6. PROCEDURES:

Any case that falls under the category of mandatory reporting (refer to definition of *A Reportable Suspicion*) should be referred to the Principal (or suitable Board representative) for immediate action in accordance with the School's Child Protection Policy.

All mandatory reporting cases shall be reported to the Board at the earliest opportunity.

For cases that do not fall under mandatory reporting, the person should handle the matter themselves or, if unable or unwilling to do so, they should contact the Principal, or any member of the Board, the class teacher, or in cases where any of these are inappropriate, or the person believes they cannot discuss the matter directly with these nominated persons, with the independent contact nominated by the School.

Complaints will be investigated promptly and fairly, and in a confidential manner. No member of the school community will be disadvantaged as a result of making a complaint.

The School will take all appropriate actions regarding allegations. If necessary and where appropriate, the relevant authorities will be notified (Police, Equal Opportunity Commission, etc.)

7. IMPLEMENTATION:

Awareness

Parents will be made aware of this policy at the beginning of each academic year through the Parent Handbook.

All staff will be made aware of this Policy by having it included in their Staff Policy Handbook. As well, staff will be reminded of the Policy as it applies to them and their students at the beginning of each academic year, and through

review at staff development meetings from time to time. The Principal will be responsible to ensure that this is implemented.

Training

The Principal will regularly educate and train employees appropriately on how to prevent and manage sexual harassment.

Dispute Resolution

Dispute Resolution Policy and Procedures are in place.

Record Keeping & Monitoring

The Principal is required to keep appropriate records, monitor and report sexual harassment issues. Any allegation presented to the Principal must be reported to the Board Chair. Reports shall be given to the Board as required.

8. RELEVANT LEGISLATION:

- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*
- *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)* [Chapter 2 Div 2]

9. OTHER POLICIES:

- BBP-404 Anti-Discrimination Policy
- BBP-501 Child Protection Policy
- BBP-604 Staff Code of Conduct
- BBP-701 Resolution of Issues Policy

- Form-BBP-100 ARCHER Values

Policy Level/Authority	Board		
Distribution	Board members, Staff, School Community via Parent Handbook		
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