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## 2.12 HARASSMENT POLICY

JANUARY 2007

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### **INTRODUCTION**

At St. Mary's Coptic Orthodox College we are working to apply the teachings of the Holy Bible, the teachings of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Coptic Orthodox Church.

In our daily work we desire to follow the example of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Every individual, both young and old, needs to model his or her life according to this ideal example. In our dealings with each other we always need to refer back to the values and teachings of the Coptic Orthodox Church and its beliefs and traditions.

#### **i. Policy Basis**

In relation to the Harassment Policy we desire to always treat one another with love. Our guide for this Policy is based on **1 Corinthians 13**

#### **ii. Policy Scope**

This policy covers ALL forms of harassment, including:

1. staff to staff,
2. staff to student,
3. student to student,
4. student to staff,
5. parent to staff, and
6. staff to parent.

### **GUIDING DEFINITIONS**

#### **i. Discrimination**

Discrimination is the treatment of a person differently and less favourably than someone else on the grounds of age, sex, marital or personal relationship status, family composition, pregnancy, sexual preference, physical ability, ethnic or national identity, colour, religion or political conviction.

## ii. General Harassment

Harassment is a form of discrimination that occurs when a person is subjected to adverse behaviour by others. The impact of this behaviour may be determined by how the message is received not the intent of the message itself. Such behaviour may include, but is not limited to:

### Types of harassment:

**a. Physical** -is any deliberate physical action which:-

- invades personal space
- physically harms or makes a person feel threatened or offended

***It must be noted that the College does not condone or use Corporal Punishment and the college will not accept any excuse for the use of such punishment.***

**b. Visual** -is making a person feel uncomfortable by exposing them to such things as:-

- offensive notes or materials
- graffiti or damage to others' possessions or property

**c. Verbal** -is using any words to an individual or group that are unwanted and repeated and which a person(s) finds offensive:-

- name calling
- offensive language
- slander (putting people down behind their back)
- picking on people because of their race, sex or religious creed

**d. Intellectual** - this type of harassment can be verbal or non-verbal and directed at you:-

- because you are good at your work
- because you are having problems with your school work.

**e. Victimization** -this occurs when a person becomes a victim and is threatened more than once by such actions as:-

- bullying

- stand-over tactics
- picking on others
- threats to "get" people
- "paying" people out
- where gangs try to dominate

**f. Sexual** - this is behaviour of a sexual nature which is unwanted and which a person finds offensive. This type of harassment can be verbal or non-verbal:-

- touching or brushing against a person in a sexual manner
- sexually-oriented jokes, drawings and literature
- commenting on the size and shape of one's body
- calling a person rude names or making comments about their morals
- invitations of a sexual nature which are unwelcome
- asking questions about a person's private life which are unwanted

**g. Emotional** - can be a result of one or more of the above by such actions as:-

- excluding others
- making someone feel bad
- threatening someone
- making others feel insecure

## **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Rights**

- **All members of the College community** have the **right** to dignity and respect. This includes the right to be intolerant of, or to refuse to accept any form of discrimination.

Discrimination may include:

Comments about **gender, sexuality, race, marital and parental status, religious and/or political beliefs, family background, physical or mental/intellectual disabilities or impairments.**

- All members of the College community have a right work within an environment free from harassment.

- Students have the right to learn without disruption caused by harassment and/or discrimination or any type of behaviour that may interfere with their learning or their well-being and safety

## **Responsibilities**

- **The entire College community** has a **responsibility** to take all reasonable steps to prevent any form of discrimination, harassment or bullying.
- Each individual within the College community has a responsibility to comply with the “*College Harassment Policy.*”
- As an entity, the College has a **legal responsibility** to prevent harassment and unwanted behaviour and to fully investigate any incidents of harassment.
- The College will ensure that all complaints are dealt with in a serious and confidential manner, ensuring the rights of both the complainant and respondent are protected at all times. No person shall be discriminated against or suffer reprisals due to their involvement in a complaint. Any such victimisation will be deemed as unlawful.
- While it is desirable to resolve the complaint within the College, it is recognised that the complainant has the right to pursue the matter through alternative avenues as provided in current legislation.

## **POLICY GUIDELINES**

The following outlines the procedures for implementation of the College’s Harassment Policy:

- On-going educational programmes highlighting the personal, moral, social and legal aspects of harassment will be implemented for all members of the College community, as a preventative strategy;
- All incidents of harassment will be investigated promptly, with respect, sensitivity and confidentiality.
- Appropriate procedures for reporting, resolving, monitoring and Evaluating incidents and complaints will be strictly implemented;

## **INFORMATION AND POLICY DISSEMINATION**

- The College Management Team need to ensure that College Community understand the nature of harassment, be aware of the implications of the relevant legislation and are informed of the College’s own policy and its implementation strategy.
- All of the College Community will have access to this policy and will be an integral part of induction for any new staff;
- Students are to be informed of this Policy through briefings during year level assemblies, whole school assemblies and the pastoral programme.
- The College Community will be able to view the policy on the College’s web site.

## **IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE**

### **RESPONSIBLE PERSONNEL**

- The College Management Team will be responsible for the implementation of this policy.

### **PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE COLLEGE MANAGEMENT TEAM.**

#### **Step 1.**

- The recipient of harassment should report their complaint immediately to the College Management Team or the Student Welfare Coordinator if it is a student.
- The complaint should be on the Harassment Incident Report available from the General Office or the College Management Team.
- A detailed written report should be filed with the College Management Team or Student Welfare Coordinator if applicable)

The College Management Team/Student Welfare Coordinator or will determine who else needs to be involved and what additional information needs to be collated and researched.

#### **Step 2.**

- The College Management Team or Student Welfare Coordinator. should arrange to interview the complainant and then decide what steps need to be undertaken.

If the complaint is about a member of the College Management Team His Grace, Bishop Suriel is to be notified.

#### **Step 3.**

- If it is determined that the complaint is legitimate, the College Management Team should inform the other party if it is deemed relevant in accordance to current legislative requirements.
- The College Management Team or Student Welfare Coordinator should seek more information regarding the incident (e.g. Witnesses etc., if it is deemed necessary and is relevant)

All detailed records of any other relevant information should also be recorded at this stage.

#### **Step 4.**

- The College Management Team or Student Welfare Coordinator should arrange a meeting with the other party to discuss the reported incident if it is advisable (See 6.5 Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting)

- The concerned other party may elect to be represented by another person of their choice (e.g. another staff member, union or legal representative, parent, etc.)

The outcome of this meeting will be determined by the severity of the incident and in a manner that conforms with enrolment status, employment rights and conditions, and current legislative requirements.

- NB.
1. All meetings must be minuted in detail and kept Strictly Confidential (See 2.6 Privacy).
  2. All relevant material should be filed with the College Management Team.
  3. Follow up action must commence within 48hrs. of the report



