



MACKILLOP

Catholic College

WARNERVALE

Hands-Off Policy

K - 12

Review Schedule	
Version Number	1.0
Approval Date	January 2026
Next Review Date	December 2030
Author	College Leadership Team
Approved By	College Leadership Team

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1. Purpose

The Hands-Off Policy at MacKillop Catholic College is designed to support a safe and respectful learning environment. This policy establishes a whole-school approach to respectful relationships and consent education grounded in the dignity of the human person and the Common Good. It ensures that all students learn to form healthy, safe, ethical, and respectful relationships, that align with Catholic values, Gospel teaching and NSW curriculum requirements, and child safeguarding obligations.

This policy makes explicit reference to appropriate and inappropriate behaviours to support students in the area of respectful relationships education. When this education is delivered to students it is differentiated to support age and stage appropriateness and is grounded in the Catholic faith.

The Mackillop whole-school approach focuses on improving student wellbeing by providing a safer learning community by targeting intentional teaching and learning to promote the Common Good and human dignity for all.

2. Scope

K-12

3. Curriculum Implementation

3.1 Respectful relationships and consent education is delivered through the NSW PDHPE K-10 Curriculum. Students learn about:

- consent and ethical decision-making;
- personal boundaries and bodily autonomy;
- power, respect, and equality;
- online safety and digital consent;
- help-seeking and protective behaviours.

3.2 Respectful relationships and consent education is:

- Age and Stage appropriate;
- trauma-informed;
- culturally safe, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;

- inclusive of students with diverse learning requirements;
- aligned with safeguarding requirements;
- delivered by teaching staff through a Catholic lens and grounded in Faith.

4. Catholic Context

4.1 Respectful relationships and consent education is grounded in the dignity of the human person. It ensures that all students learn to form safe, ethical, and respectful relationships, that align with Catholic values and Gospel teaching. Our Catholic teaching is grounded in:

- the dignity of the human person
- the call to love and serve others
- justice, compassion, and respectful relationships
- the example of Christ as model of respectful encounter

4.2 The Sacredness of the Human Body

Catholic theology holds that every person is made *imago Dei* — in the image and likeness of God. This means:

- the body is not an object;
- the body is not disposable; and
- the body is a visible expression of God's creative love.

Therefore, the body must be treated with reverence, not used, manipulated, or violated.

5. Definitions

5.1 Bodily Autonomy

The right of every person to feel safe and in control of their own body.

5.2 Bullying

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm.

5.3 Coercion

Any behaviour that pressures, manipulates, or forces a person to act against their will.

5.4 Consent

In the context of sexual relationships and intimacy, consent must be explicit, informed and freely given, mutual and clearly communicated. A free, voluntary, informed, mutual

and ongoing agreement between individuals. Consent cannot be given under coercion, pressure, manipulation, intimidation, or when a person is incapable of giving consent. Consent is agreeing to how and when another person touches your body, or you touch their body. It must be present every time any sexual or intimate activity occurs.

Consent must be clear, voluntary, and ongoing — it can be withdrawn at any time. Saying “yes” once does not mean “yes forever”, and consent to one behaviour does not imply consent to others. Consent must be actively communicated, not assumed; it must be made clear by saying “yes”. Students need to understand that “No, means No” and that this means no consent is granted.

Consent is the expression of one’s free will. To act without consent is to disrespect a person and diminish their humanity.

6. Respectful Relationships

Interactions grounded in dignity, empathy, equality, and mutual respect, reflecting Gospel values. Respectful relationship education is taught from Kindergarten to Year 10. The College is intentional in teaching and mirroring to our children and young people safe, respectful and life-giving relationships.

6.1 Human Dignity

Catholic believe that every human person is created in the image and likeness of God and thus, has equal worth and dignity. With moral conscience, each person has the freedom and responsibility to journey towards union with God.

6.2 Common Good

This refers to the complete set of social conditions that help individuals and groups of people live life in abundance respecting the rights and freedoms of others and the maintenance of peace and security through just and moral means.

7. Responding to Concerns and Disclosures

Concern	Responsibility	Explanation
Mandatory Reporting	All Staff	All staff must follow mandatory Child Protection reporting requirements and procedures.
Threshold for Mandatory Reporting	All Staff	Not all matters covered in this Hands-off Policy may reach the threshold for mandatory reporting. However, it is important to understand that where it may do so, that all College staff have an obligation to report.
Awareness and Call to Act	All staff	Staff members are aware that they may be approached by a student or parents/carers to act

		<p>on a concern, allegation or disclosure raised. It is compulsory for the staff member to act on the matter quickly and report the matter to any member of the College Leadership Team or College Executive Team K-12.</p> <p>NOTE: If the allegation is about a staff member, then this must be reported directed to any Head of School or College Principal.</p>
No Promises	All Staff	Staff members cannot promise any person that they will not act on the matter raised. The staff member must report the matter.
Report concerns and disclosures	Students	Students may report any concerns or disclosures to any staff member. A staff member cannot promise not to take action.
Report concerns and disclosures	Parents/Carers	Parent/carers may report any concerns, allegations or disclosures to any staff member. In some instances, the College will encourage the parents/carers to contact the police, pending the nature of the alleged act. The staff member has a responsibility to inform a member of the College Leadership Team or Executive Team K-12.
Confidentiality	All people	Confidentiality is critical.

8. Student Wellbeing

- 8.1 Students impacted by physical contact may require counselling and/or medical attention.
- 8.2 Students in Kindergarten to Year 4 or pending the diverse learning needs of the student may be supported by their parents/carers pending the nature of the act.

9. Appropriate and Inappropriate Behaviours That Breach the Hands-Off Policy

This list is not exhaustive and provides a range of examples to support the education of the MacKillop community.

Behaviour Examples	Appropriate Behaviours	Not appropriate and a breach of policy
Greetings between students	Handshakes & high-fives	Slapping, hitting, jumping on a person. Ruffling the hair of others.
Taking the property of others or tampering with the property of others	Asking for permission to use or touch the property of others.	Stealing, interfering or tampering with property of others, looking through the school bags of others or their lockers, playing with their devices, pencil cases etc... Taking the property of others without explicit permission from the owner.
Bullying	Not bullying	Ongoing and deliberate employment of stand-over tactics, harassment, physical intimidation, fighting, scratching, spitting, throwing, kicking, flicking, slapping, tapping, hair-pulling, physically annoying a person by touching, poking etc... Physically assaulting a person.
Rough play or rumbling	No rough play or rumbling, irrespective of intent.	'Play fighting', 'horseplaying', 'roughhousing', 'wrestling', 'whacking', rough playing or rumbling.
Engaging in contact sports outside of a supervised PE Lesson	No contact sports or activities during breaktimes	Contact sports, tackles, head high tackles etc... Playing contact sports when unsupervised by a teacher in a lesson.
Non- verbal contact	Not engaging in negative non-verbal contact	Deliberate tripping, shoving, punching, shoving, pulling the clothes of another person or pulling, throwing/taking the

		school bags or belongings of others.
Non-consensual touching of another person	Asking for permission before touching another person. Understanding that consent may be revoked at any time. Understanding that "No means No."	Non-consensual touching, kissing or sexual or intimate touching or touching of genitals, buttocks, nipples and/or breasts or other parts of the body. Putting pressure on someone to consent to touching. Hitting, 'Whacking', gripping or grabbing of genitals, nipples or buttocks of others. Sexual assaulting a person.
Encouraging or manipulating others to engage in violence, aggression or non-consensual acts.	Reporting negative behaviour to a staff member. Not being involved in any kind of manipulative behaviour that is deemed coercive, even as a joke, dare or a challenge, irrespective of the intent.	Engaging in and/or coercing others to undertake negative behaviour through the guise of 'joking around', challenging, daring others, pranking or 'horseplaying'. Being a bystander to negative behaviour and not reporting.

10. Responding to Breaches of the Hands-Off Policy

10.1 Breaches of the Hands-Off Policy will be treated seriously. In some situations, this may require internal school-based investigation. At other times, this may require police investigation and/or mandatory reporting or direct age and stage appropriate discussion with a parent/carer.

10.2 Severe Behaviour

Any behaviours deemed to fall into the Severe/Red or Extreme kind will be responded to by the Behaviour Management Team (BMT) unless it is a matter of mandatory reporting.

10.3 Pending the nature of the act, the College will respond by applying the Behaviour Management Policy and/or the Student Child Protection Policy in combination with any other policies or guidelines provided by Catholic Schools Broken Bay (CSBB).

11. Consequences Pending the Nature of the Act

The following list is not exhaustive and provides a sample of consequences:

- Withdrawal of playground privileges.
- College detention.
- Re-Education Program.
- Police Liaison Officer Intervention.
- Withdrawal of the student from classes (Internal or external).
- Suspension depending on the severity of the incident.
- Enrolment Review of the student.
- Exclusion or expulsion of the student to another school.
- Criminal charges, pending the nature of the act.

12. Reviewing

This policy will be reviewed every four years or earlier if required by:

- Changes to Legislation;
- Updates to NSW Curriculum;
- CSBB safeguarding directives and Respectful Relationship changes to policy;
- Community needs.

[Document Ends]