

## PHYSICAL CONTACT POLICY



### 1. RATIONALE

Every student within Gleeson College has the right to their own personal space and should feel safe and protected against any physical violation of this space.

### 2. AIMS

- 2.1. To ensure the standard application of procedures and consequences for students who violate this policy.
- 2.2. To promote an understanding about the right that people have to their own personal space and the need for this to be protected.
- 2.3. To help students to concentrate on their primary task of quality education and personal development while at Gleeson College without the fear of physical intimidation or abuse from other students.
- 2.4. To promote justice and equity within Gleeson College.

### 3. BROAD POLICY

Breaches of “Physical Contact” can occur in a spectrum of possible situations, this would include premeditated and violent physical abuse, as may occur in fights, deliberate rough tackling with the potential to injure in a game; occasions where one student feels awkward about unwanted advances or embraces being offered by another; and any other physical contact deemed by the College to be inappropriate. Each different instance will be dealt with separately, with a set of graduating consequences being applied according to the severity and/ or frequency of the offence. Parents will be informed of serious breaches.

### 4. GUIDELINES

#### 4.1. SERIOUS PHYSICAL VIOLENCE WITH INTENT TO HARM / HURT / INTIMIDATE

Examples of this may include use of a weapon, a group picking on someone who by weight of numbers has no chance of defence and fighting which by its nature inflicts significant injury. Consequences: Any student involved will immediately be isolated while the incident is investigated. This isolation may be facilitated internally (at school) or externally (suspended) where the Assistant Principal Student Development and Deputy Principal will meet with the student and their parents to discuss the conditions of re-entry to the College (presuming re-entry is an option - see Basis of Discretion). Such re-entry will include counselling.

## **4.2. FIGHTING**

Many fights occur in the heat of the moment, are not premeditated and are over with in a very short space of time. Each instance will be dealt with on an individual basis and investigated thoroughly.

### **4.2.1. Serious Offences:** characterised by punching, kicking, wrestling and/or choking, violent pushing, headlocks or actions of similar seriousness.

Consequences:

- isolate student(s) and inform Assistant Principal Student Development and House Leader
- An afterschool or isolation (internal or external) will be issued to both instigators and retaliators (where retaliators choose to respond more aggressively than self-defence or protection). Students will be required to complete a written reflection
- Counsel student(s) to avoid repetition of behaviour. Every attempt to conduct a restorative session between instigators will be mediated by Assistant Principal (Student Development) and House Leader. Support will also be provided by College Counsellors
- Communication/ an interview between parents, students, Assistant Principal (Student Development) and House Leader will be conducted.

### **4.2.2. Less Serious Offences:** where restraint is shown by the participants, characterised by light handed arm/body slaps, pushing and shoving.

Consequences:

- refer to House Leader for their records and apply either an after school detention or isolation, depending on seriousness. The incident will be recorded as a demerit on the Learning Management System (LMS) with parents notified, and students will be required to complete a written reflection

## **4.3. RECESS AND LUNCHTIME GAMES**

Physical activity and enjoyment through sport and games is actively encouraged at Gleeson College. However, it must be remembered that contact games have the potential for dangerous physical play (rough-housing). At recess and lunchtime, student games do not have staff appointed umpires and should operate in a self-regulating manner. Inappropriate behaviour (as determined by the yard duty or supervising teacher) in these games would include full or aggressive tackling and/or play, violent grappling or pulling of uniform or body, and any other reckless or deliberate action which actually causes or has the potential to cause physical harm to another person or damage to school uniform.

Consequences: refer to 4.2.1 and 4.2.2, depending on severity and/or frequency of actions.

## **4.4. TAKING FRIENDLY SITUATIONS TOO FAR**

Students may engage in a range of “friendly” activities such as back slapping and arm punching. Good friends may have rituals involving such ways of greeting each other. At times, physical hurt can be inflicted and students must understand that if this is the case, it will not be acceptable to use the excuse, “I was just mucking around”.

Hugging is often used as a form of greeting, as a congratulatory gesture in times of good news or as a consoling and comforting action in times of distress or bad news. Such spontaneous and compassionate human responses are not only acceptable but would seem a natural part of a caring, Christian community. It is also understandable that many students within our community

may enter into relationships with each other. However, the College is not an appropriate place for intimate hand holding, kissing and/or embraces. Students should be relating in community rather than in isolation whilst at school. Also, while many couples will insist that there is mutual consent, there is the potential for students to find themselves under pressure to behave in ways they would prefer not to.

Consequences: students may need to be cautioned and their actions may be recorded as a demerit on the LMS. Repeated actions will therefore lead to consequences, such as Community Service. Obviously, common sense needs to be applied by teachers in this regard (see Basis of Discretion below)

## 5. BASIS OF DISCRETION

- 5.1. The Principal, using personal discretion and/or after taking advice, may choose to depart from these guidelines in some circumstances depending upon the student(s) involved and the perceived threat to others in the Gleeson College community. This takes into account the seriousness of the breach in the first place, the number of previous occasions that the offender has breached the policy, whether or not the student is already on a special contract, and extenuating circumstances in the student's life which may be affecting his/her ability to act in a reasonable, rational manner.
- 5.2. Staff must use their discretion to decide on their course of action if they come across a hands off incident. In particular, this policy should not be trivialised with incidents that are very minor and require only a conversation..

## 6. EVALUATION

The House Leadership Team is responsible for the evaluation of this policy which will take place every 3 years. The policy should be considered by the College Leadership Team as the key team within the College for Policy Review. They may wish to seek opinions from other staff, parents and students as to the effectiveness of the policy.

Signed  Principal or delegate

Dated 03/08/2022

Signed  Chairperson of Board or delegate

Dated: 23.8.22

*This Policy now replaces all previous versions and evaluations of this Policy originally implemented in 1998.*