



# St Mary's College Board

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## SEXUAL AND SEX-BASED HARASSMENT

### Rationale

Current civil legislation addresses sexual harassment in an uncompromising manner and makes serious legal demands of administrators and teachers in schools. The Anti-Discrimination Act (1991) defines sexual harassment in the following way:

*When a person subjects another person to an unsolicited act of physical intimacy; makes an unsolicited demand or request (whether directly or by implication) for sexual favours from another person; or makes a remark or sexual connotations relating to the other person; and the person engaging in the conduct do so with the intention of offending, humiliating or intimidating the other person or in circumstances where a reasonable person would have anticipated a possibility that the other person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated by the conduct.*

The work of the Catholic schools is built on the teachings and living example of Jesus. Those teachings centre on relationships with God and relationships with each other. A significant aspect of the role of the Catholic school is to model and encourage the development of healthy and life-giving relationships. St Mary's also challenges members of its community to be sensitive to the effect of harmful relationships on individuals and on the life of the community. Sexual and sex-based harassment are examples of behaviours which can cause damage in relationships and as such must be addressed by the College community. St Mary's is committed to taking steps to eliminate sexual harassment.

By challenging the social structures which allow and encourage victimisation of men and women through sexual and sex-based harassment, St Mary's will empower boys and young men to develop whole healthy relationships and self image.

### Values

The Catholic tradition, through the promotion of Gospel values, demands that each person be treated with reverence and dignity because each person is made in the image of God. Harassment, in any of its forms, violates the essential dignity of the human person and has no place at St Mary's.

### Policy Statement

St Mary's challenges attitudes and stereotypes that support sexual harassment in society. St Mary's will address situations of such harassment with due recognition of the Catholic Church context, and the pastoral care of individuals.

## **Consequences**

- All staff at St Mary's must be familiar with the Anti-Discrimination Act (1991) and responsibilities and liabilities that flow from it;
- Awareness of the issues is raised with staff, parents, and students;
- St Mary's will develop policy and procedures clearly outlining options which may be followed in instances where sexual and sex-based harassment is identified;
- There is a requirement that staff model appropriate values through their behaviour.