



Sacred Heart College

MARIST OBSERVATORY

EDUCATION WITH HEART

Address: 15 Eckstein Street, Observatory, 2198, Johannesburg, South Africa
Email: info@sacredheart.co.za | Phone: +27 11 081 2200 | Website: www.sacredheart.co.za



SACRED HEART COLLEGE RACISM, DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

1. Preamble

In 2016, the Chief Justice, in a unanimous judgement of the Constitutional Court wrote about non-racialism, human dignity and freedom as being values foundational to our constitutional democracy and about the need to make a decisive break from the ills of the past. He called for all of us to engage in an earnest and ongoing dialogue in pursuit of strategies for a lasting solution to the bane of our peaceful co-existence that racism has continued to be. He wrote: *Nothing that threatens to take us back to our racist past should be glossed over, accommodated or excused.*

Staff and students of all racial and ethnic groups at Sacred Heart College have a right to equality of opportunity and to work in an atmosphere based on mutual respect and the dignity of each individual. It is essential that all staff members, students and parents cooperate with goodwill in adopting and implementing measures for preventing any form of discrimination and enhancing equality.

Furthermore, discrimination and harassment based on race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, religious differences, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, family status or disability are not to be practised by students or staff employed at Sacred Heart College.

2. Policy Principles

Sacred Heart College believes in the power of diversity and strives to build a balanced and inclusive school community, where no family feels underrepresented. The School is committed to eliminating all forms of racism, discrimination and sexual harassment within its community. This Policy outlines key objectives, that:

- all forms of racism will not be tolerated, including direct and indirect racism, racial discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, culture or ethnicity;
- no student, staff member or parent should experience discrimination and/or sexual harassment based on the assumptions by some groups and individuals that certain groups are better or more worthy than others as a result of perceived and inherited differences;
- all students, staff members and parents have a responsibility to promote the acceptance of South Africa's racial, cultural, religious, gender and ethnic diversity;
- all staff members have a shared responsibility to challenge attitudes and prejudices that contribute to racism, discrimination and sexual harassment and apply sanctions against such behaviours within Sacred Heart College; and
- Sacred Heart College is committed to promoting unity amongst its students, staff members and parents and acknowledges the diverse South African society within which it exists.

3. Scope of the Policy

Students, teachers and all other staff members working at Sacred Heart College are subject to this Policy and must endeavour to comply with it by showing respect for one another's diverse racial, cultural, religious, gender and ethnic backgrounds and treating one another with dignity and respect.

4. Unacceptable Acts of Racism, Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

Any of the following acts (amongst others not listed here) will be considered unacceptable, will not be tolerated and are strictly prohibited:

- Racial or ethnic slurs, slang or name calling;
- Racist/homophobic jokes;
- Threats and/or intimidation;
- Repeated teasing or annoyance;
- Imitating someone's accent or voice pitch/tone;
- Touching another person without that person's consent;
- Racial or ethnic stereotyping;
- Display, publication or dissemination of materials or pictures that degrade, humiliate or bring ridicule to people (either electronically or soft copy);
- Exclusion based on any of the above classifications; □ Suggestive or other sexually aggressive remarks;
- Stereotyping.

5. Responding to Racial and Discriminatory Behaviours

Sacred Heart College and its staff members will respond to all racial, discriminatory and inappropriate sexual discrimination through:

- implementation and following of procedures of the Sacred Heart College Racism, Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy in line with the School's Code of Conduct;
- ensuring that timely and professional responses are made to complaints about racism;
- maintaining records of all complaints of racism and the methods used to resolve them; and
- ensuring that visitors and other adults working in Sacred Heart College are requested to respect the Sacred Heart College Racism, Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy which will be available for them to read on the website or by request at the Reception areas.

6. Making a Complaint

- 6.1 A Complainant i.e. a student, parent or staff member (or person acting on behalf of the Complainant) must report, as soon as is reasonably possible in the circumstances, to any staff member who will refer the complaint to a member of the School Exco.

6.2 All reported incidents will be investigated by a member of the School Exco who will assess how the matter can be resolved.

6.3 If appropriate, sanctions will be applied according to the Sacred Heart College Code of Conduct for Staff or Students.

7. Receiving a Complaint

7.1 In instances where the complaint is brought to the attention of a teacher or other staff member, that person must refer the complaint to a member of the School Exco immediately. The member of School Exco must ensure that such a complaint is dealt with expeditiously and appropriately.

7.2 All complaints must be recorded in writing.

7.3 Every endeavour must be made to resolve the matter within **10** days of the complaint being referred to a designated staff member.

7.4 All forms of racial, discriminatory or sexual harassment abuse by any person within Sacred Heart College are treated seriously. The School will record, investigate and act upon such incidents and parents will be contacted.

7.5 The steps to be taken by the Exco Staff member on receipt of a complaint must include, but are not limited to:


- advising the Complainant that the matter shall, as far as is possible, be dealt with confidentially;
- advising the Complainant that late reporting shall not necessarily have negative consequences for the process of decision making relating to the merits of the complaint;
- with the consent of the Complainant, approaching the Respondent to explain the context and nature of the complaint with a view to obtaining further information and obtaining an amicable resolution. The identity of the Complainant may or may not be disclosed to the Respondent, depending on the wishes of the Complainant;
- where the Respondent acknowledges responsibility for their conduct, facilitating a process to allow an opportunity for the Respondent to offer an apology. The terms, conditions and acceptance of such an apology will be facilitated, determined and agreed upon in a discussion between the Complainant and the Respondent, facilitated by the Exco Staff member, or any other manner that is appropriate in the circumstances.
- acceptance of the apology does not preclude the Respondent from facing either informal or formal disciplinary action in line with the Sacred Heart College Staff or Student Code of Conduct;
- preparing a written report containing a summary of the complaint and recommendations on how to adequately resolve the matter and submitting the report to the person(s) presiding over a disciplinary hearing held in accordance with the Sacred Heart College Staff or Student Code of Conduct;
- ascertaining whether the Complainant and/or Respondent requires any further advice, counselling or support; and

- ascertaining whether the student body requires any further advice, counselling or support.

Any student or staff member who is found to have contravened this policy will face disciplinary action in accordance with the Sacred Heart College Code of Conduct.

Parents found in contravention of this policy will be deemed to be in breach of their contract with the school.

All reasonable options for redressing any harm suffered as a result of racism, racial harassment and contravention of this policy must be considered by the person(s) presiding over the Disciplinary Hearing. This includes sanctions that consider both rehabilitative and punitive approaches.

 Marist Brothers Linmeyer	Sacred Heart College	
	Author: Sacred Heart College Authorized: Exco Date revised: 08.2018 Revision: 2 Policy No: MBL2033	Policy Title: <u>SACRED HEART COLLEGE RACISM, DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY</u>