

Policy Information	STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT
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Policy Number	1102
Last Revision Date	17/3/2022
Next Revision Date	31/5/2024

Rationale

The vision of Grace Christian College is for Christ to rule in the hearts and minds of our students so they are able to contribute as citizens to a peaceful and just society through a biblical understanding of family, community and human endeavour.

The individual's relationship with Jesus Christ is an essential concern for the school including the belief that a relationship with Jesus Christ provides guidance for daily living and the transformation of communities through each individual engaging in that relationship.

This relationship is sometimes expressed in the Bible as "putting on Christ" as the individual seeks to live a life of humility, compassion, self-sacrifice and service to their community.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to assist students to understand what it means to 'put on Christ' how this concept transforms our behaviour to have positive outcomes for ourselves and those around us.

This policy will assist students to understand the appropriate boundaries that individuals must maintain to demonstrate respect, tolerance and compassion for others in their immediate community and beyond.

Guideline 1 The Principal of 'Putting on Christ'

Christians are exhorted to "put on Christ" which is a request to imitate His behaviour.

12: The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. 13: Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarrelling and jealousy. 14: But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (Rom 13:12-14)

The theme of imitating Christ in his humility and submission to God's purposes is repeated in the New Testament with an emphasis on "conforming" to his image. Identity for a Christian is therefore found in who they are "in Christ" and not in who they were before beginning their relationship with Christ. However, this does not mean that an individual's personality or abilities are null and void, rather they are to be brought into line with God's purposes and Christ's example of a life lived well for God through the power of the Holy Spirit and God's grace.

Guideline 2 Respecting Leadership

The principle of respecting leadership is key in the principal of 'putting on Christ'. Jesus was himself submitted to the authority of his Father over him as described in Matthew 26:9: - And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."

The Apostle Paul carries this concept of submission into his teaching in Romans 13:1: - Every person is to be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. (Romans 13:1).

***Note 1 Demonstrating Respect for leadership**

Respect for leadership is demonstrated when students:-

- 1) Comply with instructions and directions given to the student by the school staff.*
- 2) Engage positively with staff about their school work and activities.*
- 3) Work co-operatively with school staff at all times.*
- 4) Demonstrate respect through using positive words and actions when interacting with school staff.*

***Note 2 Inappropriate responses to leadership**

Inappropriate responses to leadership are:-

- 1) *Ignoring instructions and directions of staff.*
- 2) *lying to staff about actions taken by the student.*
- 3) *Speaking disrespectfully, sarcastically, or in a challenging manner to staff.*

Guideline 3 Respecting community members including other students

The teaching of the Apostles throughout scripture has a strong theme of love and compassion to all those within the Christian community and to those outside.

In I Thessalonians 5:12-15, the Apostle Paul instructs his fellow Christians as follows - We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labour among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.

This passage refers to a range of character traits within the community but requests that patience is exhibited to all and that individuals should not seek revenge against others when wrong is done to them.

***Note 1 Demonstrating respect for fellow students and community members**

Students must show appropriate respect to their fellow students and community members. This includes:-

- 1) *Speaking appropriately to other students in ways that are encouraging and helpful.*
- 2) *Respecting the personal space of others and their property.*
- 3) *Not seeking to embarrass, discourage or vilify other students or community members.*

***Note 2 Inappropriate behaviour toward other students and community members.**

Inappropriate behaviour is wide-ranging and should also be considered in relation to the school's Anti-bullying policy. Inappropriate behaviour is:

- 1) *Ridiculing or intentionally embarrassing another person*
- 2) *Excluding another person from a peer group*
- 3) *Taking or damaging another person's property*
- 4) *Making threats or seeking to intimidate*
- 5) *Injuring another person through strong physical contact*
- 6) *Making inappropriate or hurtful comments through social media, email or some other access allowed through the internet.*

Guideline 4 Respecting the organisation and facilities

Grace Christian College Co-operative is a not-for-profit organisation with a membership of like minded volunteers who oversee the Principal of Grace Christian College who manages the school.

Grace Christian College Wodonga is owned by the Grace Christian College Co-operative.

Grace Christian College has been developed through the hard work and persistence of many staff, volunteers, parents, students and members of the Grace Christian College Co-operative and the blessing of God who they serve.

Students who enrol in Grace Christian College should be appreciative of the history of the school and the contribution that has been made by many people over many years to the success of the school.

***Note 1 Demonstrating respect for the organisation and facilities**

Students are expected to show respect to the organisation and facilities by:

- 1) *Demonstrating respect through a positive attitude towards the organisation which is shown through actions and words.*
- 2) *Following the recommended procedures for dealing with grievances and complaints.*
- 3) *Caring for equipment and building structures.*

***Note 2 Inappropriate conduct toward the organisation and facilities**

Inappropriate conduct toward the organisation and facilities would be:

- 1) *Ridiculing the school or staff through conversation or online posts.*
- 2) *Bringing the school into disrepute through inappropriate behaviour on school excursions or in public out of school hours.*
- 3) *Damaging equipment used in classes or provided for student use.*
- 4) *Writing graffiti on walls of buildings both internal and external.*
- 5) *Taking items belonging to the school without permission (stealing).*

Guideline 5 Respecting Self as an Image Bearer of God

Christians believe that mankind is made in the image of God. Being made in the image of God is an intrinsic part of our existence which means we are like God in our moral, spiritual and intellectual nature.

As a result of sin, the image of God in each person has been shattered. Sin has caused mankind to be guilty and alienated from God but it is through faith in Jesus Christ that it can be restored. The Christian, by putting their faith and trust in Christ receives not only eternal life but also receives the Holy Spirit and is enabled to 'put on Christ' in their daily lives.

Ephesians 4:22-24 states "and that, in reference to your former way of life, you are to rid yourselves of the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you are to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

'Putting on Christ' is seen not just through external actions but begins internally in our spiritual and moral understanding which then impacts and changes our behaviour.

The Vision statement of Grace Christian College expresses a desire for Jesus Christ to rule the hearts and minds of our students. This is an essential desire and purpose for the school and is a key part of the school's mission. We desire all students to grow to understand themselves and their identity in Christ and to seek to 'put on Christ' in their daily lives.

***Note 1 Beginning with Christ**

'Putting on Christ' begins with an internal desire to submit to God and the way he has created the world. Each person is called to recognise that they are a sinner and alienated from God. This relationship can be restored by repenting of their sin and believing in Jesus Christ.

Each individual must make this decision to follow Jesus for themselves. This decision is transforming as the individual seeks to follow Christ and align their thoughts, words and actions with those of the Holy Scriptures.

***Note 2 Demonstrating 'putting on Christ'**

A student demonstrates 'putting on Christ' through the way they engage in the many facets of school and daily life.

- *by being mindful of their thoughts in line with Philippians 4:8*
- *seeking the positive well-being of others in line with Philippians 2:4*
- *by using words to encourage others and express praise and worship for God's blessings*
- *through reading the Bible and seeking to learn more about God*
- *Through prayer with fellow students and staff*
- *by thinking about their school work and the curriculum through a Christian World view that sees God as the Creator and Author of all things.*
- *by demonstrating character that is moderated and motivated by the principles of living illustrated in the life of Jesus Christ.*

Guideline 6 Romantic relationships between students

The school's preference is that students should not engage in romantic relationships during their school years but instead focus on building strong relationships based on friendship and mutual respect. Romantic relationships require a maturity that children and teenagers generally do not have.

As students progress through school into the senior years, romantic relationships can be even more disruptive to their schooling. Young people can experience strong emotions during their mid to late teens and broken relationships can be very impacting on their schooling focus. Romantic relationships are also a source of speculation, gossip and unhealthy competition amongst students and can be an unhealthy distraction for students and the source of relational upheaval in classes and student cohorts.

*Note 1

Students must refrain from physical expressions of romantic relationships while at school. This includes kissing, cuddling and intimate touching.

Guideline 7 Sexual Activity and Consent

Early sexual activity can have an incredibly negative impact on students and can lead to extreme feelings of guilt, shame and abuse. Teenagers are ill-equipped to cope with the intensity of intimate relationships and engaging in sexual activity clearly violates the principle of 'putting on Christ' which this code of conduct is based on.

Pornography and sexually explicit imagery and video are considered a violation of the call to chastity and modesty. These things do not have a place in the life of the person seeking to 'put on Christ'.

*Note 1 **School expectations**

It is expected that students will not engage in sexual activity, sexual innuendo or make available material of a sexual nature to their fellow students.

*Note 2 **Sexual behaviour at school**

Students must not make sexual advances to other students or seek to entice any student into sexual activity while at school.

*Note 3 **Age of Consent**

The law in Victoria sets clear age limits for when a person can legally have sex. This is called the age of consent. A person can be charged with a sexual offence if they perform a sexual act that breaks these age limits, even if the younger person agrees to it.

*Note 4 **Advice for students under 12 years old**

If a child is under 12, even if they agree, another person cannot:

- have sex with them
- touch them sexually, or get them to touch the other person sexually
- perform a sexual act in front of the child.

*Note 5 **Advice for students under 12 to 15 years old**

If child is 12 to 15, even if they agree, a person who is more than two years older than the child cannot:

- have sex with them
- touch them sexually, or get them to touch the older person sexually
- perform a sexual act in front of them.

However, it is not an offence if the person honestly believed that the child was 16 or if there was less than a two-year age difference between them. This is exactly two years. For example, if a person is 17 and has sex with someone who is 15, it is not a crime. But if the person was 18, it is a crime unless the person believed the person was 16 or older.

*Note 6 **Advice for students under 16 to 17 years old**

If a teenager is between 16 and 17 years old, even if they agree, a person who is caring for them or supervising them (like a teacher, youth worker or foster carer) cannot:

- have sex with them
- Touch them sexually, or get the teenager to touch them sexually
- perform a sexual act in front of the teenager.

However, it is not an offence if they are married to teenager, or if the person honestly believed the teenager was 18 or older.

*Note 7 **When one person does not agree to sex**

As well as age limits, the law says that two people can't have sex unless they both freely agree (also known as consent). If a person doesn't freely agree and someone threatens them to engage in a sexual act or touches them sexually or in a way that makes them uncomfortable, the person threatening is breaking the law.

If someone has sex with a person or touches them sexually when they are asleep, unconscious or so affected by alcohol or drugs that they are not able to freely agree, it is still a sexual offence.

Guideline 8 Information Technology and Social Media

Digital technology is an essential part of our lives today. However, digital devices can both a tool for learning and a distraction. A dependence on digital technology has led to new terms such as FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) which leads to people constantly needing to check their devices to view the latest news, updates and posts on social media. The school recognises the many benefits of digital technology but also recognises the inherent dangers and opportunities for obsessive and addictive behaviour to develop in children and teenagers.

***Note 1 Social Media**

Social media creates the opportunities for students to connect with others but also presents risks for young people. Where students are permitted by parents to connect with others on social media that must be done in a respectful manner.

Students must be aware that their interactions on social media can reflect negatively on the school and can put them at risk depending on the information shared.

The school expects that students will seek to be a blessing to others in these interactions and will not post disrespectful or offensive material on their social media profile or share such content with others.

***Note 2 Other School Policies controlling student conduct**

Parents and students should be familiar with the requirements of these school policies that impact on student conduct:-

Information Technology Policy

Student Code of Conduct: School Camps and Excursions