TRINITY LUTHERAN COLLEGE

P-12 ANTI-BULLYING POLICY: STUDENTS, STAFF, PARENTS

SUMMARY OF POLICY

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, relational or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear. However, it is important to acknowledge that not every incident is a bullying situation. Each situation should be carefully considered and handled appropriately.

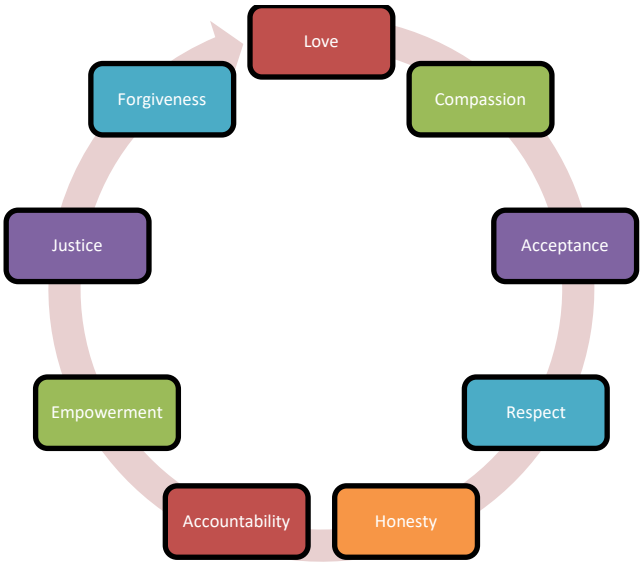
Every student and adult attending Trinity Lutheran College has the right to enjoy his/her learning or teaching and leisure time free from bullying or harassment. Intimidation and violence have no place in our community and will not be accepted under any circumstances.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Each person is created in the image and likeness of God. As a Lutheran school we seek to nurture individuals living in community reflecting characteristics of God through the core values of Love, Compassion, Acceptance, Respect, Honesty, Accountability, Empowerment, Justice and Forgiveness. A strong values framework where diversity is acknowledged and celebrated underpins our approach to encouraging positive behaviours and relationships between students and among students, teachers and parents at all times.

Our college motto '*Academic Excellence, Love for Humanity*' encourages all students to take advantage of the diverse range of opportunities offered to them in pursuit of their goals while demonstrating our college values in their learning and interactions with others at all times.

OUR RELATIONAL VALUES



OUR AIM

Communication: To ensure our college community has an awareness of what bullying behaviour is and the impact of bullying on people's lives.

Commitment: To promote the values, principles and approaches that will help eliminate bullying in our college community.

Consistency: To develop consistent approaches in addressing the issue of bullying across both our college campuses.

Clarity: To ensure that each member of our college community knows how to seek help and support, and the college's response to reported bullying.

Collaboration: To recognise that it is each person's responsibility to tackle bullying behaviour. By working together against bullying behaviour, we can make our college community a safe place in which to learn and work.

Capacity: To increase the capability of students, staff and parents to nurture positive and supportive relationships as well as heal and restore broken relationships.

BULLYING IN OUR CONTEXT

In keeping with our College Mission Statement and Vision we believe that all members of our college community have the right to a learning and work environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying so that we can maximise the educational outcomes for all students. The erosion of a person's dignity goes against all of the values upheld by our Lutheran community and contravenes State law.

At Trinity Lutheran College, students, parents and staff have the expectation that everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Each member of our college community is then responsible for taking an active stance against all forms of bullying behaviour.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Definitions

Whilst there is no universally accepted definition of bullying, there is general consensus that bullying behaviour has the following elements.

> *A desire to hurt; the perpetration of hurtful behaviour (physical, verbal or relational) in a situation in which there is an imbalance of power; the action being regarded as unjustified, typically repeated and experienced by the target of the aggression as oppressive, and by the perpetrator as enjoyable. (Ken Rigby, 2002)*

Bullying is a *pattern* of uninvited, *on-going* behaviour directed by a more powerful person or group to intentionally hurt, injure, embarrass and/or distress a less powerful person or group. Bullying may be physical, verbal, psychological, or social.

Bullying behaviour can also occur unintentionally - if we are insensitive to the feelings and safety of others. "It was only a joke" or "He doesn't mind" or "He's a friend of mine" are never acceptable excuses for bullying behaviour.

Bullying can take many forms, all of which will cause distress. Examples of bullying include:

- ***Physical:*** hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting on others
- ***Extortion:*** threatening to take someone's possessions, food or money
- ***Verbal:*** teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours
- ***Non-Verbal:*** writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, using email or text messaging to hurt others, rude gestures
- ***Exclusion:*** deliberately excluding others from the group, refusing to sit next to someone
- ***Property:*** stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property
- ***Cyber:*** (emails, SMS, chat rooms, social media) offensive or threatening images, offensive, threatening or hurtful comments, rumour spreading
- ***Prejudice based:*** behaviour which is prejudice driven e.g. on race, religion, nationality, culture, gender, sexual identity, disability, economic factors, appearance, health/medical conditions.
- ***Bystander:*** being a spectator to any form of bullying and not intervening or speaking out. Being a bystander means you are ignoring your community responsibility to contribute to the safety and wellbeing of others.

In practice the different forms of bullying often occur together. Physical intimidation is often accompanied by verbal abuse. One is used to reinforce the other, as when a child is repeatedly struck and called names. In bullying we are concerned not only with physical injury: the constant undermining of an individual by taunts, jeers and name calling can be equally devastating.

WHAT BULLYING IS NOT

It is important to acknowledge, however, that not every incident is bullying. Each incident should be carefully considered and handled appropriately. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

Mutual conflict – In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

Social rejection or dislike – Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

- **Single episode acts of meanness or random acts of aggression or intimidation** – Single episodes of meanness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying, for example, when two persons of equal power are in disagreement..

MANAGEMENT OF BULLYING INCIDENTS

Trinity Lutheran College prides itself on having high expectations which aim to uphold a culture of excellence both academically and in relationship with others. Our college thereby rejects all forms of bullying and students, staff and parents are encouraged to report all incidents of bullying. *The college is unable to take action if acts of bullying are not reported.* All bullying incidents are dealt with seriously and the college reserves the right to discipline students whose behaviour is unacceptable.

Sometimes parents will react angrily to facts reported by their child, but on investigation by the college, these 'facts' are sometimes not accurate. It is therefore prudent to test facts before making premature judgements to ensure the implementation of a fair and just process.

To this end, the college is committed to investigating a bullying allegation in a manner that protects the rights of all involved, including the alleged bully. This is not the college failing to take immediate action to punish the person allegedly engaging in bullying behaviour, it is the college exercising procedural fairness. Hence, it is important to allow the college to look into the matter thoroughly rather than challenging the alleged perpetrator directly, or the parents of the alleged bully. Students may be asked to write down their version of events, to improve accuracy and certainty of information in evaluating an incident.

On the Ashmore Road Campus, the investigation would commence with the Head of Year. The investigation will then flow to Head of Wellbeing, Head of Campus and Principal if required. On the Cotlew Street campus the investigation would commence with the Head of Pastoral Care and then flow to Head of Campus and Principal if required.

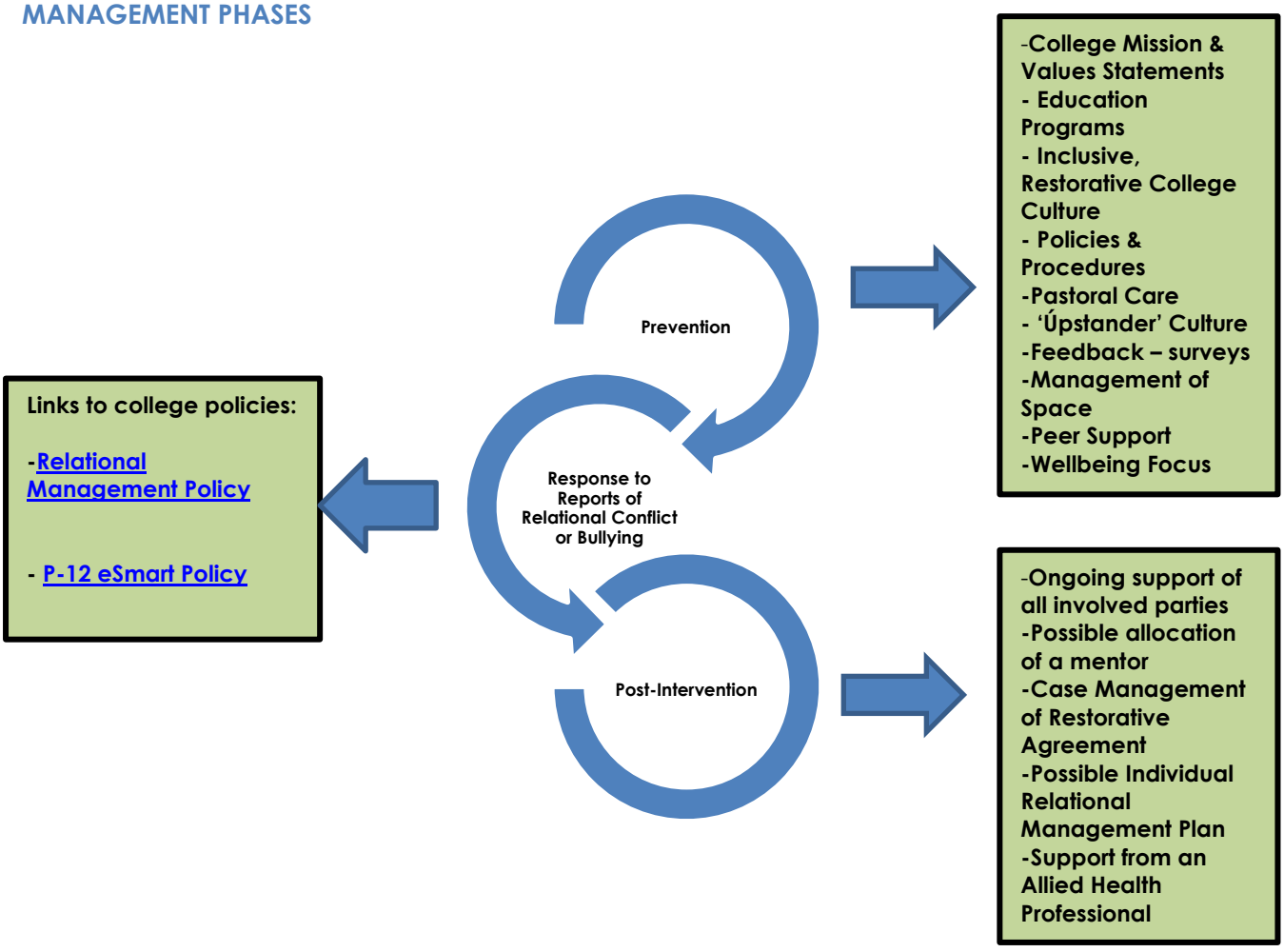
STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

All students are required to treat other students, all staff and any other person onsite at the college professionally and with respect. Students are expected to avoid behaviour that could be interpreted as bullying and act to prevent other students in engaging in bullying behaviour where practicable. Students are requested to report any witnessed bullying to a staff member.

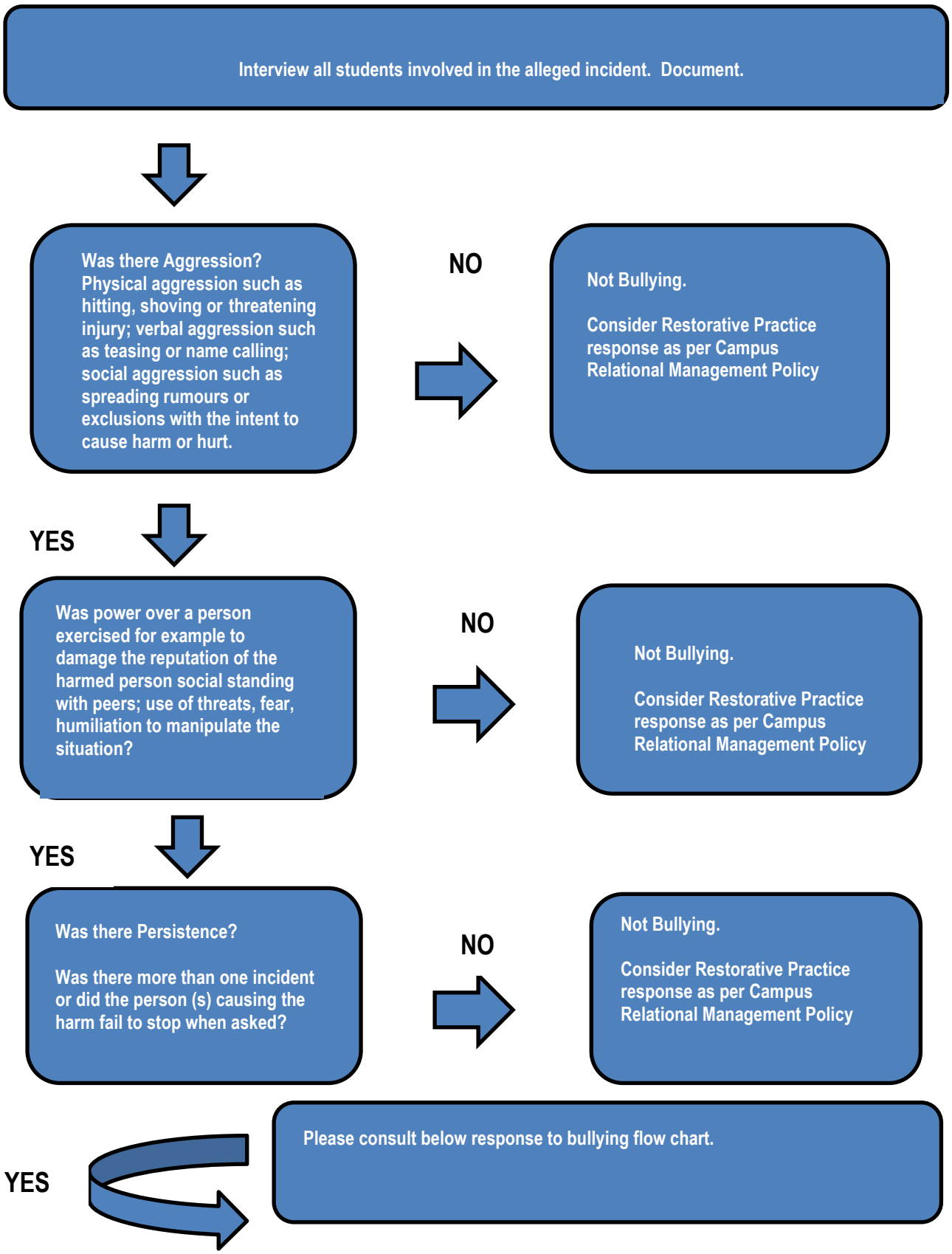
STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff are required to ensure they are aware of this policy and educate students of their obligations under this policy. Staff will intervene quickly where inappropriate behaviour is identified and will act fairly to resolve issues and enforce the colleges behavioural standards. Where a staff member breaches this policy Trinity Lutheran College may take disciplinary action.

MANAGEMENT PHASES

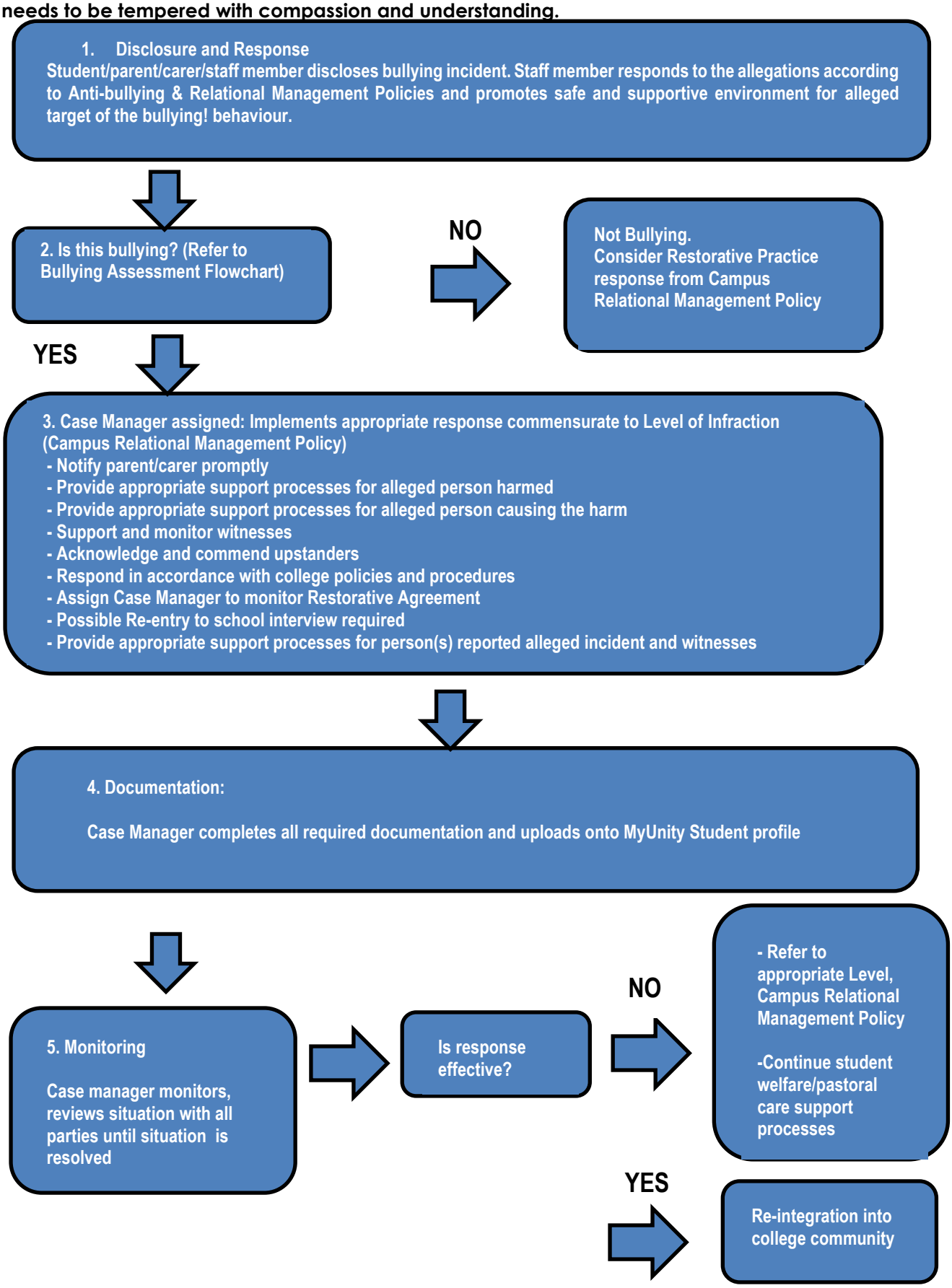


BULLYING ASSESSMENT FLOW CHART



RESPONSE TO BULLYING FLOWCHART

***Remember that the person causing the harm may too have been/be a victim and thus firmness needs to be tempered with compassion and understanding.**



RELATED POLICIES

- College Anti-Discrimination policy
- P-12 eSmart Policy
- Social Media Guidelines
- Relational Management Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- College Privacy Policy