



ST MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL TOUKLEY

Anti-Bullying Policy

POLICY

At St Mary's Catholic School, we believe that all members of the community have the right to a learning and work environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. We all share a responsibility to create a culture of caring which will not tolerate bullying. This policy builds on the school's pastoral care policy to provide clear and agreed procedures and strategies for combating bullying in the school, and responding to bullying behaviours and protecting and supporting all parties involved.

PURPOSE

At St Mary's Catholic School we are called to establish relationships which are grounded in love, compassion, reconciliation and justice. In witnessing Christian values we reject ideas, beliefs and behaviours which marginalize or victimize people.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful, and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Bullying can involve: humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, sexual orientation or practice of religion. Bullying of any form, or for any reason, can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Cyber-bullying refers to bullying through the use of information and communication technologies by an individual or group that is intended to harm others, or is undertaken recklessly without concern for its impact on others.

Bullying can happen anywhere: at school, travelling to and from school, in sporting teams, or in the workplace. Bullying behaviour can be:

- verbal, eg name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats.
- physical, eg hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting.
- social, eg ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures.
- psychological, eg spreading rumours, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of communication technology/mobile devices.

Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying. Bullying behaviour is not:

- children not getting along well.
- a situation of mutual conflict such as, teasing or disagreement.
- a single episodes of hurtful words or actions, or random acts of aggression or intimidation.

(Adapted from: National Safe Schools Framework (2011) and DEC NSW Website)

The Potential Impact of Bullying

Bullying has the potential to affect both the individual and the entire school community. Students who are bullied may:

- ✚ Develop feelings of negative self worth, possibly leading to feelings of isolation and abnormal absenteeism.
- ✚ Develop feelings of helplessness, feeling they ought to be able to do something about it but lack the confidence to take any remedial action.
- ✚ Feeling frightened for their safety.
- ✚ Feel embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated.

- ✚ Disconnect socially from peers.
- ✚ Project anger onto others.
- ✚ Suffer problems in concentration or in sleep.
- ✚ Develop health problems associated with the emotional/psychological distress created by bullying.
- ✚ Exhibit “at risk” behaviours, such as anxiety or depression.
- ✚ Have long term problems in maintaining interpersonal relationships and in sustaining self esteem.

The Possible Impact on the School Community

Although the effects of bullying may be most painful for the individual victim, bullying can create “shockwaves” across the entire school community. It may be responsible for some of the following:

- ✚ Feelings of anger, tension or disharmony amongst students or staff.
- ✚ An atmosphere which seems unsafe or uncaring.
- ✚ A perceived lack of trust and cohesion between members of the school community.
- ✚ A lack of faith amongst the student body in the ability of staff to maintain a controlled, peaceful environment.
- ✚ An abnormally high number of aggressive actions.
- ✚ A perceived condoning of “preferencing” where older students exert power over students in younger year groups.
- ✚ Tension and frustration within the parent body as a result of their fears for the safety, happiness and well-being of their children.
- ✚ Feelings of guilt, shame or helplessness as the result of knowing about or witnessing bullying.
- ✚ A reluctance by a section of the community to participate in activities, especially those which are non-compulsory.

How do we prevent bullying at St Mary’s Catholic School?

Ultimately, strategies to prevent bullying will only be effective when placed within the context of a culture in which respect for others is consistently taught and demonstrated across all facets of school life. The Christian values, which represent the antithesis of bullying, must be continually affirmed in words and actions.

Strategies to prevent bullying will fall within the following broad categories:

- ✚ ‘moral education’ in the context of religious education, liturgies and assemblies where the value of the individual is affirmed and the importance of qualities such as compassion, kindness, reconciliation, tolerance, respect and justice are encouraged.
- ✚ “across the curriculum” values teaching (eg looking at the problem of prejudice within the context of a novel or a history lesson).
- ✚ clear statements from staff about the nature and unacceptability of bullying.
- ✚ teaching specifically related to bullying in the PDHPE curriculum (Social and Emotional Learning eg. Bounce Back program K-6).
- ✚ teaching more positive ways of resolving conflict, such as working co-operatively within the classroom and playground.
- ✚ staff and students as role models, particularly those in leadership roles such as peer support, school captains, house captains etc.
- ✚ provision of activities which develop a culture of caring for one another and acknowledging the worth and contribution of others and which help to develop compassion.
- ✚ appropriate provision of counselling or other support services.
- ✚ provision of support for parents through information seminars, support networks etc.
- ✚ provide instruction to students in on-line personal safety issues including unwelcome sites, stranger danger, cyber-bullying and financial exploitation e.g. through promoting ACMA’s Cybersmart Program.

How do we respond to Bullying at St Mary’s Catholic School?

Bullying is viewed as a breach of the school’s behaviour code. Any reports of bullying will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken. The response to bullying will provide:

- ✚ guidance and other support for the victim.
- ✚ appropriate and consistent sanctions and support for the bully.

Staff will be encouraged to report suspected incidents of bullying to the class teacher of both the victim and the bully. If they encounter an incident of bullying, they should first take steps to protect the victim. All staff are expected to pass on information about any bullying to the Principal/Assistant Principal, for further action.

The School seeks to promote a culture in which students will be encouraged to:

- ✚ take some positive action to stop the bullying if they observe an incident.
- ✚ report the bullying incident to a teacher as soon as possible.
- ✚ make it clear to their peers that bullying is not accepted.

Victims of bullying will be encouraged to:

- ✚ initially ignore the bullying and not show that it is upsetting. Many bullies will stop if they do not elicit a response.
- ✚ confront the bully and let him/her know that his/her behaviour is unwanted and unjustified. This step should be taken if initial tactic is unsuccessful.
- ✚ Discuss the problem with friends and parents, who may be able to assist with strategies to deal with the problem.
- ✚ Notify their class teacher.

What Parents can do

Parents play a key role in the support of both the victims and the perpetrators of bullying. The school and parents need to work in partnership for the benefit of the child. Parents can assist in the following ways:

- ✚ Let your child know that bullying in any form is never acceptable. Listen to your child and take their feelings and fears seriously.
- ✚ Immediately notify the school if you believe that your child is being bullied.
- ✚ Communicate with school staff in a respectful manner.
- ✚ Respond to your child at an age appropriate level.
- ✚ Make sure your child knows that being bullied is not their fault.
- ✚ Don't call your child names, like "weak, sook, wuss". Don't tell them "not to worry, to forget it, to toughen up".
- ✚ Avoid bullying tactics around your child, so they don't get mixed messages.
- ✚ If the bullying is verbal, help your child develop the skills to ignore it so that the bully does not get the satisfaction of a reaction. Practice a way to walk past looking confident with head up. Practice a supply of quick (not insulting) responses – for example 'that's your opinion', 'talk to someone who cares'.
- ✚ Avoid the urge to take everything into your own hands unless absolutely necessary, as this will make your child feel less in control.
- ✚ Help your child feel good about the other things in his life. Feed their self-esteem.
- ✚ When it is clear that your own child is the bully, recognise the seriousness of the issue and support the school in implementing this policy.

Procedures to deal with Bullying

All initial cases of bullying will be dealt with by the respective class teacher/teachers on duty who will keep the Assistant Principal/Principal informed.

- ✚ An interview(s) will be conducted to ascertain the specific nature of the bullying and its effect on the victim, in an attempt to develop *mutual empathy*. Decisions will be made as to the level of severity of the incident and whether the parents (of both parties) need to be informed. The interview should also focus on appropriate strategies to assist both the victim and the bully. Further support may be offered, if required. The class teacher shall be responsible for informing the parents at this stage.
- ✚ The initial interview should also include a clear statement on the consequences if the bullying continues, or if there are any reprisals as a result of the reporting of the incident.
- ✚ A less formal post-interview follow up of both parties should be conducted a week after the initial incident, to ensure that there have been no problems.
- ✚ If the student continues to engage in bullying behaviour, he/she will be interviewed in the presence of his/her parents by the Principal/Assistant Principal and the Class teacher. Direct

consequences will include calling on internal and external assistance re development of a plan of action to manage student behaviour, conflict resolution, anger management etc.

- ✚ The victim of the bullying may need further support to develop strategies to overcome the situation. The class teacher will seek to involve the parents in the formulation of the plan.
- ✚ When action plan(s) have been implemented, all those engaged in their development will continue to monitor and formally follow up at regular intervals.
- ✚ Any further recurrence of bullying may result in an issue of warning re suspension and could lead to the implementation of suspension procedures and, if necessary, removal of the student from the school through:
 - ✚ Suspension pending negotiated transfer
 - ✚ Negotiated transfer
 - ✚ Expulsion

St Mary's Catholic School graduated processes and consequences for dealing with breaches of the school's behaviour code

Consequences are what happen as a result of behaviour. Consequences can be positive or negative depending on the type of behaviour. Consequences should be fair, predictable and certain to happen. They should be related to the rule that has been broken.

Major Sanctions are last resort actions which only occur with due process in the event of serious breaches of the school's behaviour code. All major sanctions are options that can be undertaken after Step 6 in any order deemed appropriate for the situation.

Review Date Reviewed 2019

PRINCIPAL: Kevin Williams

Signature: *K Williams*

REVIEWED: March 2019

PRINCIPAL: Kevin Williams

Signature: *K Williams*

Additional Information

References 'Anti-Bullying Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools'

ACTION	STEP 1 ALERT STUDENT	STEP 2 CAUTION THE STUDENT	STEP 3 TEACHER/STUDENT/ PARENTS DEVELOP PROGRAM	STEP 4 CALL ON EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE	STEP 5 FOLLOW-UP TO EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE
WHY	To refocus, to return to the appropriate activity, to make the student aware that the behaviour is inappropriate	To stop the disruptive behaviour	To assist student to modify unacceptable behaviour	To set up a support group to manage concerns about student behaviour	To monitor and follow up formal action plan
WHEN	When student's behaviour is disruptive, or school rules are being broken	When inappropriate behaviour continues	When student's behaviour continues to intrude upon teaching and learning time, or school rules continue to be broken	When the student's behaviour intrudes upon teaching and learning time beyond manageable limits, school rules being broken which threaten the safety or dignity of others, harassment or bullying. This is a serious breach of the Behaviour Code	At regular intervals after action plan has been implemented
HOW	Ask student to return to what he/she is supposed to be doing, student makes restitution	Relocate student within classroom, student makes restitution	Restitution, by negotiating a rewards system, through use of a communications book with parents, by making a contract between teacher and student	Parents, senior staff members and external support bodies assist the teacher and student to develop a plan of action to manage student behaviour	Through a series of support group meetings involving all members in Step 4
WHO	Student Staff	Student Staff	Student Staff	Student Staff	Student Staff

			Parents	Parents Principal External Consultant(s)	Parents Principal External Consultant(s)
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ACTION	STEP 6 ISSUE WARNING	STEP 7 SUSPENSION PROCEDURES	STEP 8 SUSPENSION PENDING NEGOTIATED TRANSFER	STEP 9 NEGOTIATED TRANSFER	STEP 10 EXPULSION
WHY	Action plan is deemed unsuccessful	Action plan has failed to modify seriously disruptive student behaviour	Suspension procedures have not modified student behaviour	Negotiations are complete and suspension period is over	Student's behaviour has not changed. Student is deemed to be a threat to the wellbeing or safety of others. Negotiated transfer has not occurred
WHEN	Prior to any action being taken towards putting major sanctions into play	When all of the above steps have been unsuccessful. A serious breach has occurred	When all internal and external resources available to the school have been unsuccessful in modifying student behaviour. A serious breach has occurred	Negotiations with alternative location, parents and student are successful. A serious breach has occurred	When previous major sanctions have been unsuccessful or deemed inappropriate. A serious breach has occurred
HOW	A written warning, where appropriate, is issued outlining potential consequences for continued serious breaches and/or inappropriate behaviour	The student's right to attend the school is withdrawn for a temporary time. Appropriate activities to be undertaken by the student to modify behaviour	Through consultation with and research of alternative locations and environments. Consultation between staff and parents to determine optimal relocation	Re-enrolment at new location. Where appropriate, offer assistance to student/family to ensure positive relocation	After consultation with Parish Priest & Schools Consultant, Principal makes recommendation to the Director of Schools. Recommendation is then reviewed by an Advisory Panel. Director shall make a determination based on report from panel
WHO	Principal In the absence of the Principal Assistant	Student Staff Parents Schools	Student Staff Parents Schools Consultant	Student Staff Parents Schools Consultant	Student Staff Parents Schools Consultant

	Principal	Consultant Parish Priest Principal	Parish Priest Principal	Parish Priest Principal	Parish Priest Advisory Panel Director of Schools Principal
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REVIEW: November 2017

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