



# **SACRED HEART CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

## **PYMBLE**

### **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

**2015**

## **Purpose**

At Sacred Heart 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 foster, promote and restore right relationships. We believe that bullying is unacceptable and we [students, staff and parents] all share a responsibility for preventing it.

This policy builds on the school's Pastoral Care and Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy to provide clear procedures and strategies to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying.

## **Policy Framework**

Flowing from the Christian vision expressed in the Diocesan Pastoral Care Policy, schools 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 marginalise or victimise people.

## **Definition**

Whilst there is no universally accepted definition of bullying, there is general consensus that bullying behaviour:

- is deliberate and often repeated
- intends to cause fear, distress, hurt or harm to another
- is action by a more powerful individual or group over a less powerful individual or group

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

- *Physical* - hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting on others etc
- *Verbal* - teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours etc
- *Non-Verbal* - writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, using e-mail or text messaging to hurt others, rude gestures etc
- *Exclusion* - deliberately excluding others from group, refusing to sit next to someone etc
  
- *Extortion* - threatening to take someone's possessions, food or money etc
- *Property* - stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property etc
- *Cyber* - any form of bullying which is carried out through electronic means such as email, chat room, 'sms', web page etc

## HOW DO WE PREVENT BULLYING AT SACRED HEART CATHOLIC SCHOOL?

Research suggests that prevention strategies that involve the whole school community [students, staff and parents] are more likely to reduce bullying. Therefore, at Sacred Heart Catholic School we recognise that we all share the responsibility to prevent bullying. The Christian values which represent the antithesis of bullying will be taught explicitly, continually modelled, clearly demonstrated and generously affirmed across all facets of school life.

### AT SACRED HEART CATHOLIC SCHOOL WE ADOPT THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIES TO PREVENT BULLYING:

- **Explicit teaching of positive behaviours embedded within the curriculum addressing positive relationships, conflict resolution, resilience, bystander action etc**
  - *PBL lessons addressing appropriate behaviours to Care for Self, Care for Others and Care for the place we're in*
  - *Friendly Schools and Families and Bounce Back resources assist us in our teaching. These are also used to guide teaching of specific skills to students (whole grade, groups and individuals) as needs arise*
  
- **Regularly recognising and acknowledging students who demonstrate appropriate behaviours that promote and restore right relationships**
  - *Awards at school assembly (alternate weeks K-2, and 3-6)*
  - *Recognition at line up – teachers publicly congratulate children they have noticed demonstrating appropriate behaviours*
  - *Each teacher awards 2 Habits of Mind Awards to students based on the focus*
  - *Merit Award for academic achievements - teachers allocate 2 students from each class.*
  - *PBL awards and Reason to smile stickers for demonstrating appropriate behaviours (App.F) – all staff (class teachers, admin staff, Teacher librarian, music teacher, Learning Support teachers and Aides and Canteen Manager) allocate 2 students for PBL awards for demonstrating Behavioural Expectations.*
  
- **Vigilant classroom, playground and transition supervision**
  - *Teachers are to actively supervise children at all times.*
  - *Supervision commences at 8.20am each morning.*
  - **Duty of care - Classroom** - *Children are to be supervised by a teacher at all times. Should a teacher need to leave their classroom during the day, they should request the teacher in the nearest classroom to exercise visual supervision or notify a member of the Leadership Team*
  - **Active playground supervision.** *Staff are to provide active supervision when on playground duty. Be Positive and Be Proactive.*
    - Punctuality**
      - *Staff are to turn up to their designated duty on time.*
    - Movement / Mobility**
      - *circulate throughout the whole playground area*
      - *be in proximity of more active areas ('hot spots') such as toilets, stairwells, corners etc*
      - *be visible, wear the staff vest*
    - Interaction, intervention and communication**
      - *talk with students, greet students*
      - *acknowledge groups of students doing the right thing*
      - *engage in problem solving*
      - *pass on relevant information to relieving teacher / class teacher regarding concerns and specific incidents*
    - Scanning**
      - *look for areas of concern – toilets, stairwells, out of bounds areas, breeze way etc*
      - *pre-correct where ever possible*

➤ **Provision of safe and structured playground spaces and activities at break times**

- *Shade area / quadrangle – quiet play, children without hats etc*
- *Oval – teachers support children to make use of the space, equitable and safe*

At “Sacred Heart Catholic School” School **students** are encouraged to:

- *take some positive action to stop the bullying if they observe an incident - Five Finger strategy*



- *report the incident to a teacher as soon as possible*
- *make it clear to their peers that bullying is not accepted*

At “Sacred Heart Catholic School” School, **staff** are expected to:

- *take some positive action to stop the bullying when they observe an incident*
- *pass on information about any reported or observed bullying behaviours to the Principal / Assistant Principal / Year Coordinator / for further action as per PBL processes*

At “Sacred Heart Catholic School” School, **parents** are encouraged to:

- *listen to their child and encourage their child to follow the ‘five finger strategy’ and speak to their teacher at school*
- *contact the school if they have a concern (eg Class teacher, Principal ,Assistant Principal)*

## **HOW DO WE RESPOND TO BULLYING AT SACRED HEART CATHOLIC SCHOOL?**

Bullying is viewed as a major breach of the school rules and behavioural expectations and therefore follow up action will align with our School’s Behaviour Management Policy.

Any reports of bullying will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken promptly. The response to bullying will include:

1. guidance and other support for the recipient of the bullying (eg re-skilling and re-teaching of strategies, resilience and social skills, counselling, conflict management skills, social networking etc)
2. guidance and support for ‘bystanders’, ‘supporters’ and witnesses of the bullying (eg intervention strategies etc)
3. age appropriate and consistent sanctions for the student who bullied (eg consistent with School Behaviour Management Policy)
4. interventions and support for the student who bullied included in a Behaviour Support Plan (eg specific interventions developed to reduce the bullying behaviour, teaching of replacement behaviours, reinforcers etc)
5. where appropriate informing parents as stated in the policy and involving them in any action and follow up
6. contact with School Liaison Police officer:- Hornsby Police Station (02) 9476 9799

## PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING BULLYING AND FOLLOW UP

In discerning appropriate responses to bullying, school leaders need to balance the collective welfare of the school community with the individual needs of the student.

- Preliminary interview(s) will be conducted to ascertain the specific nature of the bullying. These interviews should be with individuals initially (ie student being bullied, students witnessing bullying, student engaging in bullying behaviour, staff etc)
- The initial interviews should focus on the safety individuals. This should 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
  - immediate preventative actions that will be implemented to avoid further incidents.
- Decisions will be made as to the level of severity of the incident and whether the parents of those involved need to be informed.
- Follow up interviews should focus on appropriate strategies to assist and support all involved within a Behaviour Support Plan. This Plan will outline specifically identify the inappropriate behaviours, name the replacement behaviours, outline strategies to support the replacement behaviours and reinforcers (both negative and positive) when behaviours occur.
- A record of the separate interviews should be kept.
- Regular monitoring and follow up with the students involved is necessary. (for example daily, prior to and after break times etc)
- Review of the Behaviour Support Plan will take place to modify strategies and supports.
- 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 or
  - Expulsion

**We all have the right to learn in a safe and supportive school environment that values diversity – an environment free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence.**

**We all have the right to be treated with fairness and dignity.**

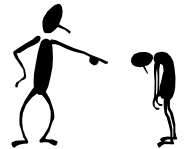
**We all have a responsibility to keep others safe and to treat them in the same way - with fairness, dignity and respect.**

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/issues/rights.shtml>

## Definition of Bullying

Whilst there is not one universally accepted definition of bullying, there is general consensus that **bullying behaviour**:

- **is deliberate and often repeated**
- **intends to cause fear, distress, hurt or harm to another**
- **is action by a more powerful individual or group over a less powerful individual or group**



Bullying takes many forms. Examples of bullying include:

- **Physical** - hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting on others etc
- **Verbal** - teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours etc
- **Non-Verbal** - writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, using e-mail or text messaging to hurt others, rude gestures etc
- **Exclusion** - deliberately excluding others from group, refusing to sit next to someone etc
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### Bullying is not ...

Many inappropriate behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require intervention and management. Some examples of inappropriate behaviours that are socially unacceptable and may be confused with bullying are:

- **Mutual conflict or disagreement** - an argument or dispute between students of 'equal' power. In these cases, usually both students are upset and are wanting a resolution to the problem. It is important to assist students with the skills to manage their conflict as unresolved issues may develop into a bullying situation (ie with one student being 'targeted' or experiencing 'loss of power' or with repeated incidents)
- **Social rejection or dislike** – when a child is left out of a social group. It is important to consider the intent of those who are 'excluding' the student. When the rejection is intentional and deliberate aiming to cause harm, it is bullying. If there is no intent, it is important to assist all students in the situation to develop appropriate skills which may foster acceptance and inclusion. (eg skills of compromise, joining a group etc)
- **One – off incidents of nastiness or physical aggression.** These are not the same as bullying. However, since we all have a responsibility of care to keep others safe, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should not be ignored or condoned by [by other students, staff or parents]

When addressing inappropriate behaviours that are socially undesirable, it is important for schools and families to work together in order to support the student to adopt more appropriate behaviours. These skills need to be explicitly taught, allowed time for practice and suitably reinforced.

### Acceptable common terminology

Bullying involves different 'participants'. When referring to the student who is the recipient of the bullying, avoid the term 'victim' and use terms such as 'recipient', 'target', 'child being bullied', 'student who is bullied' etc. When referring to the student who is displaying bullying behaviour, avoid the term 'bully' and use such terms as 'the student who bullied', 'those who bullied' etc. Similarly, when referring to power, avoid the term 'weak' or 'weaker' and use 'in less powerful position' etc.

## The Potential Impact of Bullying

Bullying has the potential to affect individuals involved as well as the wider school community.

Students who are bullied may:

- Develop feelings of negative self worth, or helplessness, feeling they ought to be able to do something about it but lack the skills or confidence to take any remedial action
- Feel frightened for their safety
- Feel embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated
- Suffer physical harm eg bruises, cuts etc
- Develop health problems associated with the emotional / psychological distress created by bullying eg, frequent complaints of headaches or stomach aches;
- Have property damaged or destroyed
- Disconnect socially from peers; Project anger onto others
- Suffer problems in concentration or in sleep
- Show a decreased interest in school; exhibit poorer school performance; absenteeism from school;

Students who bully may:



- Continue to display bullying behaviours when desirable outcomes are met
- Lack the appropriate skills to replace bullying behaviours
- Engage in high risk activities and escalated behaviours as time goes on
- Engage in serious crime and obtain a criminal record

Bystanders ( those who witness bullying or are aware that it is happening) may:

- Be actively involved in the bullying behaviour
- Contribute by encouraging others to cause harm distress
- Feel helpless in being able to stop the bullying
- Fear for their own safety if they try to intervene
- Consider themselves as 'not being involved' by merely standing by and allowing the bullying to continue

Members of the School Community may:

- Experience feelings of anger, tension or disharmony
- Develop a perceived lack of trust and cohesion
- Experience frustration as a result of their fears for the safety, happiness and well-being of their children
- Experience feelings of guilt, shame or helplessness as the result of knowing about or witnessing bullying
- Become withdrawn from activities and events



## What can schools do?

All members of the school community have the right to a learning and work environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. All share the responsibility to create a culture of caring which will not tolerate bullying. Schools have policies that provide clear and agreed procedures and strategies for **preventing**, **reducing** and **responding** to bullying.

The School seeks to prevent and reduce bullying by assisting all members of the school community to know what bullying is and what it isn't. The school also has teaching and learning programs that explicitly teach students what to do if they are bullied or are witnesses to bullying situations. These teaching and learning programs are aimed at developing in students positive social emotional competencies that equip them to establish and maintain right relationships. The school also regularly recognises and acknowledges students who demonstrate appropriate behaviours. Staff are trained and supported to demonstrate vigilant classroom, playground and transition supervision. Routines and structures are put in place to provide safe playground spaces and activities at break times.

Schools will have in place policies that provide clear procedures for when responding to bullying and inappropriate behaviours.

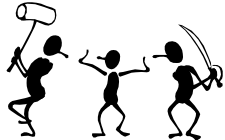
The school seeks to promote a safe and supportive environment in which students will be encouraged to:

- 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



Recipients of bullying will be encouraged and supported to:

- initially ignore the bullying and not show that it is upsetting. Many bullies will stop if they do not elicit a response.
- develop skills in being able to confront the bully and let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable
- notify a teacher or staff member they trust
- discuss the problem with friends and parents



Witnesses of bullying [bystanders] will be encouraged and supported to:

- develop skills in being able to assist students being bullied
- ask for teacher support
- discuss the problem with friends and parents

## What can parents do?

Suggested resources links:

<http://www.friendlyschoools.com.au/parents/primary/bullied.php>

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/parentfactsheets.htm>

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/talkout/faqs/default.shtml>

When your child has been the recipient of bullying:

- Try to talk to your child about what is going on.
  - o take their feelings and fears seriously
  - o make sure your child knows that being bullied is not their fault.
  - o Avoid making judgements or using terms like "weak, sook, wuss". Avoid telling them "not to worry, to forget it, to toughen up."
  - o If the bullying is verbal, help your child develop the skills to ignore it so that the student who bullies does not get the satisfaction of a reaction. Practice the 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' etc
  - o Let your child know that bullying in any form is never acceptable
- Encourage your child to ask for help if they feel they are being bullied, eg. discuss who they could talk to at school.
- Talk to your child's teacher / Principal and discuss the situation and some strategies.
- Avoid the urge to take everything into your own hands as this will make your child feel less in control. It is not recommended that you approach the child who is bullying [or their parents] speak to the school.
- Help your child feel good about the other things in his life. Enhance their self-esteem.

When it is clear that your child is the student who bullies:

- Stay calm and avoid becoming angry and defensive.
- Reassure your child that you still love them – it's their behaviour you don't like but you will work with them to help change this.
- Co-operate with the school in implementing the appropriate procedures and graduated responses for dealing with bullying.
- Talk to your child and let them know what they are doing is bullying and it is not acceptable.
- Discuss with your child what they can do instead; teach them appropriate skills to replace the inappropriate behaviours.
- Be sure to help your child to understand the consequences / results of appropriate behaviours as well as the inappropriate behaviours.

Resources and references:

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/default.shtml>

<http://www.friendlyschoools.com.au/index.php>

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/antibullying/index.html>

<http://www.ncab.org.au/index.html>

<http://www.readymade.com.au/method/index.htm>

<http://www.netalert.gov.au/>