St Joseph's Primary School Corinda

BULLYING POLICY

Contents

Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying/Harassment in Schools

Guidelines and Procedures

"**All Australian schools are safe, supportive and respectful learning and teaching communities that promote student wellbeing" NSSF (revised 2011).**
 A safe and supportive school is described in the following way:

> *"In a safe and supportive school… diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel respected and included and can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety and wellbeing".(NSSF)*

The prevention and management of bullying or harassment is incorporated within the Brisbane Catholic Education *Student Behaviour Support Policy* and the St Joseph's *Behaviour Support Plan*. The *National Safe School's Framework (2011)* provides a resource for schools to guide self-assessment and planning.

This document should be read in conjunction with the:

• Brisbane Catholic Education Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying and Harassment in Schools Policy;
• Brisbane Catholic Education Student Wellbeing Policy;
• Student Attendance Policy;
• Critical Incident Response Policy and Procedures
• ICT Acceptable Use Policy

Legislation and Related Policies

Authority
• Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2006 (Qld)
• Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act and Regulations (2001)
• Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2012 (Qld)
• Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (C'th)
• Anti – Discrimination Act (1991) (Qld)
• Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (C'th)
• Telecommunications Act 1997 (C'th)

 This document aims to:

1. Promote a proactive attitude to, and clear understanding of school processes, when addressing allegations of bullying or harassment behaviours;

2. Facilitate a consistent approach to the management of school record keeping processes in relation to bullying or harassment behaviours and consequent investigations;

3. Ensure the rights of students and staff to expect a school that is actively promoting a school environment free from the fear of bullying, harassment, intimidation and victimisation and where all members of the school community feel safe and supported at school.

Bullying Definition:

*Bullying is defined as **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 (National Safe Schools' Framework, 2011).*

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Cyberbullying refers to bullying that is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records), through the use of information and communication technologies (Queensland Government Education).

Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on gender, race or disability. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved including bystanders.

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

Bullying behaviour can be:
- Verbal e.g. name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats
- Physical e.g. hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- Social e.g. ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- Psychological e.g. spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones, social media platforms and APPS.

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
- single episodes of nastiness or random acts of aggression or intimidation.

Appropriate Terminology

Brisbane Catholic Education promotes the use of positive language that supports the values of the National Safe Schools' Framework 2011 and the Australian Curriculum (i.e. Civic and Citizenship, Health and Physical Education Curriculum and the General Capabilities).

The terms 'bullies' and 'victims' are not recommended as appropriate terminology to use when identifying, reporting, recording and responding to incidents of bullying. More appropriate terms to use may include 'bullied students', 'students who are bullied', 'students who bully' and 'students who engage in bullying behaviour'. This will ensure that the unacceptable behaviours are addressed in a manner that supports the individuals involved to learn and demonstrate more acceptable social behaviours without the impact of enduring labels.

Preventative Actions

St Joseph's Primary School utilises a range of education programs and strategies to promote positive behaviours including reporting of bullying and preventing bullying behaviours.

- **The Bullying No Way! Website** provides a wide range of information and resources for parents and school communities on managing bullying. For more information visit: www.bullyingnoway.gov.au and go to the parents' portal.
- Implementation and teaching of the **Friendology Program.** For more information visit: https://urstrong.com/
- Support the aims of the General Capabilities, Health and Physical Education and the Technologies Curriculum in the school.

Reporting, Record Keeping and Tracking for Schools

Procedures for school staff for documenting behaviour incidents are in place and outlined in our school's Student Behaviour Support Plan. Students or parents reporting of an incident should occur as soon after the incident as possible and be documented. This gives the school the best opportunity to follow up on the incident, intervene, provide support and then continue to monitor the records for repeated incidents that constitute bullying.

The BCE Student Behaviour Support System (Engage) allows for frequent behaviour incidents to be tracked effectively and incidents should be recorded within this database.

Keeping records of bullying and harassment incidents will enable the school to:
• Manage individual cases effectively
• Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies
• Celebrate the anti-bullying work of the school
• Demonstrate defensible decision making in the event of complaints being made
• Engage and inform parents and other services as necessary.

Student Reporting Systems:
Student reporting systems are of value when students have confidence that their concerns will be treated promptly and seriously, and that action will be taken which will not make their situation worse.
Reporting for students should include confidential and varied ways in which they are able to report instances of bullying. However, if a student's safety is at risk, school staff cannot keep the information confidential and must report to the appropriate authorities. Please refer to BCE Student Protection Processes.

Parent Reporting Systems:
Parents are frequently the ones to report bullying incidents to the school. It is important that school staff are sensitive to the emotional needs of parents when they make contact with the school and that parents have confidence that staff will act promptly, take the concern seriously and report back on progress on the issue to parents.

Responses

Should a case of alleged bullying occur, the Principal or Assistant Principal will be informed immediately and a thorough investigation will take place to establish the facts. If what has happened proves to be *bullying,* St Joseph's Primary School adopts the following procedures for responding to bullying incidents:

Investigate the allegation and establish if bullying has occurred

Students who are bullied/harassed
a. Protect and support the student who has experienced the bullying behavior;
b. Offering an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their class teacher, another teacher or member of administration if they choose;
c. Inform the parents/carers of the student;
d. Document the support measures provided for the student; and
e. Review the support to ensure that it has been effective for the student to respond positively and have his or her personal safety improved.

Students who demonstrate bullying behaviour
a. Ensure the student alleged to be engaged in bullying behaviour has a complete understanding that their behaviours and communications are considered as bullying and therefore that these must cease;
b. Inform the parents/carers of the student exhibiting bullying behaviour;
c. Document the support measures provided for the student; and
d. Review the support to ensure that it has been effective to reduce the student's bullying behaviour.

Students who are bystanders
a. It is important that all students be taught to recognise bullying, report bullying and have the opportunity to practice safe ways to effectively intervene, maintaining personal safety, when bullying occurs;
b. Students who witness bullying as a bystander may be called upon to contribute to investigations of alleged bullying.

Procedural Steps in Responding to Bullying/Harassment Incidents

1. The school will respond to incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent manner;
2. The school will apply the appropriate support for the student/s who has engaged in bullying behaviour and ensure that there is a positive outcome, adequate follow up and that relationships are restored for all involved;
3. The parents/guardians/carers of the student who is being bullied, and the student who is bullying, are informed;
4. The student demonstrating bullying behaviour may be excluded from the playground at break and/or play times for a period of time deemed appropriate. The student will be assisted to reflect on their behaviour and consider/learn more appropriate responses;
5. Students may be placed on an Individual Positive Behaviour Support plan and required to "check-in" with an appropriate member of staff as per support strategies in St Joseph's Behaviour Support Plan; and
6. If a student does not stop bullying, after being officially warned and supported, an "in school" or "out of school" suspension is considered.

Responsibilities

Principal:
- Assists in the creation of a positive school climate of respectful relationships where bullying or harassing behaviours are not tolerated and cannot flourish;
- Consults with other school staff (and if required, Brisbane Catholic Education School Services and Student Wellbeing personnel) and uses professional judgment to determine the appropriate response strategy for a specific behavioural issue. The *BCE Student Behaviour Support Guidelines, Regulations and Procedures* provide a set of factors to consider in determining the appropriate level of response;
- Takes responsibility for the implementation of the school's anti-bullying procedures;
- Identifies patterns of bullying or harassing behaviours and initiates school action to address them;

- Embeds anti-bullying messages into each curriculum area and in every year**;**
- Ensures the development, implementation and evaluation of education and prevention strategies to promote student safety and wellbeing**;**
- Responds to incidents of bullying or harassment that have been reported to the school quickly and effectively**;**
- Ensures that support will be given to any student who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour; and
- Ensures that incidents are recorded in Engage.

School Staff:
- Support the school in maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment;
- Model and promote appropriate right relationships and behaviours;
- Respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying or harassment according to the school's Student Behaviour Support Plan;
- Support students to be effective bystanders while maintaining their own safety;
- Know their school's Student Behaviour Support Plan and Anti-bullying Procedures and reporting structures;
- Promote a school culture where bullying or harassment is not acceptable; and
- Teach students to identify, react, report and respond to bullying or harassment at school and online.

In addition, teachers have a responsibility to:
- Provide curriculum and pedagogy that support students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community.

Parents/Caregivers:
- Keep the school informed of concerns around behaviour, their child's health and wellbeing issues or other matters of relevance;
- Communicate in a respectful manner with school staff about issues of concern;
- Support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible online behaviours;
- Support their children in developing supportive bystander behaviours; and
- Work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents when they happen.

Students:
- Are respectful towards other students, staff and members of the school community;
- Understand what bullying/harassment is, what is not bullying and how to report bullying;
- Behave as responsible digital citizens;
- Communicate with an appropriate adult if bullied or harassed or if they are aware someone else is being bullied or harassed; and
- Learn to be an effective bystander, so that bullying and harassment are discouraged through peer influence.

Prevention, Coping and Intervention Strategies
No method of addressing bullying has been reported as 100% effective and no one intervention is appropriate in all circumstances of bullying. However, promoting a school culture where bullying is unacceptable, disclosure is encouraged, and prompt intervention is taken by staff, increases its effectiveness. The school team should decide on the appropriate combination of interventions for the individual circumstances of bullying behaviour. Prevention builds on protective factors (those that increase the likelihood of positive wellbeing outcomes and buffer against the effects of negative experiences) and refers

to strategies specifically designed to prevent bullying behaviours, for e.g. embedding anti-bullying messages and programs into each curriculum area and in every year.

Some points to consider:
- Bullying and harassment prevention must be part of a comprehensive, cohesive, and integrated school wide system of learning that supports and creates a culture of safety, connectedness, acceptance and support;
- Prevention and response to bullying or harassment must use evidence-based strategies and resources that are developmentally appropriate;
- Interventions need to be matched to the particular incident;
- More than one intervention will usually need to be implemented;
- No one intervention is appropriate in all circumstances of bullying or harassment;
- Not all hurtful behaviours are bullying, but schools need to address inappropriate behaviours whether or not it meets the definition of bullying; and
- Bullying or harassing behaviours that appear to involve illegal (e-crime) activities such as violence, threats, intimidation, and inciting violence should be reported to the Principal and can be reported to the police.

Supportive Bystander Behaviour

Most bullying or harassment takes place when bystanders are present; although most bystanders do not act to discourage it, when any one of them does there is a good chance (around 50%) that the bullying will stop. Students who are 'defended' are better adjusted and report less peer victimisation one year later. Reconciliation occurred more readily when bystanders intervened than when teachers intervened. The majority of peer interventions are effective.

Definitions

National definitions have been developed by the MCEETYA '*Safe and Supportive School Communities*' management group and used in the *National Safe Schools' Framework (2011*), and form part of BCE's lexicon.

Aggression:
Aggression is words or actions (both overt and covert) that are directed towards another and intended to harm, distress, coerce or cause fear.

Bullying:
Definition for Teachers, Parents and Carers:
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.

- *Cyber bullying* refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.
- Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying.
- Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved including bystanders.

For use with younger students
Bullying is when someone targets another child again and again and tries to make them feel bad. They say or do many mean and hurtful things, make fun of them a lot, try to stop them from joining in or make others not like them.
Although it isn't nice if someone says or does something mean to someone else, we don't necessarily call that bullying. It also isn't bullying if children of the same age have a one-off argument.

For use with older students

Bullying is when one student (or a group) targets another student again and again to upset or hurt them. They might hurt them physically, try to socially isolate them or say and do many mean or humiliating things to them.

Although it's neither respectful nor acceptable if someone behaves in a mean or aggressive way on one occasion, it isn't considered bullying. A fight or disagreement between students of equal power or status isn't considered bullying.

What is NOT Bullying?

There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying:

- **Mutual conflict** - which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- **Single-episode acts** of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying unless it becomes a pattern of behaviours.
- **Social rejection or dislike** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Conflict:

Conflict is a mutual disagreement, argument or dispute between people where no one has a significant power advantage and both feel equally aggrieved.

- Conflict is different to bullying because there is always an imbalance of power in bullying. However, poorly resolved conflict situations, especially those involving friendship break-ups or romantic break-ups sometimes lead to either aggression or bullying.
- Conflict can be a precursor to bullying where there are instances of repeated conflict and where the balance of power changes.

Covert bullying:

Covert bullying is a subtle type of non-physical bullying which usually isn't easily seen by others and is conducted out of sight of, and often unacknowledged by, adults. Covert bullying behaviours mostly inflict harm by damaging another's social reputation, peer relationships and self-esteem. Covert bullying can be carried out in a range of ways (e.g. spreading rumours, encouraging a third party to engage in bullying behaviour, conducting a malicious social exclusion campaign and/or through the use of internet or mobile phone technologies).

Cyber bullying:

Cyber bullying is a term used to describe bullying that is carried out through internet or mobile phone technologies. It is often combined with offline bullying. It may include a combination of behaviours such as pranking (i.e. hang-up calls), sending insulting text messages, publishing someone's private information, creating hate sites or implementing social exclusion campaigns in social networking sites. It is also cyber bullying when a student uses technology to run a multi-step campaign to bully another student (e.g. setting another student up to be assaulted, video recording their humiliation, posting the video-recording online and then sending the website address to others).

It is important to recognize that cyberbullying is a form of bullying, and as such schools should already be equipped to deal with the majority of cyberbullying cases through their existing Whole School Student Behaviour Support Plan.

Cyber safe behaviours:

Cyber-safe behaviours are defined as the safe, respectful and responsible use of internet and mobile phone technology.

Cyber exploitation:
Cyber exploitation is the use of the internet or mobile phone technologies to take advantage of another. Examples include: asking others to send sexually explicit photographs of themselves or publishing such images; stealing someone's identity and impersonating them (e.g. to subscribe to services or purchase goods and services in their name); using unscrupulous sales tactics (e.g. pop-ups).

Cyber fight:
Cyber fight is conflict that is carried out through the use of mobile phone or Internet technologies.

Cyber harassment:
Cyber harassment is a single episode of aggression (e.g. an insult, threat, nasty denigrating comment) against a specific student carried out through internet or mobile phone technologies.

Cyber risks:
Cyber risks are potential risks that students are exposed to when using Internet or mobile phone technologies. These include: the temptation to misuse technology, cyber exploitation, self-exposure and cyber bullying.

Digital Citizenship:
There are 9 elements in digital citizenship**:** *Access; Commerce; Communication; Literacy; Etiquette; Law; Rights and Responsibilities; Health and Wellness and Security*. Please refer to the Australian Curriculum ICT Capability at ACARA.

Discrimination:
Discrimination occurs when people are treated less favorably than others because of their race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; marital, parenting or economic status; age; ability or disability. Discrimination is often ongoing and commonly involves exclusion or rejection.

E-Crimes:
E-crimes are illegal actions that are carried out through the use of the internet or mobile phone technology. They include: child exploitation material, fraud, impersonation or identity theft, or sending words or images that cause offence, distress, menace or threaten. Most of these are crimes under Australian Federal Law but some are also (or only) crimes under some Australian State Laws. It is important that students understand that the production or distribution (including texting and posting) of lewd images of themselves or others may constitute child exploitation material with a potential criminal penalty and that some of these activities can be construed as bullying.

Flaming:
Flaming are online "fights" using electronic messages with inappropriate/angry and obscene messages.

Harassment:
Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; marital, parenting or economic status; age; ability or disability and that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment. Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour, or it may be a single act. It may be directed randomly or towards the same person/s. It may be intentional or unintentional (i.e. words or actions that offend and distress one person may be genuinely regarded by the person doing them as minor or harmless).

Harassment is unacceptable and needs to be addressed as part of creating a safe school but it would not be considered bullying if any one or more of the following three features were present:

- It occurred only once and was not part of a repeated pattern.
- It (genuinely) was not intended to offend, demean, annoy, alarm or abuse.
- It was not directed towards the same person/s each time.

Online hate websites/Bash boards:
Bash boards are websites (or other online sites) that have been established for the purpose of bullying another student. They contain insulting and contemptuous remarks or images and encourage others to sign on and indicate their hatred of a nominated person and add more disparaging comments.

Sexting:
Sexting is the sending of sexually explicit messages or photographs of oneself or others, using mobile phone technology either by request or spontaneously. It can also include posting of this material online. A student's current, or potential romantic partner, may be the source of a request to engage in sexting. Such photos may be sent (without permission) to many other people, or used to coerce or blackmail after a relationship break-up.

It is important that students understand that the production or distribution (including texting and posting) of lewd images of themselves or others may constitute child exploitation material pornography with a potential criminal penalty*.*

Brisbane Catholic Education schools are committed to ensuring the young people in our schools are safe and protected from harm of all kinds, including self-harm such as sexting.

The increasing incidence of sexting illustrates what happens when students lack the ability to make judgements about what constitutes right behaviour. The ability to know right from wrong, and to make sound ethical decisions, does not arise intuitively or happen by accident.

Teaching young people how to make responsible decisions is embodied in the Church's teaching that "the dignity of the human person implies and requires uprightness of moral conscience" (Catholic Church, 1776). For, "at the heart of all Catholic moral and social teaching is a single fact: the respect given to an individual human person must always be first and must govern every law and action so that the person's life and dignity is always and everywhere protected and defended" (Kagan, 2012).

Brisbane Catholic Education has a responsibility to intentionally foster the capacity of young people to know how to: respect themselves and others; connect with others in just and loving ways; make decisions based on an informed conscience; and manage the changing states of relationships that in no way diminishes themselves or others. This learning offers young people a moral and ethical framework that can guide them in making responsible, loving and just choices, including how to use and not misuse the technology that they are surrounded with.

Supportive Bystander Behaviour:
Supportive Bystander Behaviour is when the actions of a supportive bystander can stop or diminish a specific bullying incident or help another student to recover from it. A bystander is someone who sees or knows about child maltreatment, harassment, aggression, violence or bullying that is happening to someone else. Supportive bystander behaviours are actions and/or words that are intended to support someone who is being attacked, abused or bullied.

Violence:

Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person(s) that results in psychological harm, injury or in some cases death. Violence may involve provoked or unprovoked acts and can be a single incident, a random act or can occur over time.

Resources

• Act Smart Be Safe: a gateway for parents/carers, students, teachers and the community to access information to help improve youth safety. http://education.qld.gov.au/actsmartbesafe/

• Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) www.acma.gov.au/cybersafety

• Australian Federal Police: are involved in crime prevention and awareness raising activities, particularly in keeping young people safe online. The AFP coordinates ThinkUKnow. www.afp.gov.au

• Beyondblue www.beyondblue.org.au

•UR Strong - https://urstrong.com/

• Bullying. No way! Safe and Supportive Communities (SSSC) Project; Queensland Department of Education, Training and Development on behalf of the Australian Education Authorities (2013) www.bullyingnoway.com.au

• The Bullying No Way! website provides a wide range of information and resources for parents and school communities on managing bullying. For more information visit: www.bullyingnoway.gov.au and go to the parents' portal.

• Child, Family Community Australia Working with families whose child is bullying: an evidence-based guide for practitioners

• Cybersmart provides an outline of policies and procedures schools may follow to assist them in providing a holistic approach to cybersafety. www.cybersmart.gov.au

• Digital Citizenship information on the BCE Learning and Teaching site

• Kids' Helpline: is a free, private and confidential, 24-hour telephone and online counselling service for young people aged between 5-25 years 1800 551 800 www.kidshelp.com.au

• The National Centre Against Bullying (NCAB) is a peak body working to advise and inform the Australian community on the issue of childhood bullying and the creation of safe schools and communities, including the issue of cyber safety. www.ncab.org.au

• Restorative Practices www.restorativepractices.org.au offers teachers, students and parents a way of seeing problems as an opportunity for learning.

• Safe Schools Hub: National Safe Schools Framework (2011) MCEECDYA, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace relations; Commonwealth of Australia (2013) www.scafeschoolshub.edu.au

POLICY: Recordkeeping

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POLICY: Recordkeeping