Mater Christi CPS

BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE PROCEDURES

(STUDENT)

Mater Christi Catholic Primary School

Bullying, Harassment, Aggression and Violence Procedures

Contents

Sources of Authority	
CECWA Policy	Community
Executive Directive	Bullying, Harassment, Aggression and Violence Procedures

1. Rationale

Mater Christi Catholic Primary School will not tolerate bullying, harassment, aggression or violence in our school. It is in the best interests of all, for all members of the school community to take a pro-active stance to promote the safety and wellbeing of every child.

Catholic schools have a responsibility to provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person, and therefore, aims to encourage the development of positive relationships between students and the application of restorative practices to reduce all forms of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. Students who are bullied, subject to aggression or harassed tend to have poorer health, lower self-esteem, more interpersonal difficulties, higher levels of loneliness, depression, suicidal ideation and increased anxiety. The policies and practices that a school employ should enhance the dignity of the human person and reflect the Principles of Pastoral Care as espoused in the Pastoral Care Framework (2007).

The Australian Government's National Safe Schools Framework adopts a whole school approach to safety and wellbeing. It provides a comprehensive range of evidence- informed practices to guide schools in preventing and responding to incidents of harassment, aggression, violence and bullying and to implement their responsibilities in relation to child protection issues.

The National Safe Schools Framework is based on the following overarching vision: All Australian schools are safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote student wellbeing.

In the NSSF, a safe and supportive school is described in the following way:

In a safe and supportive school, the risk from all types of harm is minimised, 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 or wellbeing. We also need to acknowledge that as we are made in the likeness of Jesus, we must accept our failings such as poor decision making, and seek to forgive and learn from our experiences

The Guiding Principles of the National Safe Schools framework

This Framework is underpinned by the following guiding principles that represent fundamental beliefs about safe, supportive and respectful school communities. These guiding principles emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a pre- requisite for effective learning in all school settings.

Australian schools:

- affirm the rights of all members of the school community to feel safe and be safe at school Policy statement [2-D6 Dealing with Bullying and Harassment (Students) (Version 3 – 2010) Page 2 of 5];
- acknowledge that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing and effective learning;
- accept responsibility for developing and sustaining safe and supportive learning and teaching communities that also fulfil the school's child protection responsibilities;
- encourage the active participation of all school community members in developing and maintaining a safe school community where diversity is valued;
- actively support young people to develop understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe;
- commit to developing a safe school community through a whole- school and evidence based approach.

2. Definitions

Bullying is when, over a period of time, an individual or a group continually and intentionally harm a person. It is important to clarify that the term bullying should not be used to label one off incidents. Additionally, bullying can be characterised as: causing distress, not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks; and, an imbalance of power (that is inappropriate and where there is an intention to hurt).

Its nature may be:

- **Verbal**- name calling, put-downs, threats (spoken, written, electronic or cyber which may also apply to the following points);
- **Physical** - hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects, stealing;
- **Social** – ignoring, hiding, ostracizing.
- **Psychological** – stalking, threatening looks, spreading rumours, damaging possessions [CEWA - Policy statement 2-D6 Dealing with Bullying and Harassment (Students) (Version 3 – 2010)].

Bullying can be easy to see,or hidden from those not directly involved.

Direct / Overt bullying - involves physical actions such as punching or kicking or observable verbal actions such as name-calling and insulting. Overt, direct, physical bullying is a common depiction of bullying. (This is sometimes called 'traditional bullying'). But overt physical bullying may not be the most common type of bullying.

Indirect / Covert bullying - can be almost impossible for people outside the interpersonal interaction to identify. Covert bullying can include repeatedly using hand gestures and weird or threatening looks, whispering, excluding or turning your back on a person, restricting where a person can sit and who they can talk with. (2017, Bullying. No Way!). This form is the most difficult to detect and prove.

Covert social or verbal bullying can be subtle and even sometimes denied by a person who claims they were joking or 'just having fun'.

Some bullying is both covert and indirect, such as subtle social bullying, usually intentionally hidden, and very hard for others to see. This type of bullying is often unacknowledged at school, and can include spreading rumours, threatening, blackmailing, stealing friends, breaking secrets, gossiping and criticising clothes and personalities.

Indirect covert bullying mostly inflicts harm by damaging another's social reputation, peer relationships and self-esteem, that is, through psychological harm rather than physical harm. Bullying has the potential to cause harm (although not all unwanted actions necessarily cause harm).

The effects of bullying, particularly on the mental health and wellbeing of those involved, including bystanders, can continue even after the situation is resolved. (2017, Bullying. No Way!).

Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. (Adapted from Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy, Harassment in School, 1998). Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying.

Bullying and harassment are often thought of separately, however, both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on the grounds of 'difference'. These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, personality, age, marital status, parenting status or economic status. (Bullying. No Way! website cited in the National Safe Schools Framework, 2003).

Unlike bullying and harassment, **violence** is not necessarily associated with an imbalance of power. It can occur between people of equal power. It implies extreme forcefulness, usually (but not always) of a physical kind. (Rigby, cited in the NSSF, 2003).

Bullying Online – Cybersafety

Bullying does not have to occur face to face, it may also occur online via social media. The use of social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat etc) is not recommended for primary aged children. This is affirmed by the minimum age of consent for tools such as Facebook (13), Instagram (13), Twitter (13), and snapchat (13).

While this form of bullying may not occur at school, or within school hours the ramifications of such actions are often seen at school. Mater Christi Catholic Primary will deal with these in school situations as per the Behaviour Management Procedures and Bullying & Harassment Policy. Ultimately parents must be aware and accountable for their children's online actions outside of school hours.

Misuse of the term 'Bullying'

It should be noted that due to the saturation use of the term 'bullying' in all forms of media, many behaviours associated with bullying are NOT in fact bullying.

The National Centre Against Bullying (2010) acknowledges that while the following behaviours are often upsetting to those involved, they do not constitute bullying:

- arguments and disagreements;
- disliking someone;
- one-off acts of social rejection;
- one-off acts of meanness or spite;
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence;
- rough play;
- taking someone's belongings without asking.

Whilst these behaviours would not be considered as bullying (because they do not involve deliberate and repeated harm and/or a power imbalance) they will be addressed in the same way as other inappropriate student behaviours as defined by our school Behaviour Management Procedures.

3. Principles

3.1 Mater Christi aspires to provide a safe and supportive environment where the 6 guiding principles of the National Safe Schools Framework are practiced.

3.2 Mater Christi owes a duty of care to its students.

3.3 Mater Christi endeavours to provide a supportive environment which:
- act to prevent instances of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence;
- encourage socially appropriate behaviour using positive behaviour management and direct teaching of curriculum in areas such as interpersonal and self-management skills;
- promote respect for self and other;
- develop physical/emotional well-being and resiliency;
- develop interpersonal skills and positive mental health.

3.4 Responding to bullying, harassment, aggression and violence requires quality leadership and role modelling to facilitate strategy implementation and sustained change, together with a whole school community approach that is consistent with Catholic Education Western Australia's Pastoral Care Framework and the school's Evangelisation Plan, which partners with parents and other agencies.

3.5 Bullying, harassment, aggression and violence may occur outside of the school. When these behaviours impact on a student's learning and behaviour in school, Catholic schools take action to support the continued wellbeing of those involved.

3.6 All bullying, harassment, aggression and violence shall be responded to. When bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are ignored or overlooked, it serves to condone or reinforce the behaviour. Bystanders, (those who observe bullying) can encourage or assist those who bully simply by doing nothing. Those in this position can also be known as enablers due to their lack of action.

3.7 While the aim is to promote and encourage positive behaviour, school policy and procedures shall contain clear statements regarding the range of appropriate consequences that may be applicable for unacceptable behaviour (Behaviour Management Procedures). In looking at consequences relating to specific issues, consideration should be given to other circumstances which may have bearing such as family or mental health matters.

3.8 All parties to incidents of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are entitled to appropriate support.

3.9 Peoples interpretations of bullying and harassment can differ significantly.

4. Procedures

4.1 MC has developed a school-based policy on bullying, harassment, aggression and violence, based on a comprehensive risk and needs assessment, which includes:

> **4.1.1** MC will not tolerate bullying, harassment, aggression or violence in our school. Teachers cannot solely shoulder the load of monitoring and dealing with bullying. It is in the best interests of all, for all members of the school community, to take a pro-active stance to promote the safety and wellbeing of every child under our care.
>
> Examples of behaviours that are considered to be bullying, harassment, aggression and violence.
>
> **4.1.2** There are four types of bullying behaviour
> - **Verbal**
> - **Physical**
> - **Social**
> - **Psychological**
>
> If any of these behaviours occur only once, or are part of a conflict between equals (no matter how inappropriate) they are not bullying. They can however be considered as harassment, aggression or violence and should be dealt with in accordance with the Behaviour Management Procedures.The behaviours alone don't define bullying.Verbal, physical, social or psychological bullying can occur in person or online, directly or indirectly, overtly or covertly.

4.1.3 We wish our students to feel safe when online. It is inevitable that students, will through the course of their lives, come across uncomfortable situations online. It is our obligation to ensure that the students under our care have had access to resources enabling them to become good digital citizens. Mater Christi Catholic Primary seeks to become proactive in this area in order to help students better deal with situations.

Students are urged and expected to inform parents or teachers when they become the victim of cyber harassment or cyberbullying.

4.1.4 When an issue has occurred outside school hours it is not the school's obligation to intercede. However, if the actions of those involved impact student behaviour at school it will be dealt with in accordance with the Bullying and Harassment Policy or the Behaviour Management Procedures. The school shall notify parents that an issue has been dealt with and may require further parent investigation or clarification.

Staff are guided by the Mater Christi Catholic Primary Bullying Action Plan in dealing with instances of bullying. Paramount to the process are;
- Ascertaining if in fact bullying is occurring;
- Documenting findings;
- Communicating with students, families and staff;
- Ensuring that follow up protocols are followed.

4.1.5 Strategies and responses (including curricula, programs and pedagogy and, where school resources are limited, forming partnerships with parents, families and the wider community) to address:
- The development of supportive environments, positive relationships and student connectedness to the school;
- Social decision making and empowerment of students;
- Improving skills in conflict resolution;
- Promotion of tolerance and understanding, the encouragement of inclusion and the celebration of difference;
- Acceptance of difference, and, a culture of cooperation, empathy and respect;
- The resolution of bullying incidents involving those who bully and those who are bullied or subject to aggression and which includes the early and appropriate involvement of parents;
- Application of Restorative Practice as per the Behaviour Management Procedures. This process often serves to re-empower a victim;
- Support and restoration to wellbeing of students who have been harmed by hurtful. This includes working with parents and families to assist in retaining a connectedness to school and facilitating
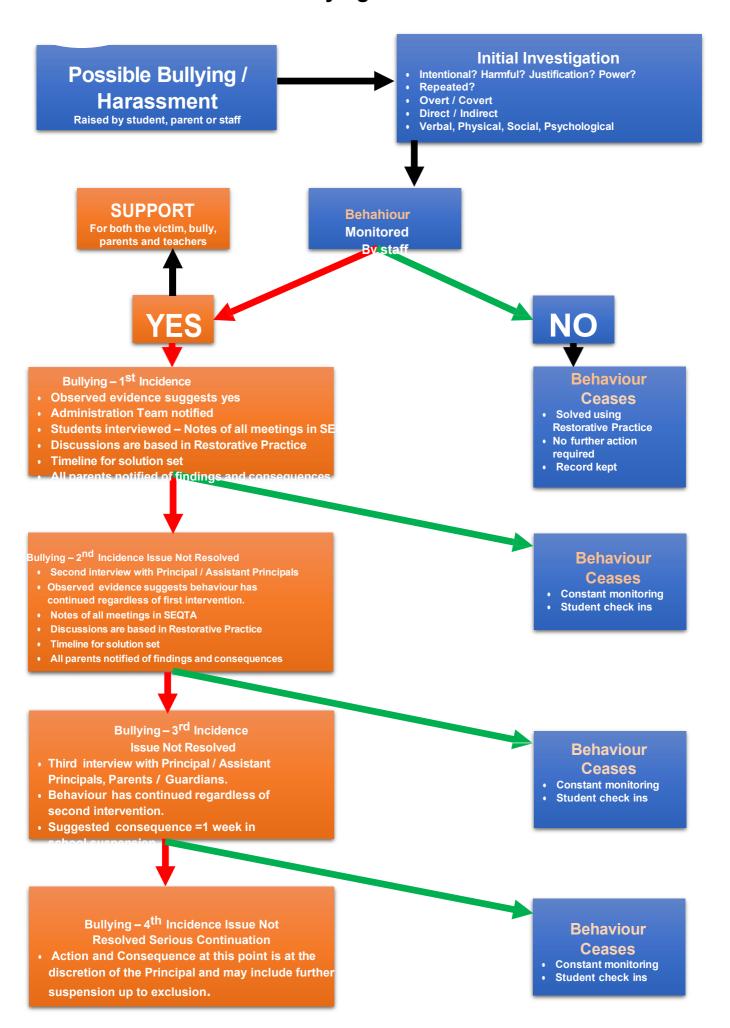
reintegration in those whose attendance may have lapsed as a consequence of bullying, harassment, aggression or violence;

- The improvement of the behaviour and attitudes of students who bully;
- The pro-active engagement of bystanders to discourage bullying behaviour;
- The broader needs of the school community;
- The prevailing attitudes within the school including the 'culture' of the school to promote safety and wellbeing;
- Teaching and learning programs to support the strategies and promote good citizenship skills in students, staff and parents.
- School support systems that promote positive social health, mental health, safety and wellbeing.

Reporting, recording and data collection procedures to be used when investigating incidents, as a basis to facilitate evaluation and justify any modification to approach, and to inform prevention and management activities. All notes are to be uploaded to SEQTA and involved students tagged.

5. Considerations

5.1 Following an incident of bullying, the students involved (victim and perpetrator) will undergo a process of healing and each case is unique. At MC we believe in forgiveness and that every child deserves a chance to learn from their mistakes and change their behaviour. The process of atoning for the poor choices which have constituted the bullying are addressed in the Behaviour Management Procedures's Restorative Practices.

5.2 Bullying does not mean that the perpetrator is a 'bad person', but rather that they are making some poor choices which affect others and come with a series of consequences. The outcome of the process must include efforts aimed at addressing better decision making.

5.3 Bystanding involves watching while others are being bullied or treated badly by others and not taking any action to prevent the bullying from occurring. In many cases there will be consequences for bystanders if they are found to enable or encourage bullying behaviour. Enabling is also considered to be a lack of action in the presence of bullying.

5.4 Parents/carers should not try to sort an issue out independently by contacting parents of another student. Report to the nominated people as outlined in this policy.

5.5 Parents should trust that when the school informs them that a reported incident on bullying is 'undergoing the process' that the procedures and consequences outlined in this policy are being followed and that the problem is in the process of resolution, with the best interests of all parties in consideration.

5.6 Confidentiality is important and it is for this reason that details of how the school is managing the case of a particular student will not be discussed with parents or friends of another student.

5.7 Decisions and consequences are made at the discretion of the Leadership Team

6. Bullying Action Plan

Possible Bullying / Harassment
Raised by student, parent or staff

Initial Investigation
- Intentional? Harmful? Justification? Power?
- Repeated?
- Overt / Covert
- Direct / Indirect
- Verbal, Physical, Social, Psychological

SUPPORT
For both the victim, bully, parents and teachers

Behahiour Monitored By staff

YES

NO

Bullying – 1st Incidence
- Observed evidence suggests yes
- Administration Team notified
- Students interviewed – Notes of all meetings in SE
- Discussions are based in Restorative Practice
- Timeline for solution set
- All parents notified of findings and consequences

Behaviour Ceases
- Solved using Restorative Practice
- No further action required
- Record kept

Bullying – 2nd Incidence Issue Not Resolved
- Second interview with Principal / Assistant Principals
- Observed evidence suggests behaviour has continued regardless of first intervention.
- Notes of all meetings in SEQTA
- Discussions are based in Restorative Practice
- Timeline for solution set
- All parents notified of findings and consequences

Behaviour Ceases
- Constant monitoring
- Student check ins

Bullying – 3rd Incidence Issue Not Resolved
- Third interview with Principal / Assistant Principals, Parents / Guardians.
- Behaviour has continued regardless of second intervention.
- Suggested consequence =1 week in school suspension.

Behaviour Ceases
- Constant monitoring
- Student check ins

Bullying – 4th Incidence Issue Not Resolved Serious Continuation
- Action and Consequence at this point is at the discretion of the Principal and may include further suspension up to exclusion.

Behaviour Ceases
- Constant monitoring
- Student check ins

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-D6 Dealing with Bullying Harassment Aggression and Violence
https://intranet.cathednet.wa.edu.au/PolicyStatements/Community/Documents/2-D6%20Dealing%20with%20Bullying%20Harassment%20Aggression%20and%20Viole nce.pdf

Rigby, K (2001). Stop the Bullying. A Handbook for Schools. ACER, Australia

Curriculum Corporation (2000), Mind Matters, Commonwealth of Australia
https://www.mindmatters.edu.au/

National Safe Schools Framework (2003, revised 2011. Education Services Australia as the legal entity for the Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs [MCEECDYA]). https://www.education.gov.au/national-safe-schools-framework-0

https://www.esafety.gov.au/

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-C4 Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying https://intranet.cathednet.wa.edu.au/PolicyStatements/Stewardship/Documents/2-C4%20Harassment%20Unlawful%20Discrimination%20Victimisation%20and%20Bull ying%20(Staff).pdf

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-D3 Child Protection
https://intranet.cathednet.wa.edu.au/PolicyStatements/Community/Documents/2-D3%20Child%20Protection.pdf

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-D8 Management of Confidential Information in Schools
https://intranet.cathednet.wa.edu.au/PolicyStatements/Community/Documents/2-D8%20The%20Management%20of%20Confidential%20Information.pdf

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-D7 Exclusion of Students for Disciplinary Reasons
https://intranet.cathednet.wa.edu.au/PolicyStatements/Community/Documents/2-D7%20Exclusion%20of%20Students%20for%20Disciplinary%20Reasons.pdf

Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, Framework for the Development of Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools (2007)
http://www.ceo.wa.edu.au/ReligiousEducationCurriculum/Documents/Framework%20 for%20the%20Development%20of%20Pastoral%20Care%20in%20Catholic%20Scho ols.pdf

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